

"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

---

# Household Words.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 153.]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## How the Colonel was Told.

A Tale of Guy Faux Day.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"Is it really so bad, Lancelot?"

"It most certainly is," answered Lancelot Marstone, captain in a crack cavalry regiment, tugging vindictively at a long, drooping, blonde moustache; "I should imagine things are coming to a crisis. There, I am not sure about that being anything," with calm philosophy; "they have developed a tendency in that direction for the past two years."

Rising from his chair, the speaker walked to the window and gazed moodily forth. There was but scant comfort to be derived from outside. Evening was closing in with fog, and darkness was brooding heavily over London. A wretched October, dull and cheerless throughout its course, was bewailing its approaching end in sobbing gusts of wind and driving rain, and suppressing a sigh, at variance with his careless words, the young man resumed his seat. The firelight, flickering on his set features, fell on easels and plaster-casts, on sketches littered about, and pictures in various stages of completion—on all the thousand-and-one accessories of an artist's studio, and on a grave face steadfastly regarding him, the said face and artistic properties appertaining to his friend, Cameron Gray.

"Something must be done," he resumed after a pause, in which the two men had smoked in silence.

"Then, don't you think," said the other earnestly, "it would be better to tell your father of your marriage?"

"Oh yes," with a hard laugh; "Colonel Marstone will be charmed to know that his eldest son is secretly wedded to the governess. What have I to do with love and romance?" he went on bitterly. "I have my debts, and I am sure they are enough. I ought to have gone in for the wealthy marriage my respected parent cut out for me, and caused joy in the tribe of Judah. Offered myself a lamb upon the Hebraical altar, in fact, dear boy."

"Lancelot, for her—your wife's sake, you do not repent?"

"Repent! no, indeed. I am not sure that it was wise in her to link her fortunes with mine. But I would marry my love again to-morrow—aye, a thousand times; only," smiling sadly, "it would make sad inroads on a limited income, or, to speak correctly, no income at all."

Another pause, and a deal of smoke puffed forth in lieu of words, then Captain Marstone spoke again.

"Look here, old man," in jesting tones which yet bore a spice of earnestness, "I have an inspiration—a plan to retrieve my fading fortunes. I am going to sojourn under the paternal roof-tree for a few days—change of air and scene are really necessary for my health; I am weary of the same duns' features; in fact, the Semitic type grows monotonous; and I long for my darling's face. You shall come with me, make love to and marry my father's ward, and then you can rely on my drawing on you to any amount."

"I am willing to help you if I can, Lancelot, without that."

"I know it, old friend, and thank you; but I am in too deeply for your small savings to do any good. Do not look so grave, Cameron; I was but joking. You would not marry for the shakels more than we did, and our united fortunes, after we had fed the reverend gentleman who made us one, and his clerk, an elderly individual with weak knees, who gave away the bride, amounted to eleven pounds nineteen and some odd coppers. But, seriously, Gertrude Trent is a dear girl; awfully rich, and you might do worse."

"Heiresses do not throw themselves away on poor struggling—"

"And not too clever painters," supplied Captain Marstone.

"Even if they did," pursued the artist, not heeding the interruption, "even if they did—!" And a sigh finished Cameron Gray's words.

"Ah, I understand," said the other. "I had forgotten for the moment, or, rather, hoped you had. You love another, as they say in the novels, and it is an unfortunate attribute, as usual, with that other, to be out of reach. Forgive me; I have no right to banter on such a subject, but, like the ancient philosophical party, I jest at everything to avoid tears. You are still faithful to that dream, Cameron?"

"Aye, and shall be ever," rejoined the artist. "You do well to

term it so. It is a dream—no more. I know it, and yet, although I have schooled myself to the knowledge—sometimes, when the thought of what might be, wild and visionary as it all is, comes to me, I hunger for talent and fame—I long for—Pooh! I am talking nonsense," and the artist checked himself abruptly. "Talking nonsense and boring you. A dream! Half-a-dozen words in the galleries of Rome, two or three meetings by the Devonshire streams, and then—and then—"

"The unwarranted interference of an elderly unsympathetic gentleman, the lady's father, probably," supplied his friend, "who, with a few words, hardly of a friendly nature, spirited her away."

"Well that he did," said Cameron. "I know not whither my mad presumption might have led me else. I never even learned her name. She was unknown to me, as I am to the world—an obscure artist, unrecognised and poor."

"Which brings me to my mission here this evening, forgotten in the egotism of my own woes. This," extending a letter, "is from my Aunt Doolan, an elderly spinster. She lives with the pater—in fact, rules him and all the household, Gertrude included—has heard me speak of my friend, the rising artist, and longs for his presence."

"Jesting still, Lancelot?"

"I assure you, no. Miss Janet Doolan is quite too too utterly enthusiastic on the subject of art, blue-and-white china, and aestheticism in general. She will not tolerate anything in the crockery line which is not cracked, and fills the house with battered old stewpans and snuffer-trays, much to the colonel's disgust. So she takes the opportunity of his absence—for his old military habits are always urging him to kill something, and he is in Scotland, slaughtering deer or something—to have the picture-gallery overhauled, and our glazed and painted ancestors washed and combed and done up. But read for yourself."

Cameron Gray took the letter, but, reading, a shadow of annoyance crossed his face.

"You should not have done this, Lancelot. Your aunt evidently expects an R.A. at least. Besides, I do not profess figure-painting."

"Then I had better, my dear boy," answered the other with unruffled composure, "tell you candidly that Aunt Doolan cares not for landscape-work, but worships high art, and knows nothing of either. Away with all such modest scruples! Talk the customary jargon, and it will be all right."

"I do not like the idea," said the artist.

"Never mind, you will like to see my old home amidst the Welsh hills. It will be money in your pocket, and I will borrow some. Have faith in your own powers, and touch up the family portraits. As a matter of fact, they are so brown and ugly that, if you cannot improve them, you cannot make them worse. No more objections. We leave here the day after to-morrow."

Ere the artist could say more, Captain Marstone departed, humming a light air, as if pecuniary troubles were unknown things.

"Farewell!" he cried; "farewell until then! And so for the first step of Fame's ladder, with the helping hand of Aunt Doolan!"

But, left alone, Cameron Gray did not look quite like a man about to commence that pleasing ascent. It was his turn now to pull reflectively at a moustache—by no means a very handsome one—not to compare, more than his own somewhat homely features, with the fine points of his friend.

Yet both were well-born. But with the one, there it ended. Left an orphan, even in childhood Cameron Gray, on the smallest patrimony, had had to fight the world, and, as yet unknown, was fighting it still.

### CHAPTER II.

A WRETCHED little station, on a wretched Welsh line, a mere shed, in fact, with the painted name of Pont Ennys, or rather as much as the weather had left of it, referring to an invisible, and, probably, by the foresight of a kindly board of directors, far distant township. No sign of life about save "three single gentlemen rolled into one," in the form of the station-master, clerk, and porter, unable to sufficiently abase himself before the squire's eldest-born and his friend, Mr. Gray.

"I am very sorry, indeed to goodness, sir, I am, but there is not any one come from Plas Ennys. I do ask your pardon, sir."

"No fault of yours, Evans," said Captain Marstone good-naturedly. "We might walk, it is only three miles; but our traps?"

"Could I carry them for you, sir?"

"I think you might, Evans," and the captain glanced from the undersized official to three or four portmanteaux; "you might if we carried you."

"Why so much luggage, Lancelot, for a few days?" enquired the artist.

The other smiled, the smile of superior wisdom.

"When you are a married man you will know. These are a few commissions from my wife. Should the dear old governor return in time, I am trusting to the chapter of accidents, with your aid, to make my peace. Nothing like appearances, and I have there, for my darling, the most swell turn-out that Bond Street can do. I don't understand much about packing ladies' finery, so there's the dress in one, and the bonnet, all by itself, in another. But really this is awkward."

"You wrote that we were coming?"

"Assuredly. But I did not tell them the train would be punctual," looking at his watch, "and that accounts for it. Here they are at last," as a carriage came in view, "or rather here is my own," and a proud, happy light was in Lancelot's eyes as they rested on his bride of a few weeks. "Alone, too. I expect Gertrude could not tear herself away from some dear old cottager's toothache or rheumatism, and will be picked up as we drive home."

It was a cold greeting in appearance between these two, but the eyes of the world, as represented by the coachman and station-master, were on them. Yet, as he presented his companion with a staid "Miss Winton—Mr. Gray," Captain Marstone whispered: "Old friend, this is my wife. Nay, Kate, do not blush, it is good for me to be able to breathe the word to some one;" but she did blush all the same, and looked very pretty in her confusion.

Kate Winton, or rather Mrs. Lancelot Marstone, could scarcely have touched her twenty-fifth year, and was indeed "fair to look upon." Not perhaps the loveliest woman in the world, but yet a good excuse for his friend's disobedience, so decided Cameron as Mr. Evans performed prodigies of strength with the luggage, and they took their places.

"Where is Gertrude?" cried Lancelot as they rolled off. "Is it Widow Jones or Widow Hughes to-day, Rhys Rhys, with his lumbago and doubts of the Pentateuch, or Mrs. Williams and her countless brats?"

"Neither," answered his wife. "You are wrong for once, Captain Marstone," with a smile for the formal word. "What a wonderful memory you display. Are you not surprised, Mr. Gray?"

"Not at all," was the gallant rejoinder, with a bow. "I can understand no one connected with Pont Ennys being ever forgotten."

"Very pretty indeed," laughed the captain; "you are developing wonderfully, dear boy. You must know, Kate, he is a perfect Timon at home, in order to appreciate him to the full. At this rate he will take Aunt Doolan by storm, and heal up the sorrows of some love-passages which rent her heart a few centuries since. But again, where is Gertrude? and how is she?"

"A headache deprived me of her company. She does not complain, and insists that there is nothing amiss; but I am sure she is not so light-hearted as formerly, nor does she go about as much as she used to."

"I am sorry for that," said the captain musingly, "so are all the goodies and old cronies of the place, I'll wager. Gertrude cannot be in love—I know the symptoms—there is an utter dearth of material. Our butler is not bad-looking, certainly, and there's the Rev. Baxter, only there's no romance about a fellow of twenty-five without a single hair on his head. Aunt Doolan esteems him for it. If you don't wear your hair on your shoulders, the next best thing is to have none. And how is my aunt—crazy as ever?"

"Lancelot, don't," with a reproving glance. "Miss Doolan is more favourably disposed to us all, I think. She is looking forward to a perfect feast of art with you, Mr. Gray."

"I trust not," said Cameron earnestly. "Lancelot, you should not have done this. I am a very mediocre painter indeed, Mrs. Marstone, and must undeceive Miss Doolan."

"And get turned out as an impostor for your pains," laughed his friend. "But behold the lodge in the distance. Prepare for a stately entrance. Aunt has thoughts of a mediæval trumpet for visitors to 'toot, toot' on, or an ancient 'turling pin.'"

They drove up to an old mansion of square formal architecture, dating back to the Tudor age, and standing on the terrace to welcome them was Aunt Doolan herself, in æsthetic garments, almost of the same period. At any other time the artist might have smiled at the quaint eccentricity of a rustling skirt, well-nigh stiff enough to stand alone, brocaded with immense flowers; shoes with enormous buckles; and a prodigious starched ruff. But, in truth, he hardly saw Miss Doolan, hardly heeded her welcoming words, for beside her was another, fairer form—a girl shrinking back, with a bright, shy flush upon her face. His own name sounded as if it were breathed by someone a long way off—then the name of Miss Trent, and lo! there was his dream a reality once again.

There before him were each line and feature blossoming into the beauty of early womanhood; the exquisitely refined face, framed in sunny golden hair, so well remembered in the Roman galleries;

there were the violet eyes he had seen lighting up with a deeper beauty in admiration of the woods and streams of Devon; the same musical voice—he had only heard it so few times!—and it was murmuring something in response to his own incoherent sentences.

Frankly Gertrude Trent stretched forth her hand, and taking it the artist stammered:

"I have had the honour of meeting Miss Trent before, although unfortunate in remaining a stranger. I am not presumptuous enough to hope for remembrance, myself equally unknown."

"Not quite, Mr. Gray; I found out your name, that is," with a brighter blush, "I chanced to learn—I mean I heard——"

"Of course you did," broke in Captain Marstone, and Gertrude looked grateful. "Who has not heard of Cameron Gray, the swell painter—the rising man of the day? He is the great authority, I assure you, in town, and might be President of the Royal Academy, but for his native modesty."

"May I?" and ere he knew what was coming, Aunt Doolan bowed over his hand, lightly touching it with her lips. "It is my homage to true genius, and someone has said it is ever modest."

"My dear madam," cried Cameron in confusion, "you overrate my poor talents indeed."

"Not at all," cried his friend. "Do not listen to him, aunt. You wait a bit—wait until he talks about the Venetian school, and the Renaissance. Hear him contrast the styles of the old masters, the young masters, and the middle-aged masters. Listen to breadth and depth, *chiaroscuro*, and all the rest of it. And as for old china, ah," with a sigh of admiration, "there's a man!"

"Oh, how glad I am!" said Aunt Doolan. "I long, Mr. Gray, to show you my own poor collection. A humble devotee of the beautiful from afar off, I have worshipped art, and—Alas! there are those abominable children again! Since their father left us, this sort of thing has been going on daily, and it shatters my nerves."

Miss Doolan's complaint was not unreasonable. Her speech had been interrupted by a loud explosion, which made the windows rattle, and amidst a chorus of exulting cries, three or four children, the result of the colonel's second marriage, came trooping in.

"I am so sorry," cried the eldest, a lad of about ten or twelve, "so sorry——"

"So you ought to be," interrupted Miss Doolan severely. "It is shameful, Claude, these frights you are continually giving us."

"Frights!" echoed Claude with boyish scorn. "What is there to be frightened at in this little beauty?" which was a brass cannon, as large as he could carry. "We meant to fire a salute as they came in, but it would not go off. Here, Lancelot," holding the muzzle for the captain's inspection; "only smell; isn't it nice?"

"Thank you," laughed his brother. "I don't care for it myself."

"Then you ought to," rejoined the boy. "A soldier should love to smell powder."

"Perhaps so, young fire-eater. But I fancy this is rather a dangerous playing for you."

"Oh no, it isn't! Papa knows I have it, and we are going to have a grand time on the Fifth. We have clubbed our money, and have got a Guy Faux and no end of fireworks. We are building an awful bonfire, and——"

"A great deal which, excuse me, I must defer hearing about. Come, Cameron, we dine in half an hour."

He linked his arm in his friend's, and as he piloted him up the wide staircase, Captain Marstone said:

"What do you think of my father's ward? Will she replace your dream?"

"Have you not guessed the truth, Lancelot?" replied the artist, and his voice was full of sorrow. "It is the dream itself—more hopeless now than ever."

The speaker's glance wandered to the hall they had left, where the waning light fell through stained glass on armorial bearings and carved oak, on weapons and banners, trophies of war and the chase, on choice plants, and all the evidences of wealth and luxury.

"As far from me," he sighed, "as if we dwelt in other worlds, as, indeed, we do. Let me return to mine to-morrow—at once. I dare not stay here, Lancelot. I know not whither my infatuation may lead me."

There was no romance about Captain Marstone. In a very practical manner he pushed his friend into his room.

"Not if I know it," he observed calmly. "My plans are not to be upset this way. Now, hearken to the voice of the prophet. When you leave Plas Ennys it will be as the accepted suitor of Gertrude Trent. Tush, man! have you no eyes?"

#### CHAPTER III.

MR. GRAY did not return on the morrow. To the young man, usually so calm, so self-possessed, there came a great change, and for the moment he seemed to yield himself to the fascination of the hour. He cared not to think of the future. He only knew how

delightful it was to be under the same roof with Gertrude—to be near her—and the happy days in his prosaic life had been so few!

Yet it was rare that they were ever together alone, though in such times the girl's shy confusion, her hesitating speech, and mantling blush might have whispered hope to one better read in woman's ways.

Rarely alone. In fact, Aunt Doolan took possession of the artist, and, installed amidst the family portraits, watched him engaged in carrying out sundry suggestions and improvements of her own, many of which, but for his skill, had been ludicrous. The old lady had conceived an immense affection for Cameron. In reality, perhaps, but more likely in imagination, he had recalled the dream of early days, for she had decided that he was the presentment of a young subaltern in the East Indies—the one tender episode of her life. She wore his miniature in a brooch, but only herself could trace Cameron's resemblance to a young man in the Company's uniform, the entire colour of whose vacuous face seemed centred in his nose, and who had died of a broken heart, or else too intense devotion to ardent spirits.

Miss Doolan—she had wearied everybody else long ago—loved to dwell upon this. Cameron had been taken into her confidence, and listened with a tender sympathy, which won her still more. In truth, if Gertrude would only be near, he would have been well content to listen to the dullest of "Harvey's Meditations," or the most repulsive chapters of "Foxe's Martyrs." But not so Captain Marstone. Free and careless as ever, he came rushing in upon Gertrude's silence, Aunt Doolan's reminiscences, and the artist's work.

"Now then, old man, away with all this," feigning a dash at the painter's palette. "Does not the true artist seek Nature? Here you stay, cooped up for a week amongst these dead and gone old duffers—"

"My dear boy," this from his aunt, "is this becoming to our ancestors?"

"Yes," quite unabashed, "yes, if they conspire to keep us in with such weather. We do not get many Welsh days like this, and in November too. Here you are," with a meaning glance, which brought a flush to the faces of Gertrude and Mr. Gray, "as pale as a couple of love-sick babes in the wood. Come forth and breathe the mountain air. I have arranged it. I have given the children a holiday to complete their arrangements for a grand flare-up on this the anniversary of the immortal Guy, and we are all going for a walk."

"There is not very much time for you," put in Aunt Doolan. "We dine a little earlier this evening, as the children insist on our seeing their bonfire lighted. Where do you propose taking Mr. Gray?"

"To the most interesting spot in the Principality," laughed her nephew. "Right over Moel Dhu, to the Lover's Leap."

"Is there such a place here?" and Cameron tried hard to speak carelessly.

"Of course there is. Are we to have lofty rocks and not their usual tales? You may have heard the quite original tradition in connection with the forget-me-not, the edelweiss, and half-a-dozen other things. In this case it was the button of the lady's glove, or something as valuable. At all events, the devoted one went down, and, of course, in the interests of the narrative, did not come up. If you are very good, I dare say Miss Trent will send something down for you."

"How can you be so absurd, Lancelot?" But the girl's eyes were averted, as she hurried away for her walking attire.

It was in the nature of things that they should be together, for the mountain-path which they sought was only wide enough for two, and the squire's son was by his wife's side. Gertrude spoke but little. Possibly the captain's light words had stirred her strangely, but she was very reserved. And all accustomed as she was to the Welsh hills, her pulses were bounding wildly. The road—it was little more than a track—led under the crest of the mountain; but as they ascended the grassy slope, bordering a torrent dashing below, grew steeper. The herbage disappeared, and only a few scattered ferns, withering before approaching winter, peeped here and there amidst the rocks. Next came a treacherous stretch of loose stone, and then the pass finished on a broad plateau where the rocks in a sheer precipice frowned over a deep sullen little lake.

"This is the spot, Cameron," and his friend's hand pointed downwards to the dark water. "Here, they say, a Welsh chieftain's daughter, I know not how many centuries ago, tested the devotion of one who dared to love her. He was only a poor man, what we should term a 'bad look out' in these days."

"And his fate?"

"Goes without saying," and Captain Marstone turned to join his wife, who had drawn away. "He died like a gentleman. No man ever tried that little scramble and lived. If Miss Trent does anything of that kind, don't you be tempted."

"Perhaps it were best so," murmured Cameron Gray, "if he had loved in vain. If life had grown valueless, why not render it up in such a service?"

"Not so," Gertrude answered with assumed lightness. "Better, I think, to have gone methodically to work, and to have won the prize, if a woman so cruel was worth the winning. Now here is a place where I have always fancied the thing quite possible."

As she spoke the girl moved away lightly from stone to stone.

"Please do not be horrified, Mr. Gray. It is merely theory, not practice. I am not going down;" but she took another step or two.

"Miss Trent, I beg of you come back. It is not safe. See for yourself, the stones are loose here."

"You forget, Mr. Gray, I am used to mountain-climbing, and— Ah!"

It was only a little cry, barely audible, save to him. But he saw her face blanch with a quick fear as the treacherous foothold slipped, and she glided down the declivity, beneath the brow of which lurked certain death.

"Oh, Gertrude, my darling, my darling!" in his terror for her the words seemed to shape themselves. "Throw yourself down, cling to the rock. I am here to help you!"

Before his voice had reached her, Gertrude Trent had regained her presence of mind, and, falling on hands and knees, had stopped her downward progress.

"No, stay there," she cried; "do not peril your life for my folly."

But in an instant he was by her side. His strong hand was clutching at the rock, at the fern-roots—at anything which gave him a hold, and she was safe.

In that wild struggle the arm thrown around her had drawn the girl to him, so close that he could feel her heart beating near his, her warm breath upon his cheek. Now they stood in safety. Lancelot and his wife were hurrying to them, and slowly, reluctantly, he let her go. But ere he released her, with an uncontrollable impulse he bent his head, and his lips touched the hand yet clinging to his. She did not withdraw it. He felt it tremble in his grasp as he spoke again:

"Pardon me, Miss Trent; pardon my wild utterances. It was my heart speaking in the moment of your peril."

"I can forgive much," she whispered, "in one who risked his life for mine."

"Who would have died with you, Gertrude," he cried passionately. "Oh, darling, will you say that he may live for you?"

Gertrude Trent did not say it. She spoke no word, or it was lost in the ringing accents of Captain Marstone.

"Thank goodness you are safe!" he cried; "but don't try it again, Gertrude."

"No, never again," said Cameron with a proud, happy glance. "In future my life is devoted to standing betwixt this dear girl and any danger."

"Oh, it is that way—eh?" and the captain rang out one of his gayest laughs. "Has not the prophet distinguished himself? But enjoy yourselves, ye butterflies, whilst ye may. With the evening cometh sorrow. I suppose Aunt Doolan forgot to name it, her head being full of Rubens and Vandyke, but my revered parent is expected, possibly to-night, and it occurs to me that for some of us a rough time is coming. Shouldn't wonder if the colonel rigged up the halberds and gave us the cat all round."

#### CHAPTER IV.

DINNER—which had not been a very comfortable meal, by reason of repeated incursions of the juveniles, headed by Claude, to say that it was time to commence the feast of tar-barrels, and to demolish Guy Faux—was over. The ladies rose to seek a few wraps, and Aunt Doolan—it was surprising the amount of penetration possessed by that remarkable woman—came over to where Cameron was sitting, and laid her hand on his shoulder.

"I am so glad. Let me congratulate you, Mr. Gray."

"Thank you," the young man stammered, in some confusion. "You mean—that is—"

"I mean," she said, "to congratulate you on winning the love of a dear good girl. And I know no one more worthy of it."

"Hear, hear! to the aforesaid," put in the captain, draining a glass of claret. "I say, aunt, who told you?"

"Foolish boy!" and Miss Doolan's smile was pity. "Does blindness come to those who have loved and suffered? Can the heart not speak its gladness to those who have learned its language only in woe? Again I congratulate you, Mr. Gray, even as I do my brother's ward. Fortune has smiled on Gertrude in many ways, yet with no gift so noble as an honest manly heart."

Miss Doolan finished with a sigh for the departed subaltern, and her nephew broke in with:

"Just what I feel myself"—as Gertrude and the governess

entered—"my sentiments exactly. So I have given my manly heart to Miss Winton. Aunt, will you be a friend to—my wife?"

"What!" cried the lady.

"Nay, you must have known this from the first," he said with adroit flattery. "A heart which has loved and suffered, as yours, dear aunt, must have read our story. I thank you for the delicacy which has kept our secret, and I implore your aid with my father. For it strikes me there is likely to be a considerable row."

As the captain finished, a glow of flame lit up the terraces outside, followed by cheers from the children.

"Strikes me," he said, "we had better join the festive scene, if only to avert mishaps. Mr. Gray and I have both been playing with fire, and burnt our fingers. Come along," taking his wife's arm.

Juveniles have an intense love of noise, and sparks, and fire. And the children of Plas Ennys were no exception. Tired of waiting, they had started the bonfire, and perched the annual victim on the top, with catherine-wheels and Roman-candles fizzing all around his throne.

"Isn't he grand?" cried Claude, aiming a bundle of squibs at long-suffering Guy Faux. "Doesn't he look lovely up there? And won't he go off directly, that's all! He is stuffed full of powder, and crackers, and things, and my cannon well loaded is in the middle of his stomach."

The fire burnt low a moment, then flared up again, and fiery missiles flew in all directions. The children shouted and huzzaed for joy, but startled, shrinking from the din, Gertrude nestled more closely to her betrothed, whilst Lancelot's bride did likewise, and amidst all the uproar, no one heard the grating of wheels on the drive, nor a firm military step upon the gravel.

"Well done, my lads; well done!"

It was the voice, or rather the roar of Colonel Marstone.

"Give it to 'em hot, boys, and— Why, what the —" In moments of strong excitement the colonel used objectionable phrases, and the fire in a brighter blaze showed him Cameron Gray's protecting arm round Gertrude's waist, and Lancelot in a similar pose with "the governess." "What does this mean?"

No one spoke. No one save the principal figure of the evening, and he responded with a roar, drowning the irate colonel's. Claude had said truly. The interior of Guy was a mass of combustibles, and the fire had reached his vitals. There was an immense explosion, which blew poor Guy limb from limb. It scattered the fire in all directions, and filled the air with whizzing fragments of the boy's cannon. Then the arm of Captain Marstone around his wife's waist, trembled an instant, and relaxed its hold. She was slipping from his grasp. He knew it. And even as, with a quick terror, the knowledge came, she was on the ground at his feet.

"Help!" he cried, but his own voice was altered and weak, as he knelt down beside her. "Help! She is dead! Oh, Kate darling! my dear wife, speak to me."

"Eh! What?" roared the old colonel. "Nonsense!" after a brief examination. "It is a mere scratch, and she has fainted. Are you gone off your head, Lancelot? Your wife indeed! What lunacy is this?"

His son looked at him in a dazed bewildered way. He pressed a weak hand to his forehead, and it came away with a dark red stain.

"It is the truth, sir. My wife before all the world. But I cannot tell you now." He reeled a little as he spoke. "I think I am hurt just a trifle myself, father. Will you give me your arm?"

When Lancelot Marstone came to himself, he was in his own room. His head was bandaged up, and many anxious faces and a doctor were beside him. The latter was speaking, but, not heeding him, the young man looked round until his glance fell on his wife, and rested there in contented love, albeit her fair face was somewhat marred by one or two patches of plaster.

"Indeed," said Dr. Jones, "he has had a narrow escape. I am glad to say he will do now. Only a hair's-breadth, and the temporal artery, you know; he might have bled to death."

"Perhaps it would have been better."

There was something of his old carelessness in the words, as Lancelot's gaze met the colonel's clouded brow.

"I have disappointed you, sir, I know, and am by no means sure that I am justified in coming to life. But this I do know—life would be valueless to me without my own sweet wife. Kiss me, dear, and then go, and if—if he will let you, kiss my father."

If he would let her! As a matter of fact, the old martinet was powerless to help it. Few could have resisted that pleading wistful glance. And the pressure of those warm lips upon his withered cheek brought back some early memories of his own youth, and touched his heart. But he could not capitulate all at once.

"I think I had a right to be consulted," with lingering sternness.

"Yes, sir, and I ask your pardon," with ready alacrity. "But I

feared you would not consent, and I could not have lived without my Kate."

"The world seems turned topsy-turvy," growled the master of Plas Ennys. "Young people do just as they please nowadays, and old ones are to meet with naught but disappointments. Here I go to Scotland, and never see a single deer's antler, and come back—my sister-in-law has told me all about it—to find my son married, and my ward engaged to—to"—with anything but satisfaction—"to an artist—a man who paints pictures. I don't care for pictures."

"And I am sure my friend Cameron Gray meets your views there," put in his son with a mocking smile. "No one is expected to care for his."

"My dear colonel," and Aunt Doolan's hand sealed the "dear colonel's" lips, "Mr. Gray follows the noblest pursuit life has to offer. What are we without the refining influences of art? Is it not the one thing to reconcile us to this world of sorrows, where even our brightest joys are shadowed by tears? I have loved, I have suffered;" and Aunt Doolan's hand touched her brooch. "Let us avert such agony from these young hearts."

"Bosh!" said the unsympathetic colonel.

"And Cameron is going to paint a grand historical picture," said Lancelot. "It will represent two happy couples—the happiest in all the world—and standing over them, like their guardian angel, Colonel Marstone, bestowing his forgiveness and a blessing. Further, the artist will infuse into the face of the principal figure a fixed intention of paying his son's debts, and——"

"Bosh!" roared the colonel again, as abruptly he left them.

No, he was not quite gone. The old soldier came back and kissed Cameron's betrothed and his son's wife, and went without a word.

They knew the victory was won then.

"And I rather think," observed Lancelot, "that we have pulled through pretty well. He took his change out of this nasty cut. Still, Guy Faux has certainly helped us in telling the colonel."

## My Maiden's Smile.

WITH a smile upon her features  
I met her first of all,  
As in gay and graceful measure  
She tripped adown the hall;  
And as I looked upon her,  
Love stole atwixt us twain;  
And coyly, coyly blushing,  
She looked, and smiled again.

Her smile lit up my pathway;  
It brightened dullest days;  
It shed a golden halo  
O'er all earth's dreary ways.  
True, as she learned life's darker side,  
More tremulously sweet  
And pensive did that winning smile  
Her lover's coming greet.

Then came, alas! an evening,  
In springtide; coming late,  
No smile was there to greet me  
Behind the garden-gate.  
But in her little chamber,  
Where woodbine clammers fair  
Athwart the opened casement,  
I found her lying there.

No motion stirred her features,  
Composed in snowy grace;  
And not for earthly lover  
That smile upon her face!  
But as the earthly dawning  
Stole o'er the dew-bathed sod,  
Weary of earthly sunshine,  
She lay in the smile of God.

## His Own Guest.

(A SERIAL STORY.)

### CHAPTER XXII.

It really was like old times at Meredith Court. Instead of the usual quiet, there was an infinity of bustle, people coming and going continually, messages and telegrams arriving every few minutes, and everywhere there existed the excitement which an election always brings in its train.

It was, indeed, like old times, the times of Sir Charles's grandfather, but there was no one now in the house who could remember them except old Watts. Even he did not find it easy to realise that



Meredith was again striving to gain a seat in Parliament; ever since the day at Mr. Pennington's he had been in a very strange state. The excitement of meeting his beloved young master had been too much for him, and his brain, already enfeebled by his great age, seemed likely now to give way entirely. He was painfully subject to lapses of memory; he would totter about the house mumbling to himself mysteriously, then again for a time he would be himself again, and attend to his duties with his former care and exactitude.

Of course all this made Gordon excessively anxious. He was afraid that Watts might unintentionally let slip something which would arouse suspicion. No one had heard, as far as he could discover, what the old man said as he fell down in his fainting-fit, but there was every fear that Gordon's secret might be discovered through the butler's garrulity.

"I'm getting quite afraid," said Gordon to Pennington one day. "Do you think that any of the other servants have heard him mumbling?"

"No; I spoke to Watts yesterday," was the reply, "he was enjoying one of his lucid intervals, and I impressed on him that he must not mention his young master on any account. The worst of it is that now he goes about looking exactly as if he had some weighty secret on his mind."

"I must chance it," said Gordon, "but I don't mean this kind of thing to go on much longer. I've been in the house more than a week, and am no nearer my object than when I came."

"To gain an entrance here is no mean success," said Mr. Pennington.

"But I feel uncomfortable," said Gordon with a touch of testiness in his tone. "What right have I to come to a man's house and accept his hospitality, when all the time I am waiting for a chance of turning him out?"

"What right?" echoed his friend; "the best right in the world. The whole place is yours, and in accepting his hospitality you are in reality extending yours to him."

"I'm not so sure about that," returned Gordon. "How can the place belong to me when I can't claim it?"

"You will be able to do so before long, I'm sure."

"In the meantime I am standing on a volcano. If that poor old Watts lets a word slip, I'm discovered at once; if that cad of a Skooter chooses to be unpleasant, he can show at once that I am not the man I pretend to be. By Heaven, it's humiliating to the last degree!"

Mr. Pennington did not make any further attempt to pacify him. This was not the first conversation they had had on the subject since the memorable day, a fortnight ago, when Gordon made himself known.

Gordon's progress in the good-will of the inhabitants of the Court had been of the most marked character. Sir Charles trusted him to the utmost extent; and feeling that he owed his guest every possible return for his kindness in the matter of the election, he did all that lay in his power to make his visit a pleasant one. Lady Meredith was positively infatuated with him; she recognised in him a powerful and talented mind, tested by varied experiences, ready for every emergency. Lacking all her life a counsellor and friend whom she could trust, she felt singularly attracted towards a man who seemed to be as good-natured as he was experienced, and who in addition was a good friend to her son.

And she needed a friend. The election was perhaps not the greatest of her cares. Charles, in spite of his anxiety in the matter of his candidature, or perhaps because of it, had of late made his affection for Mary Ray much more visible to the world. His mother had noticed it several times during the past fortnight. She was ready to acknowledge that a great deal of the attention her son paid to Mary was expressive merely of that regard for her which he had shown from childhood. But there was something more than that visible now; and her ladyship had now on her shoulders the task of persuading her son to relinquish his intentions as regards Mary, whilst at the same time she felt that on her rested chiefly the blame in the matter.

One thing was certain—they must be rendered impossible, and at once. Lady Meredith endeavoured to acknowledge that her attempt to induce Charles to marry Miss Pennington was a failure, though were Mary out of the way, that project might be revived at some future time. She had not seen much of Edith during the past few days, though they had been under the same roof; engaged in the multifarious duties devolving on the hostess of a candidate's house, she had not enjoyed many opportunities of noting how her new friend Mr. Gordon was not often absent from Edith's side.

There was no time to be lost. Charles's behaviour to Mary in the drawing-room on the previous evening could bear but one interpretation. He was conscious that his mother was watching him, and, as if in defiance of her looks, acted towards Mary as if he had been her suitor.

Lady Meredith had been silent on the subject next day, to her son's surprise. She had her plan, and to involve herself in a conflict with Charles was not part of it.

When she had assured herself that all the gentlemen had left the house on election business, she sent for Mary, who soon joined her in her room.

Mary saw at once that something serious was about to occur. Her heart fluttered, she felt a lump rise in her throat, and she could scarcely command her voice sufficiently to ask, "You wish to see me?"

"Yes, my dear; sit down. I want to speak to you on a painful subject. Don't think I mean to be unkind."

"I should be the last to think that," said Mary; "I have had too many instances of your kindness."

"I have tried to act as a mother to you," went on Lady Meredith; "I have brought you up as if you were my own child. But now I am almost sorry you ever came to the house."

"Why do you say that? What have I done?" cried Mary excitedly.

"Calm yourself, I meant no reflection on you; it is an unfortunate affair—most unfortunate, but I do not blame you. I must speak now, before it is too late. Mary, you are in love with my son, and he fancies he loves you."

"Has he told you so?" asked Mary quickly.

"No; but his conduct compels me to think so. What have you to say?"

"Nothing," was the reply.

"Nothing?"

"No; until he tells me he loves me, which he has not yet done, I have no standpoint. When he has, it will be time enough to consider what to do."

"Mary," said Lady Meredith quickly, "this is not enough. You must promise me you will not accept him if he is mad enough to propose to you."

"Why should I promise you?" asked Mary, with a touch of disdain in her voice.

"Why? Because to me you owe everything."

"There is no need to remind me of that; when you give a beggar a sixpence you may be quite sure he thinks more of it than you do."

"Then do you think you are acting a generous part in what you are doing? If he marries you, he is ruined; you know that as well as I do. You know how the estate is impoverished, how we are straitened for lack of money; that this election will absolutely cripple us. Charles must marry a rich wife; he owes it not only to himself, but to all of us. You must promise me you will refuse him; it is for his sake I ask it—the first favour I have ever asked you."

It can easily be imagined that Mary did not hear this appeal unmoved. Lady Meredith had put succinctly that which had been in her own mind for months. She had often felt as Charles talked to her that there must come an end to her pleasant dream; that marriage between them was out of consideration. But she had always refused to consider the question of their marriage; she had no right to do so till he had spoken. Besides, the dream was so pleasant; why should she hasten the awakening, however inevitable it might be?

Now the awakening had come, and she must face facts.

Lady Meredith watched the poor girl as the tears gradually rose to her eyes. She was genuinely sorry for her, but the welfare of her son demanded that she should say what she had.

It was some time before Mary spoke. When she did her voice was steady, and she had gained the outward calm which results from a definite resolution.

"Yes, I will refuse him," she said, "if he asks me to marry him. It is for his sake I shall do it. You love your son, and you have often shown what sacrifices you can make for him. I, too, love him; I will show too that I can sacrifice myself for his sake. I will not drag him down to poverty."

"Bless you, my dear!" cried Lady Meredith, throwing her arms round her neck and kissing her. "You have lifted a load off my mind. Forgive me the pain I have caused you. I could not help it."

"I must ask you something now," said Mary. "I cannot stay here any longer; I could not live under the same roof with him, seeing him every day. Where can I go? Can you get me a place somewhere?"

"A place!" cried Lady Meredith. "You must not think of that. I have arranged all that for you; in a day or two you shall go on a visit to Lady Harker for a few weeks; she wants you to go, and will be charmed to have you. After that we shall see what can be done."

Mary silently assented, and soon afterwards went to her own room. There she was able to give way to the grief which filled her heart.

"It is cruel," she said to herself; "he will think me coquettish, a flirt, with no heart, and I must try and appear so, and never let him know I love him. Oh, if I could only let him know, I could bear the parting better!"

## CHAPTER XXIII.

GORDON did not find his visit to his old home an altogether pleasant one. Leaving out of the question the fact that at any moment a bombshell might explode under his feet, he did not at all relish the position he was in.

He found, on going through the town, that the people who twenty years ago had known him as well as they knew their own children, had entirely forgotten him. This increased his security, and he was so far glad of it, but yet he could not help feeling irritated to find his personality so ignored; then he became vexed at his own unreasonableness, and wished that he had never come near the town.

The morning of Lady Meredith's interview with Mary, Gordon rose early to take a solitary ramble round the old place which had been so dear to him as a boy. He slipped out of the house and took a short cut through the grounds, which would have betrayed a suspicious knowledge of them had anybody been at hand to notice it.

"Hallo!" he mentally ejaculated as he reached the end of the lawn; "what's become of the pond? Has it been filled up?"

Apparently it had; not a sign remained of the water on which, as a child, he used to sail his boats, and even venture himself in a tub abstracted from the laundry.

Nor was this the only change. The stables were altered; the yew hedge had had its old-fashioned eccentricities of shape subdued; the disposition of the beds was altogether changed.

"I'm a stranger here," thought Gordon somewhat bitterly. "Everything is changed. The house, with its new paper and new furniture, is not like the same place, and out here it is worse. Why did I come home?"

Why, indeed? He wandered on through the fruit garden till he reached the spot where formerly stood the avenue with its colony of rooks. How well he remembered the day when his father let him understand beneath those branches that Clara Berthon might become Lady Meredith.

He started as he opened the door in the high brick wall surrounding the garden. The avenue was gone; not a tree remained.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed, "have they come to cutting the timber? My father would sooner have sold the place than sacrificed the avenue. Poor Charlie! I expect that's his mother's doing."

Gordon did not care to pursue his ramble; he had had enough. He turned to go back to the house, wishing almost that he had never returned from America.

"Why did I come back?" he once more asked himself. But that question was driven away by another: "Why do I stay?"

There was only one answer to be made to that. He knew well enough why he lingered about Meredith Court in spite of the changed place and the false position he was in. He could not leave it unless Edith Pennington accompanied him.

Why should she not? She must have perceived that he admired her, yet she did not repel him. She was no coquette; she would not have let him say what he had said if she had intended him to say no more.

He had resolved, when first he felt her attraction growing too strong for him, that he would make no sign, give no hint of his admiration, till he had cleared his name from the stain on it. But now he began to reconsider that decision; in fact, he had already unintentionally acted contrary to it.

To begin with, there seemed no chance of proving his innocence. Was he to give up his chance of happiness because of a false accusation?

Then Edith was absolutely without suspicion as to his identity. Surely he was not bound to reveal himself unless he liked. That was a matter for her father and himself to decide. Perhaps after betrothal he might reveal himself, but not till he had had time to prove himself incapable of such a deed as that of which he was accused.

He was revolving these and other arguments in his mind when his thoughts were interrupted by the sound of firm footsteps approaching him.

"Good-morning, cap," said a voice which Gordon hated to hear. "Having a look round the old place?"

There was no one whom Gordon would not sooner have met than his old acquaintance. He merely nodded good-morning and turned towards the house.

"Nice place, isn't it?" pursued the colonel, who seemed to imagine it impossible that he could be in the way.

"Yes," answered Gordon shortly.

"Pity that Sir Charles don't know what to do with it. I'd never

keep so much land lying waste around it if it were mine; and he's so short he can scarcely make both ends meet."

"I don't think Sir Charles's private affairs are any business of ours," remarked Gordon.

"I shouldn't have got on much if I hadn't poked my nose into other people's private affairs," said the colonel with a smile. "I shouldn't wonder if I get a finger in this business some day."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I see my way to making a good offer for the place as it stands. Run a branch railway near it, let out some of these fields for building, with a little land to each house, and you'll find that plenty of people from Brightholme will come here after business; it's only a fifteen-mile run. When this election affair is over, I mean to talk to Sir Charles."

"I don't think you had better," remarked Gordon.

"Why not?"

"I don't think Sir Charles would take your offer."

"I can try, I suppose. Of course I shouldn't tell him I meant cutting up the property."

"He ought to know it, I think."

"I don't; and you won't tell him, of course?"

"Why of course?" asked Gordon.

"Because it wouldn't be very wise of you," replied the colonel meaningly. "It strikes me we both have a little game to play here. I don't ask questions about yours; you had better hold your tongue about mine."

Gordon bit his lip; he could have kicked his companion with pleasure. He resolved that it should not be long before he placed himself out of the power of this vulgar speculator.

Probably he would have made an angry retort to the colonel's last observation, but at that moment he caught sight of Edith and Mary crossing the lawn.

The colonel saw them too.

"Let's go and meet the girls," he suggested. "You aren't a very pleasant companion this morning. There's a pleasanter one coming; that little Miss Ray is a perfect little beauty."

Gordon silently acquiesced in his suggestion, and in a few minutes they joined the ladies. Naturally, Gordon paired off with Edith, leaving Mary and the colonel together.

This was not quite what Mary wished. She had not yet had her interview with Lady Meredith, and had come out this morning in the hope that Charles would join her.

However, the colonel was very well suited and did his best to improve the occasion. He had taken a strong fancy to Miss Ray since Lady Meredith had shown him so plainly that any hope of ingratiating himself with her was out of the question. He knew that Mary was poor, but he was rich enough not to let that drawback have much weight.

He tried hard to amuse and dazzle Mary by extravagant accounts of his possessions and powers; however, the only result was, that Mary was disgusted at his egotism and repelled by his outspoken admiration. She could not, however, very well be rude to him, knowing that his aid was necessary for her lover's election.

She was not aware that Lady Meredith was closely watching them from a window, nor that Charles, who had been on the point of stealing out to meet her, drew back in annoyance when he saw who was her companion.

Meanwhile, Edith and Gordon had the pleasantest of strolls till it was time to seek the house for breakfast. Perhaps the pleasantest time of a courtship is the few days before a proposal. Both feel it to be inevitable, but both have the pleasant consciousness of possessing an unavowed secret. Gordon was convinced that at last, after his knockabout life, happiness was in store for him; that, whatever might be the result of his visit home, it could not but end well as far as he was concerned, if only Edith would give him her love. And of that he now had firm hope.

Before they went in he had resolved to seek her father at the earliest opportunity. He felt that in the peculiar position in which he stood, it was his duty to speak to him first, before making any avowal.

During the afternoon news arrived of some importance. It was rumoured that Dolby, the rival candidate, contemplated resignation in view of the unexpected strength of the Meredith party. This was glad tidings to Charles, and he lost no time in seeking out Mary to share his pleasure with her.

He caught sight of her in the conservatory, and at once hastened to join her. To his surprise and annoyance he saw her glance at him and then walk hastily to the door, where Colonel Skooter was standing smoking a long cigar.

What could it mean? Charles was ignorant of the interview between his mother and Mary, so he had no choice but to explain her flight by her desire not to be seen with him openly after what had occurred the previous night.

"I can't stand this," he said to himself, as he turned discon-



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solately away. "I know my mother wishes me to marry a rich girl, but I must marry Mary. It's no good beating about the bush any longer. I won't be treated as a child and have a wife found for me. Why, there isn't a man on the place who can't choose his own wife, and am I to be worse off than a carter?"

He had felt considerable surprise all day that his mother had not sent for him. He knew she must have noticed his attentions to Mary on the previous evening. She was much too keen-eyed to let it escape her. Hitherto he had avoided anything like a lover's demeanour in her presence; then he had purposely assumed it.

He was walking aimlessly through the hall when he saw Lady Meredith approaching.

"Come to my room, Charles," she said; "I want to speak to you."

Charles obeyed, conscious that the deferred conversation must now take place.

"You don't look very happy, my boy," she said fondly. "Are you over-anxious about this election?"

"No, mother; everything's going as well as it can. There isn't much doubt of my return, I should think, thanks chiefly to Gordon. He's worked like a horse. What a splendid fellow he is!"

This was a subject on which Lady Meredith could cordially agree with him.

"Yes; he is the soul of good-nature. We owe him a deep debt of gratitude. But what is on your mind, Charles? You have seemed very anxious about something or other the last day or two."

Charles hesitated for a moment.

"You know what it is, mother," he said suddenly. "It's no good beating about the bush. I want to win the election, but I shan't care two straws about it unless I can win Mary as well. I love her, and have loved her ever since I can remember. You must have seen it, mother; if not before, at all events, during the last day or two."

Lady Meredith went to him and took his hand.

"My poor boy!" she murmured.

"Poor boy!" echoed Charles. "Why?"

"You will find out only too soon. You were quite right in thinking that I saw your love for Mary, and you know, too, I was grieved. You have not judged her rightly; she has misled you, I am afraid."

"Do you mean she does not love me?" asked Sir Charles incredulously.

"It is not for me to say. I will only remind you that she knows the state of your finances, and that possibly she may prefer the riches of the colonel to anything you can offer her."

"The colonel!" he exclaimed contemptuously, yet not without a touch of uneasiness.

"He is very rich," remarked Lady Meredith carelessly.

"I have had enough of this!" exclaimed Sir Charles. "I will propose to Mary to-day. I should never have postponed it so long had it not been for the fear of grieving you, mother."

"My dear boy, you know I should have preferred your marrying some one who could have helped to re-establish your position. I always thought," she added meaningly, "that you had a liking for Edith Pennington."

"So I have; I think very highly of her."

"I am sure she loves you," said his mother.

"Nonsense, mother!"

"No, it is not. Ah, if you could only marry her, you would make me happy and yourself too."

"If Mary did not exist, very likely I might fall in love with Edith; but I can't now," said Charles.

"Suppose that Mary refuses you; would you propose to Edith then?"

Sir Charles laughed. "I hope she won't refuse me," he said.

"But if she does? Will you promise in that case?"

"I'll do anything you like, mother. I'm so glad to find you don't object to my asking Mary to be my wife."

"Mind, my boy, I have your promise," said Lady Meredith as she kissed him.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

"I suppose," said Mr. Pennington to Gordon after dinner, as they sat alone—"I suppose that her ladyship has no idea that you are the returned prodigal?"

"Not the slightest. We get on very well together—excellently, in fact. But she doesn't love you, I think. Why is that?"

"Because I refused to help her in the matter of your reappearance."

"I was afraid that was the reason. She shows a wonderful disposition to make me her chief adviser; she has made me the confidant of various more or less important secrets. She's going to speak to me this evening about something or other."

"About your own letter, perhaps?"

"I hope not. I wouldn't have written it had I known the state of affairs."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this: that I've made up my mind not to do anything."

"Not to try and recover your property?"

"No; why should I? To begin with, it would stir up the unpleasant subject of that cheque. Now at present the only two people in the world who know that Tom Meredith is alive are you and old Watts. Both of you believe me innocent; so your knowledge of my existence doesn't matter to me."

"You actually think of retiring without a struggle?" asked the astonished Mr. Pennington.

"Yes; what should I gain? I am well off—rich, if you like—and from what I see, the Court would not bring much wealth to me if I got it. Then I find my brother installed, believing himself the lawful owner of everything. He is the best of fellows. I've an immense admiration for him. Why should I turn him out? I've had time to forgive my stepmother for the bad turn she played me; let her live on here and enjoy herself. Yes, I give up the fight."

"And where do you think of going?" was the natural question.

"That I have not decided on; perhaps it may not depend on me alone."

Mr. Pennington looked up enquiringly.

Gordon laid down his cigar and spoke very seriously to tell "I mean, sir, that I love Edith, and want your permission to tell her so. You say you believe me innocent; prove it by letting me marry your daughter. All my happiness depends on her answer; I don't insist on my risking a refusal by forcing me to tell her who I am yet; let me leave that till I have had a little time to show her that I am an unfortunate man, but not a bad one."

Mr. Pennington held out his hand.

"I have always trusted you, Tom. I have forgotten, and you have grown out of your youthful follies; take Edith if you will, and I hope you will find that she is not unwilling to have you. As Tom Gordon or Tom Meredith, is indifferent to me."

As Mr. Pennington finished, the coffee was brought in, and Sir Charles and the colonel lounged in from the balcony, where they had been enjoying a cigarette. A few minutes afterwards they all entered the drawing-room.

Anything was preferable to Mary to sitting near Charles, and suffering the torture of hearing him speak. The colonel placed himself near her, and Charles, repressing his jealousy, began to talk to Edith.

Lady Meredith took the first opportunity of getting Tom into a corner, and carrying on a whispered conversation.

"Mr. Gordon, you have been so kind in other matters, I am bold enough to ask one more favour from you."

"It is the best reward I could ask for anything I have been able to do," was Gordon's gallant reply.

"Thank you. My son has, I am grieved to say, formed an attachment with Miss Ray, who is utterly unsuited to be his wife, as she is poor, and Charles must marry money. I appear very mercenary to you, I'm afraid."

"I'm aware the estate is encumbered," said Tom.

"Yes, we must have money; it is a necessity. Charles must give up Mary, and marry an heiress."

"An heiress in general, or one in particular?"

"One in particular; a charming girl, besides the advantage her fortune is. He is talking with her now."

Tom started.

"Miss Pennington?"

"Yes. It is true he might reasonably have looked higher; but we must sacrifice future ambition to present necessity. She is a nice girl, is she not?"

"Oh, certainly," rejoined Tom.

"There is nothing to object to in her as a wife?"

"Nothing," acquiesced Tom. "I should be the last to think she would not make a perfect wife."

"Then will you speak to my son about it? Just a quiet hint, you know. He thinks so very highly of you; you have such influence over him, you can talk to him so much more freely than I can."

"I will certainly interest myself in the matter," said Gordon warmly, and there is no doubt he meant what he said. "A nice revelation for a man who is on the point of proposing himself!" he thought.

Lady Meredith was not sparing of her thanks, and expressed her content at having so able and willing an adviser as he had proved himself to be. Gordon waited to hear some hint about his own letter, but she did not seem inclined to let any fall.

When, a short time afterwards, some of the company made a move to the terrace, to enjoy a moonlight stroll, Gordon found himself alone by Edith's side. The opportunity was a good one. However, Edith began the conversation.

"You seemed to be having an agreeable *tête-à-tête* with Lady Meredith?"

"Good," thought Gordon, "there was a touch of jealousy in that. Yes," he said aloud, "we had a pleasant subject."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; you."

"I? Well?"

"We were talking of your marriage. Lady Meredith wants Sir Charles to marry you. You must forgive my answering your question. Don't you think it would be a good match?"

"For which of us?" she asked.

"For both."

"It is very kind of you to interest yourself in my affairs," replied Edith in a tone which implied that his interference was not altogether welcome.

"I can't help doing so. I only wish you could interest yourself in mine."

Edith drew herself up and looked him full in the face.

"So I do, Sir Thomas Meredith," she said in firm tones.

Gordon started in dismay.

"You know me? Has Mr. Pennington told you?"

"No; I found it out for myself. I heard what Watts said, as he fainted at our house; I had my suspicions before. But why do you look so agitated? Are you afraid I shall let your secret be known?"

"I am afraid, I confess; but not of that. You know my story—you know I was forced to fly the country; you find me here now under a false name, unable to own who I am—do you not shrink from me?"

"Shrink from you?" repeated Edith. She placed her hand in his.

"Edith," said Tom passionately, "I have proved a bungler at deception; I will practise it no longer with you at least. I love you; I had intended not to confess it yet, at least not as the outcast I am. Can you love me, knowing what I am?"

"Surely," she said softly, "I should not be worthy of love if I waited till all was smooth and pleasant before casting in my lot with yours."

"But I am going away; I cannot live here. Will you go with me?"

"Anywhere in the world," she whispered. Tom drew her to his breast in a passionate embrace.

Suddenly he drew himself free.

"No," he exclaimed, "I will not ask it. What a wretch I am! Do you think I will accept your love under such conditions? No; I will free myself from this accusation, I will hold up my head before all the world, before I ask you to be my wife. Forgive me, that in my selfish love for you I have acted unworthily, almost dishonourably. I will stay, and before long the world shall know that Tom Meredith is still alive!"

(To be continued.—Commented in No. 124.)

## Ebb-Tide.

THE lapsing water leaves my feet,  
So softly, scarce I hear it go;  
Across its breathing, calm and sweet,  
The sunshine burns intense and low:  
Oh, mournfullest of sweet, sad things—  
The level sand, the level sea,  
The last and level light that clings  
So wildly and so wistfully!

## Arnold.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER I.

SHE came to us, and a light shone into my darkened life; a star rose and beamed upon me that had never before brightened my pathway. It was in this wise.

My mother and I lived together in Glasgow—not that we were Scotch; we belonged to a younger branch of an old and wealthy English family, but the loss of nearly the whole of our property had led to our taking up our permanent abode there—and had so lived for some years, ever since I came home from my travels. At the time when my story begins we occupied a "flat" in one of the widest and handsomest streets, and my mother, who was old and somewhat infirm, found considerable diversion in sitting at the window and looking out at the busy throngs that everywhere crowd that bustling northern city.

Mine had been a lonely life, bright and prosperous sometimes, and at other times dark and lowering; but neither in prosperity nor misfortune had I ever had a real friend to share my hopes and fears, or a woman's tender love to lighten my way. Since an early disappointment, which had embittered a disposition naturally reserved and melancholy, I had met with no one whose love I had cared to win, though yet I was strongly, often sadly, conscious of the great want of my life, so that it came to pass that at close upon forty I was still alone in the world, with the exception of my mother.

I and my brother Miles, who was six years my senior, had travelled a great deal together in former days; we had had many adventures, and had spent several years on the North African coast, where, after our knocking about the world, and endurance of almost incredible dangers and hardships, fortune seemed suddenly to smile upon us, and in but a short time we had amassed a considerable property, with which we returned home, he to England, where he married and settled down, I to Scotland and my mother, who had lived there upon the little that had remained to us ever since she became a widow, fifteen years before.

I was four-and-thirty when I joined her, and nearly six years passed on quietly and uneventfully. I was occupied a good deal at my office—I had become a partner in a large manufacturing firm, for our present circumstances, though easy, hardly admitted of a life of idleness; nor, indeed, did I desire it—and my mother knitted and dreamt the hours away, living, as she aged do, chiefly in the past.

We were contented and cheerful, in a quiet, dull sort of way—how dull I did not know until afterwards, when I looked back upon my colourless life and pitied myself. I was proud and sensitive to a degree. I had felt my misfortunes infinitely more than my more matter-of-fact brother was capable of doing. My early rebuff, together with the galling poverty through which I had afterwards passed, had chafed me sorely, had made a bitter disappointed man of me—had, for the time, crushed out life and hope from my heart. When at last prosperity came, it failed to cheer me, or to impart fresh life to my dead hopes. It was better to eat than to starve, and the handsome rooms which my mother and I now occupied were a decided improvement upon no lodging at all, as had often been the case; but that was all. I could take no actual pleasure in our improved circumstances.

We had a few friends and acquaintances round us, but I was a reserved man, and slow at making friends; and though I found a little mingling in society cheering at times, it was powerless to brighten my gloomy and saddened mood. But all this lies in the far past—a past that seems so strange and sad to me now that it is hard to believe it ever existed.

My brother Miles had married a widow with one daughter, whom he had soon learnt to look upon as his own. They had had no other family, and two years later his wife had died, after which he and his step-daughter had continued to live on together in the same suburb of London where he had met and married her mother. He had paid us two short visits during those years, but on neither occasion did he bring his step-daughter with him; and I went once to London, but she was away on a visit at the time, and so it came about that we had never met.

Her name was Richenda Todd—a strange, ugly name it sounded to my ear, but when I heard my brother speak of her as "Dickie," I thought it the prettiest, sweetest little abbreviation ever contrived out of an unattractive, far-fetched name.

Just as I entered my fortieth year Miles had an offer to go out to Egypt on very advantageous terms, which offer he was anxious to accept, if possible. The climate would be trying, but he was accustomed to it, and to the natives and their ways, and he felt that he was peculiarly adapted to such a post. My brother was a man of great energy and practical experience—a far finer man than myself, both physically and mentally. He was eminently business-like, with all his faculties on the alert, and if sometimes, in his matter-of-fact, wide-awake march through the world, he missed the beautiful and poetical sides of the various pictures presented to his gaze, he gained instead a substantial and lasting benefit which most men would consider much to be preferred to the dreams and fancies in which I was in the habit of indulging.

When we received his letter, telling us of the appointment which had been offered him, and that his only difficulty lay in disposing of his step-daughter, we were delighted at the solution of this problem which he went on to suggest. He knew the quiet life we led, and he seemed to fear that in proposing she should come to live with us he might be imposing a great burden upon my mother and me. He little knew—we ourselves did not know, until the idea was suggested to us—how welcome a bright young girl would be in our quiet home—quiet to dulness generally, in spite of the roar of the city streets without and the surging tide of busy human life which surrounded us.

My mother's face brightened up at once.

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"Let her come as soon as he wishes," she said, "the sooner the better. Miles's little daughter will be like a sunbeam about the house. I used to long for a little girl of my own, but God did not see fit to grant me my prayer. Now I shall have a granddaughter, and you, Arnold, a niece to take care of."

As for me, my brother's half-hesitating proposition had softened me and opened my long closed heart in a way that surprised even myself. I had scarcely been conscious of how I had yearned for family ties and affections of my own until this charge was offered to us—this daughter of my brother's wife, whom I might love and care for as he had done, whom it would be my duty to protect, my pleasure to please. My heart leaped within me at the thought.

"I am afraid it will be a dull home for her—" I began, but my mother would not hear me out.

"Not at all," she said with more energy than she had exhibited for a long time; "we will see that she is well amused, and she has been used to a quiet life with Miles. There are the Crichtons, you know—"

"Too old for a girl of eighteen," I put in, trying to cast a shadow over the bright prospect that had suddenly opened upon us.

"And you can take her out to see the shops, and museums, and galleries," continued my mother, without deigning to notice my interruption. "I cannot go far, but you and she will entertain one another well."

I thought the same objection applied to me as to the friends whom my mother had mentioned, and her next words showed that the idea had struck her, though in a different way.

"She will do you good, Arnold," she pursued; "you are getting too silent and thoughtful, always shut up with an old woman like me. She will be a blessing to both of us."

So I wrote to Miles, and the dear old mother was very happy and busy trotting about and helping to get Dickie's room ready, for she was to come at once. And a week later she arrived, Miles accompanying her, partly to act as an escort, and partly to say good-bye to us. I met them at the station, and was decidedly disappointed when I was introduced to my "niece," as she was by courtesy if not by actual relationship. My mother and I had decided that she must be very pretty, very sweet, very charming altogether; but I saw only a small ordinary-looking figure enveloped in a brown ulster, with a cap to match, underneath which was a small, pale, weary face, with hazel eyes, and almost colourless lips. I spoke kindly to her, however, and asked her if she were very tired, to which she scarcely replied; and then Miles told me that she was very faint and weary, and had suffered from severe headache during the whole of the journey.

In ten minutes more we were rattling over the stones in a rickety four-wheeler, between the tall blocks that lifted their blackened roofs amid the city smoke. She lay back in the corner of the cab, looking so still and white, that I thought she had swooned, and was just going to call Miles's attention when she opened her eyes wide and looked straight at me. Finding me looking at her, she smiled—a lovely, frank smile that transfigured her face and pierced my sad old heart with a strange, faint pang, half of pleasure, half of pain. I smiled back at her, and after that I knew we should be friends.

She seemed to rouse a little then, and leaning back in her corner, she surveyed the hurrying throngs with a sort of wistful content.

"I hope you will like Glasgow," I said to her presently, leaning forward to make my voice heard above the rush and roar of the streets and the rattle of our own vehicle in particular—I was sitting on the front seat.

"I am sure I shall," she said, smiling. "It is just like London."

"You like London, then?"

"Oh yes! I never thought I could be content to live anywhere else, but this seems so much like it that I shall scarcely know the difference."

"Yes, she's a thorough little cockney, is Dickie," remarked Miles in his eminently business-like manner. "She was born in the parish of St. Botolph—"

"Within sound of Bow bells, you know," she put in, smiling a little wearily.

"And has always been a City child to the core," he went on. "She never cared for the country when she was in it, but always wanted to go to the town and see the people and the shops, and now well, you would think she had seen people and shops enough to last her a lifetime, but she hasn't."

"That comes of being born within the magic circle," said I, searching in her face for that beautiful smile which so transfigured its pale weariness.

"Yes," she acquiesced. "Were you?"

"I had that inexpressible honour," I replied, half-lightly, half-

"Honour! Pshaw! As if it could make any difference!" commented Miles with a deep scorn that was no doubt intensified by his consciousness of the fact that his own birth had taken place in one of the most insignificant villages of that tiniest county of England, Rutlandshire. "Dick's head is full of nonsensical notions," he continued—not unkindly, however. "I hope you will succeed in curing her of a few of them, Arnold, in your leisure hours."

Her eyes and mine met in another silent smile. And that was how my darling came to me.

We usually dined at six, but the meal had been put off on that day until our travellers should arrive, and tea had been added to it, chiefly on Dickie's account. When we met at the table, the change in her was wonderful. With the dust of travel washed from her face, her skin looked delicately pale rather than faded, as it had at first appeared to me; her light brown hair clustered and curled about her forehead in pretty fluffy irregularity that was yet consistent with her perfect neatness, and by the time a steaming cup of my mother's tea had sent the pink into her cheeks and the light to her eyes, my opinion of her had undergone a considerable change. She had a very winning voice, and her speech was so deliciously naive, the play of her features so piquant, that I found myself continually watching her.

"She is looking better," my brother observed presently; he showed great solicitude for his step-daughter in his matter-of-fact way, though he never seemed to bestow a caress or a word of affection upon her, while to such minor beauties as a soft voice and a rapidly-changing expression he was deaf and blind. "She will be quite herself when she has had a good night's rest. She is never very strong, and the journey has been fatiguing even to me in this heat."

Then she was not "herself" yet, I mused. Would she be prettier still to-morrow? Was she like the enchanted princess in the fairy story, whose beauty waxed and waned with the waxing and waning of the moon, until the prince's kiss broke the spell? I sat watching the face opposite me, and dreaming, while the conversation around me ran chiefly on business matters. My brother was well pleased with the home he had secured for his charge, and congratulated himself upon being able to leave Dickie in our hands.

"I shall feel as easy about her as if she were at home with me," he said.

"I hope you will," my mother replied, looking affectionately at the girl whom she had taken to her arms and her heart at the same moment. "I am sure I shall love her, and do my best to make her happy, and Arnold will not be behind. He was delighted at the idea of having a dear little niece to take care of."

I looked at Dickie as my mother said this, and she glanced up at me. Again we exchanged that silent comprehending smile. We had not said many words to one another, and yet each seemed to know and understand the other perfectly.

It was late before we separated, tired though the travellers were; there was so much to be talked over, and so little time to say it in, as Miles was to take the ten o'clock express to Liverpool the next morning, from whence he would sail, without returning to London.

"Mother is looking well," remarked Miles to me, pausing a moment in the doorway after she had gone away, carrying Dickie along with her to the pretty room she had prepared for her. "And you too—you don't seem to grow a day older. Don't go spoiling that child, Arnold," he went on. "I expect nothing of the mother, she is evidently infatuated already. But you are a man, and have some common-sense to counteract that, I hope."

"I will look after her," I answered half-absently. And I fear I somewhat startled my brother by my next words. "Do you think her pretty?"

"Pretty!" he repeated, staring at me. "I don't know, I'm sure; I never looked at her. What about it?"

"Oh, nothing," I replied; "only I thought she was, rather."

"Well, I should have thought you had seen too many black-eyed Oriental beauties in your time to admire her style," Miles rejoined. And I wondered, as I went into my room and shut the door, whether I should show any more "common-sense" than my mother in the management of Dickie.

## CHAPTER II.

It was just as I expected—my niece and I quickly became the closest of friends; to all outward appearance we seemed to be more to each other than all the world beside, though I had a shrewd idea that there was a lover somewhere in the background. She was so frank and confiding that she drew me out of my reserved, melancholy self—so infectiously full of life and sweetness that I became almost boyishly light-hearted and gay in those days. My mother, as Miles had remarked, had also fallen a hopeless victim to the charm which she seemed to exercise over the generality of mankind, and the three young bachelors who occupied the flat above had

admiring eyes for the smiling, fluffy-haired girl who was sometimes to be met on the stairs. They would walk slowly down past our door in the hope of catching a sight of her, instead of careering down the long stone flights at their usual headlong pace; but I guarded her like a dragon, and when they made advances to me, in the hope of gaining an *entrée* into our house, and an introduction to the fair little stranger, their eagerness met with the coldest discouragement.

Until now I had been quite satisfied—or thought I had been—with the companionship of my mother and the few friends we had; at any rate, I had not thought that fate had anything better in store for me, and so was dully content, as we often are from necessity; but now there was a change, and my life was suddenly complete. My first glance, my chief thought, my best care, were all given to this little insignificant girl, who looked so plain and unattractive whenever she felt sad, or dull, or tired, but who brightened and glowed into such a charming little unconscious coquette under the least provocation, or under none at all, for her spirits naturally were of the best.

She and I generally breakfasted *à-la-carte*, for my mother was in the habit of taking the morning meal in her own room; and I do not think I was aware of how I looked forward, day by day, to the hour when, fresh as a newly-blown flower, bright and smiling as the summer sunshine, she took her place at the head of the table and poured out the coffee, sometimes full of merry chat, at other times soft and quiet, but always ready to sympathise with any and every mood of mine.

"You are not a bit like what I expected, Uncle Arnold," she said to me one morning, as she gave me my second cup of coffee.

"Indeed!" I said, wondering what was coming next, for the child often made the oddest, quaintest little speeches possible.

"I wonder if you mind my calling you 'uncle'?" she went on.

"Why should I?"

"Oh, I thought you would be pretty old—as old as father, nearly—"

"So I am, very nearly—didn't you know that?"

"But you don't look old. Your hair isn't grey like his, and your eyes shine—you seem quite like a young man; and I thought, perhaps, you might like to have the credit of it," laughingly, "and having a niece of my age might deprive you of that in some people's eyes. Besides, you are not really my uncle, or any relation to me."

"So you are not willing to be my niece?" I said, rising from the table and going over to the window to see if it had stopped raining.

"Oh yes, I am," she returned, coming after me and putting her hand into mine with that trusting affection which it had never before been my lot to have given me thus, and which filled my lonely heart with a strange new rapture. "And I like to call you uncle if you like it. I like to have you for my uncle—I never had any other."

"I am not afraid of being thought old," I said. "I know I am no longer young. And do you think I do not value my proprietorship in a dear little niece, who will fill the aching void in my sad old heart, who will be to me—"

I left my vague broken speech unfinished. She broke in readily: "You shall be to me, and I will be to you, whatever you will."

My whole being thrilled at her light, unconscious words, but I finished quietly:

"My only, and therefore much-prized niece. There, it is time I was off! What are you going to do with yourself until my mother makes her appearance? Gossip with Janet, I expect, for one thing, when she comes in to clear away?"

"I never gossip," she returned with spirit.

"I am afraid you waste a good deal of that worthy woman's time which would be better expended upon her duties."

"Well, she has Bridget to help her. She has not much to do."

"Enough, you may be sure, or why should we keep her, Miss Thoughtless?"

I felt constrained to administer a little lecture now and then, in accordance with my brother's hints respecting his step-daughter, though I found it a hard matter to put a finger upon a fault. But I did not wish him, on her restoration to him, to find her what he might consider "spoilt."

"Well, if I am thoughtless, you are as much the opposite," she said gaily. "It is not everybody who thinks so much about their servants. You really ought to get married, Uncle Arnold. You would make such a considerate husband."

"I wonder what your father would say if he could hear you talking to me so?" I returned laughingly. "I am afraid he would think you sadly wanting in proper respect."

"Oh, but father is quite different," she said, still holding my hand

and coming out of the room with me into the lobby on which all the doors opened. "I should not think of saying anything not perfectly respectful to him even if he were only my uncle instead of my father; but you—you—well, I say just what I like to you."

I was very glad to hear that; I much preferred that she should look on me in the light of a friend or comrade, than in that of a superior, who commanded undeviating respect and consideration.

We stood a moment in the dim half-light of the lobby. I felt how my melancholy face and sad eyes must contrast with the rounded cheeks and smiling lips of the girl beside me. She seemed so full of life and happiness—I was a disappointed, world-battered, saddened man. No joy that could come to me now could ever have power entirely to efface the lines from my brow, to chase away the deep melancholy which had become second nature with me. I might be gay and boyish for a time, but the life that lay behind me could never be quite forgotten.

"I am glad you feel so towards me," I said. "I was afraid a grave old fellow like me might have a rather depressing effect upon your bright spirits."

"But you are not old, and you don't look so," she insisted; "and you are not grave to me, at any rate, Uncle Arnold."

"Good-bye, Dickybird," I said, as I took down my hat from the stand. "Your pretty name just suits you."

"Your name is pretty, too," she said, and then stopped so suddenly that I turned round to look at her. I was always on the look-out for that lover who, I felt sure, existed somewhere; it was not likely that a girl like Dickie would have gone "unwooded, unwon," all these sweet years of her springing girlhood, and something in her voice struck me.

"Do you think so?" I said carelessly. "And do you think it suits me too?"

"Y—yes, a great deal better than I thought it would. I did not think—"

She stopped there. She was very ingenuous, and had yet to learn the art of concealing her feelings.

"You thought that it would not suit me as well as it does somebody else," I said, "and you find that you were right?"

"Uncle Arnold, how can you know? Whatever makes you say that?"

She blushed as red as a rose as she spoke, and a jealous pain shot through my heart.

"I know nothing, my dear," I answered dryly. "You, yourself, are telling me now."

"I! I have said nothing," she returned in surprise.

But the next moment I had swallowed my sudden anger, and remembered that she and her happiness were to be thought of before the foolish, mad hopes which I had now and then dared to entertain.

"But you will tell me?" I said, drawing her near me for a moment. "You will tell me the next time we have an opportunity? You will not have any secrets from your old uncle?"

"I will tell you," she promised naively. "I would never have told father, but I like telling you things; you seem to—to feel just as I do, somehow."

"Good-bye," I said again, and possibly I should have sealed our friendship with a kiss, but at that moment my mother's door opened, and she came out.

"I heard your voices," she said, as Dickie went up to greet her.

"You are early this morning, mother," I observed.

"Yes," she acquiesced, and I saw that she was watching me intently. I dare say she was astonished to see the brooding cloud lifted from my brow, to see the veil of gloom pierced by a mere ray of light from another soul; yet here—a glance, a smile, a winning girl's voice in my ear—and the thing was done, the transformation effected. I had started on my travels almost immediately after leaving school, so that my mother had known but little of me until disappointment and misfortune had frozen up the well-springs of my passionate heart, and now, perhaps, it was something of a shock to her to see them thawed into life and warmth by the touch of young, loving fingers.

Intensely proud and reserved people will sometimes return with passionate ardour a frank confiding affection given them, as Dickie had given hers to me, without waiting to see whether they have any to offer in return. She had always intended to love me, just because I was her father's brother, and when she came to know me, and to feel how deep and entire a sympathy existed between our apparently opposite natures, the duty of affection was lost in the pleasure and consolation of it. This I know, because she herself told me so, in simple naïve words that would lose half their expression and tenderness if rendered literally, because my pen could not transfer to paper the soft, pure tones of the voice which uttered them, the sweet and ingenuous glance of affection which accompanied them.

(To be continued.)

## Nemesis.

"DEAD and buried." Each separate word  
Bright, as if written in fire, appears,  
Slowly vanishing, dim and blurred,  
Scarcely seen through "a mist of tears,"  
Such as never have found a way  
Since the sorrows of childhood's day.

"Dead and buried"—and she and I  
Once were fettered by love's sweet bond !  
Came a cloud o'er the summer sky,  
Shadowed the future that lay beyond,  
And in a moment the smiling scene  
Passed as though it had never been.

Long she pleaded ; my heart was hard,  
Careless of all but an angry pain ;  
Pride and passion the gates had barred,  
Love and sorrow might sue in vain.  
"All is over," I coldly said ;  
"Trust has vanished, and truth is dead."

Fool ! to set in my own despite  
Ill that would last for a whole life long.  
Fool ! to turn from the path of right  
Into the path of the flagrant wrong,  
Flinging in anger and pride away  
Love that would gladden the darkest day.

So we parted, the time went on ;  
Never again have our pathways crost.  
Now, I know, that the years have gone,  
All the blessing my life has lost ;  
Wide or narrow the earthly scope,  
Vanished for ever have love and hope !

Yet, if I only could call her back,  
Down to earth from that farther shore ;  
If I could follow the self-same track,  
Strong in the thought we should meet once more ;  
If I could win her from death and fate,  
Just for a moment— Too late ! too late !

## The Ordeal by Gold.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

It will probably be admitted that a story is none the worse for being true, even though the imagination has not been very vividly called into play in its construction ; and the following narrative was declared, by a person who ought to have known, to be true in every essential particular.

I shall not be identifying the scene too closely, if I say that the action of the brief drama took place at a public-house in London, because everyone who has visited the metropolis must have observed that it contains several public-houses. I may venture on a little closer description, perhaps, and so mention that this was, and is, a very large and busy public-house ; so large and so busy that the takings on a Saturday night, as I have been informed on good authority, averaged more than one hundred and thirty pounds. As this amount was entirely taken in very small sums, I have, I hope, established my proposition that this was a busy public-house.

John Gateleigh, in the year 18—, was out of a situation and, which was worse, had been laid up for some three months with rheumatic fever ; so, what with want of employment and the expenses of his long illness, he and his wife were reduced to great extremities. The struggle told very much on both, and Mary Gateleigh, who had been a rosy-cheeked country belle only a couple of years before, now looked more haggard and white than did her husband, for all his long illness. At this there was little to marvel, for, out of the proceeds of their few valuables (the whole of which were by this time sold or pawned), John had all the nourishing and inviting food that was within their reach, while little Mary, aged ten months, was carefully tended also ; but whenever food was scantier, or money shorter, in the house than was usual, it was Mary Gateleigh who went without her meals, and feigned, always with the kindest and most cheerful of smiles too, to have had her bit of dinner while John slept.

With the natural, and presumably inevitable, selfishness of an invalid (that is, a man invalid ; a woman is rarely so selfish), John had seen nothing of this, and took everything for granted ; but, as he grew stronger, he noted how pale and weary his nurse looked, and, as he still mended, came to understand what a long and willing sacrifice she had made. John, being a good little fellow—he was not very lofty of stature, I may remark—in his way, as Mary was in hers, would allow no more of this self-denial, but it became evident that unless some favourable change took place, things were likely to be in a bad way for both of them.

I have not yet mentioned John's calling—his "profession" as one must say nowadays ; it was not one of the learned professions, and useful as it may have been, it was one which carried some

prejudice against it in many minds, but John could not help being what he was, and that was a barman. John was a very smart, civil, active barman, too, and as scrupulously honest as if he were a—I cannot finish my sentence for want of a trade to select as a standard of unsusplicable integrity. He was almost as honest as you and I are, reader.

John had now grown strong enough to walk out, and to call upon two or three friends who, he thought, might interest themselves for him, but he heard on all hands that "things were very flat just now," and in spite of all his efforts, he had still too much leisure time in which he might lean on the parapet of London Bridge, and watch the shipping ; an amusement which never fails to interest, and is one of the cheapest I know. But the hour before day is always the darkest, and although no answer came to the advertisement John had contrived to put into the paper, one of the friends to whom he had applied, called upon him with the welcome and surprising intelligence that having heard the proprietor of The Grand Turk was in want of a barman, he had spoken to him on behalf of John, and the said proprietor had agreed to give him a trial.

This was tremendous, for the house in question—as the reader must already have decided—was the busy one referred to, and was famed throughout the trade as having the smartest and most competent assistants in London. It was rather a rough place, as regarded the general run of customers, and the work was very hard, hence no young ladies were employed ; but the pay was good, and to have been engaged at The Grand Turk, was, one may say, to have taken a first-class degree. So with a great deal of excitement, much hope, and some nervousness lest he should be unsuccessful, John waited upon the proprietor, who was a great, burly, big-whiskered man, with staring eyes, and who—John thought—did not seem particularly pleased with the candidate. The recommendation from a personal friend was, however, sufficient, and in a somewhat ungracious manner he told John he could begin on the following Saturday.

A little abashed by his new master's manner, yet very thankful also, John went home, where his poor little wife shed tears of joy at hearing the good news, and kissed the baby with a warmer hope of new frocks for that young lady than she had dared to indulge in for many a day. There were great troubles yet to be encountered, for John's wardrobe was in anything but a fit state to furnish his outfit, and had not Mrs. Parryble—who, we should explain, was his landlady—lent him by stealth Parryble's Sunday coat, in which to go and see the proprietor, John would hardly have dared to see the proprietor at all. When, however, the situation was obtained, Parryble himself, who was a stonemason, was taken into consultation, and although the Gateleighs were many weeks behindhand with their rent, yet the Parrybles were a kindly soft-hearted pair, who felt for the young couple and sympathised in their struggles. Having no children of their own, they "took to" the baby wonderfully, and they carried their friendship so far, under these combined influences, that, having no money to spare, they became surety with a neighbouring tailor for a brand-new suit of clothes, and thus John was respectably started in his new situation.

He duly went to work, and very soon proved that the recommendation he had received was by no means undeserved ; the other barmen—five besides himself—were all quick and business-like, but none of them were better than John. He carried his civility beyond the public department, and was anxious to be friendly with his new comrades, but, for some reason or another, he could not tell what, he did not make much way with them ; so that at the end of a couple of months he found himself separate and apart, without anything like a quarrel having taken place, or his being in any way able to account for it.

With his master he had barely exchanged a word, although the burly proprietor was in the business a great deal, after his fashion—sitting alone, and often asleep, in his bar-parlour. And so when John was one evening told, three months having elapsed since he joined, that Mr. Cramp wished to see him before he (Mr. Cramp) left, his heart misgave him. He obeyed the summons, and found the proprietor looking, he thought, bigger, burlier, bushier-whiskered, and more staring as regarded the eyes than before.

"You have been in my service three months to-day, Mr. Gateleigh," began the proprietor, whose name, as has been somewhat irregularly intimated, was Cramp.

"Yes, sir," assented John.

"I am not altogether dissatisfied with what I have seen of you," continued the proprietor ; "yet there are some things which I find it necessary to speak about. This is a first-class place, Mr. Gateleigh ; we are A1 here, sir, and I expect my people to be first-class and A1 also. You don't dress well enough for me, sir."

"Not dress well enough !" faltered John, looking down at the suit which was as yet only half paid for.

"Yes, sir," returned Mr. Cramp, "and you have not enough style about you. Where is your watch ? your pin ? your rings ?



You see all the other gentlemen behind the bar have them, and, as I tell you, we expect style here."

"I am sorry to say, sir," replied John, "that before I got your situation I had been out of employment for more than half a year, and had been laid up with rheumatic fever three or four months. I—I have had a great deal of trouble to pull myself round at all."

"Oh, I dare say that is very true," said Cramp, "and I can make allowances; if I could not I should have spoken to you much earlier; but now you know what my sentiments are, and will no doubt think them over. I repeat, Mr. Gatligh, you are the only one of my staff who has not a watch, chain, rings, and pins, and just consider how your want of them spoils the effect. That will do. Good-night."

So John retired, and trudged home very late—for he was on the last turn at the bar—and full of trouble, which his anxious wife noting, she became at once alarmed, would not be evaded, and John was obliged to tell her all about his interview with the proprietor. They both agreed that it was very cruel and very unfair of Mr. Cramp, and that it was almost impossible for them to devise means of complying with his request. Not only were the new clothes still in part unpaid for, but the arrears of rent were not all cleared off; the doctor's bill was in the greater portion still owing, and many things held as indispensable for Mrs. Gatligh and the baby were unpurchased. As they said over and over again before they went to sleep, "What could a man do in three months after such a long spell of misfortune?"

The next day, and the next, as may be supposed, the dilemma was talked over, and at last a resolution was arrived at. The influence and credit of Mr. Parryble were of no avail here, although he was trusted readily enough by all who knew him; but watches and jewellery were a little out of his line, and so, after a great deal of discussion, the unlucky couple determined that John should go on as before, doing his best at the tavern, and paying off his liabilities at home as much as possible, in hope that, after all, Mr. Cramp would not say any more to him on the subject. If, however, he did recur to it, John was to tell him boldly what was the reason for his non-compliance, and then ask for an advance on account of his salary sufficient to buy the watch, etc., required, the amount to be deducted from his pay by instalments. This was the best plan they could think of, and bad, indeed, was the best; their chief hope was that Mr. Cramp might forget all about it.

Another source of discomfort to Gatligh was the evidently increasing dislike in which he was held by his comrades; there was no denying this fact, although he could not guess the reason, and although he made every effort to alter it; but all his advances were treated with the utmost coldness, till he supposed at last that it was his poverty which had influenced their behaviour.

Time rolled on, and Mr. Cramp took no further notice of Gatligh. John at first was sensitively nervous. Every time the proprietor entered the house, he expected to be sent for; every time any one of the staff came out from the bar-parlour, he felt sure he saw a message to himself in his face. But this wore away, and he began to think that all was forgotten, and that he was to be allowed to settle down in his own way.

However, on going to business one morning early—for he was on the "first turn" then—he found, to his surprise, that the proprietor was already there, and John had scarcely got inside the bar, when one of the resident staff said:

"You are to go and see Mr. Cramp at once."

The man spoke rudely enough, but he always so spoke to Gatligh, and the latter did not heed it generally, but on this day it seemed an omen of bad luck, and he obeyed the intimation with a sinking heart.

Mr. Cramp was in the bar-parlour, but he rose as John entered, and led the way into a little sanctum at the back, a kind of counting-house, used only by himself.

"Well, Mr. Gatligh," he at once began, "you, of course, remember a conversation I had with you a few months back. I do not see that you have paid much attention to it."

"You mean, sir," said John, flushing with shame, "about the watch and so forth?"

"I do," returned his employer. "Why have you not procured the things I mentioned?"

With the courage of desperation, the barman plunged at once into his story, told his master how poor he was, how long he had been ill, how his wife had suffered, how they were in debt, but were gradually paying off their liabilities. He told him, too, of the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Parryble, and then proffered his request for an advance, to be repaid by instalments.

Mr. Cramp listened to the story more patiently than John had expected would be the case, and when he had finished, replied, with a curious smile:

"You came to me without a watch and chain, Mr. Gatligh, as have many other men whom I have engaged, but you are the only

man who ever remained in my service for six months without getting them, and I never had the least occasion to advise them to do so."

Here Mr. Cramp smiled his curious smile again. He went on:

"The fact is, Mr. Gatligh, you will not do for The Grand Turk. You are a very good barman, I never had a better; but you are too honest. Honesty, as you understand it, won't do here. Do you suppose I don't know that every man behind my bar at this moment robs me? Do you believe I am always half or quite asleep here? They think so, but I am as wide-awake as themselves. Yet they are all honest, after a sort. They draw a line with their perquisites, and it would be useless for me to dismiss them. They are all clever, and their successors would infallibly rob me more—at first, at any rate, until they had settled down, and then they might not be so clever as this lot. Now you haven't nicked a sixpence—'nicked' is the correct term, you know—since you have been here. I am confident you have not. I put the screw upon you a little in the watch and jewellery matter to see what effect it would have, and you have come out well. You are the only thoroughly honest man I have ever met, but you would be out of place here. You would soon be at variance with the others, for, as I tell you, I shall not change my people. So long as I get a certain percentage for my money I am satisfied, and don't intend to go too narrowly into little irregularities. Here is a letter to Messrs. Brimmer and Runlet, to whom I have spoken about you; they are willing to take you into their warehouse—a much better place for a married man than anything in this trade—at a salary which I call handsome, and if you present this letter all will be right."

John, whose breath had almost been taken away by what he heard, and whose head was swimming, began to stammer out something; but the proprietor went on:

"In case Brimmer and Runlet should be as particular about the watch and chain as I am," he said, with the curious smile on his face stronger than before. "I have thought it as well you should be provided for such a necessity, and here"—with this he drew a small case from his pocket—"are a watch and chain accordingly, which I present to you as a token of my respect for your honesty."

John mechanically took the case, but was quite unable to speak.

"There is a cheque for your wages now due, and for a three months' notice. I see what is the matter with you. Go home, tell your good little wife, and then lose no time in hurrying off to your new place, for they expect you."

John tried to say a part of what he felt, but a kind of sob came in his breath when he began, which had a very hysterical sound.

"There! Be off!" exclaimed Cramp good-humouredly, uncere- moniously pushing him out of the counting-house as he spoke; "and if you have anything to say, come to me this day month and say it."

Thus ended this extraordinary interview, and little John Gatligh, scarcely knowing how he got there, hurried home to his wife, as advised. If he had felt any shame at being hysterical, or reluctance to allow the tear to swim in his eye, his wife had no such scruples, for she cried, and sobbed, and laughed, and kissed the baby, and kissed John, and blessed Mr. Cramp, until John broke down as completely as herself.

However, all ended capitally; the watch was of gold and so was the chain. The former bore an inscription inside the case: "Front Samuel Cramp to John Gatligh;" while the letter was better even than gold, for, upon its presentation, Brimmer and Runlet engaged John at once; and, although it is more than twenty years ago since this happened, and the baby is grown up and married, John is in the warehouse still, at the top of the tree. Mr. Cramp, with his burly figure, his big whiskers, and his staring eyes, has long been dead, but, in his way, he was a friend to John to the last. He saw him about once a year, and then barely spoke; but old Mr. Byller, the head clerk, told John, in strict confidence, that Cramp seldom came to the house, of which he was the principal customer, without enquiring about him, and saying something in his favour.

John was not unmindful, when better times came, of the kindness shown by Mr. and Mrs. Parryble; and the capital glass of whisky, of which the worthy stonemason boasted so much every Christmas, always came with "John Gatligh's best respects."

And now the reader knows how John Gatligh got the only gold watch he ever possessed.

## The Editor's Note Book.

IF the story of the dynamite plot against Lord Lansdowne is true, it again shows the absolute aimlessness of the Irish-American dynamite faction. No result could have been really hoped for from the assassination of the new Governor-General of Canada, and he does not belong to the class of Irish landlords whose "removal" has been advocated by the party of assassins. There seems, happily, some reason to believe that the plot is only a bogus one after all, and was intended to extract subscriptions from the credulous Biddies and Paddies of New York, rather than for any other purpose.

## HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

Edited by Charles Dickens.

THE *Daily Telegraph* of the 25th October contained an excellent article, under the title "Why should London Wait?" in which the terrible condition of a great part of the population of the metropolis, and the urgent need of a practical reform of the manner in which over four millions of people are left practically without government, are urged with graphic force and yet with the utmost fairness and moderation. Side by side with this article should be read Lord Salisbury's paper in the *National Review*, in which the Conservative leader deals exhaustively and vigorously with the question of the housing of the metropolitan poor.

THE question is well asked, "Why should London wait?" for a chance of rescue from the frightful evils with which she is afflicted, because a caucus, or congress, or conference of provincial busybodies and doctrinaires chooses to demand as a more pressing measure a Reform Bill, for which, outside of the fussy circles of the smaller professional politicians, nobody has asked, and for which nobody cares.

EVER since I have had the honour of commenting in these columns on passing events, I have written, and that frequently, with the same object and on much the same lines as the two articles I have quoted, and I am rejoiced to find that the question is assuming the importance which it deserves. If Mr. Gladstone, with all his personal and political power, does not feel equal to dealing with the matter, it must be taken up by the other side, and would, I feel sure, be much more valuable as political capital than the stale invective, founded upon what is really ancient history, which seems to be all the stock-in-trade of the present generation of Conservative orators.

It will also be well to remember, when the next patching up of the Constitution takes place, and a Re-distribution of Seats has to be effected, that London, if she is to be represented in proportion to her population, would require rather more than eighty members, who would on any non-political question, as to which they might be united, be able to force the hand of any Government.

It is evident that the Lord Mayor elect has the courage of his opinions, and that his term of office is likely to be marked quite as much by his own originality and independence of character as by the unusual surroundings of his election. Mr. Alderman Fowler has peremptorily refused to accede to an application that he would invite the Transvaal deputation to his inaugural dinner on the 9th of November. Except as a political demonstration there is no particular reason why these gentlemen should have been invited, and from that point of view Mr. Fowler's refusal was almost a foregone conclusion.

THOSE guests at the banquet who are near enough to understand what is said will probably hear a little plain-speaking from Mr. Ferdinand de Lesseps, and will in all likelihood be also entertained by some interesting verbal gymnastics on the part of Mr. Gladstone, who, between politeness to M. de Lesseps and the usual necessity of saying as little as possible about Egypt in as many words as may be convenient, will have a difficult task indeed.

THE Chairman of the Surrey Sessions has instituted a novelty in our judicial system, whether wisely or not, it would be perhaps premature to express an opinion. A man pleading guilty to a charge of stealing a watch, Mr. Hardman informed the prisoner that he had decided on postponing sentence for a year, with the understanding that if the culprit led an honest life during that time, no punishment would be inflicted. The experiment is altogether a new departure, and its result will be watched with interest. I cannot help thinking, however, on the first blush of it, that its universal adoption would be found somewhat inconvenient.

THE police-constable who haled a crossing-sweeper before Mr. Hosack, the magistrate, would appear to have been suffering from an attack of over zeal, as there is really nothing criminal either in sweeping a crossing or in taking a halfpenny as payment for the accommodation. It is impossible to suppose that any municipality, however rich and however well organised, could keep up such an army of sweepers as would be necessary for the principal crossings in London, and the present volunteers contribute not a little towards the public comfort and convenience. It is true that there are black sheep among them, but, although it is quite proper to punish a man for being an insolent, foul-mouthed beggar, there is no reason why crossing-sweepers generally should be put in this category.

A GOOD deal having been said about some alleged gluttony on the part of certain members of the Clerkenwell Vestry, the clerk has written to explain that the refreshments supplied to the Vestry Committees are on the most moderate scale. But why the gentlemen of the Committees should expect to be refreshed at the expense of the ratepayers is not quite apparent. No man is obliged to be a vestry-

man. The office is sought with eagerness—either from a desire to be useful, or in some cases, perhaps, from less disinterested motives—and there really is no more reason why vestrymen should be paid with lunches than that Members of Parliament should receive salaries.

NOVICES who entertain the erroneous idea that they are likely to add materially to their incomes by backing horses, would do well to take to heart the lesson of last week's Cambridgeshire Stakes at Newmarket. For this race, as is usually the case in great events, several horses carried the complete confidence and a good deal of the money of their owners, but the majority of the people who know most about such matters looked upon the defeat of a horse called Medicus, the property of the Duke of Hamilton, as being almost an impossibility. Consequently, although the field numbered twenty-five starters, the ingenuous public were content to take less than two to one about the animal, who, however, could get no nearer than third, victory falling to a despised outsider, against whom fifty to one was offered. On the whole backing horses may be amusing, but certainly cannot be recommended as a remunerative profession.

MR. AUGUSTUS HARRIS displays so much energy and liberality in his management of Drury Lane Theatre, that he deserves a better reward than any he is likely to reap from his latest production, an unwieldy and uninteresting drama called "A Sailor and His Lass." In truth the new play is from almost every point of view a bad one, and will give, I think, little, either of reputation or profit, to its authors, Mr. Robert Buchanan and Mr. Augustus Harris.

THE story of "A Sailor and His Lass" is simple and familiar, and mainly turns on a false accusation of murder being made against the virtuous hero, who suffers all sorts of troubles in consequence, even to the point of being pinioned in the condemned cell, and being marched to execution through the yard of Newgate. Necessarily all comes right to the point of this crisis, and the sailor is duly restored to the arms of his lass. A dynamite explosion, a shipwreck, and the story of a stowaway are also introduced into the piece, but do not add much to the simplification or coherence of the main plot.

THESE matters have all been introduced to provide opportunities, more or less reasonable, for elaborate scenic effects, but even these appear to miss the mark—principally, it may be, because of their irrelevancy, but certainly also, in some degree, by reason of their intrinsic absurdity. The scene of the ship, for instance, rigged—or rather not rigged—as no ship ever was since seafaring began, and with openings in her side through which the action of the drama is carried on, is nothing short of ridiculous, while the subsequent scene, in which certain of the characters are presented tossing about on the mast of the vessel, after she has gone to the bottom with singular calmness and deliberateness, cannot fail to recall memories of the somewhat similar effect of the raft in "The World."

IT is, unfortunately, an inevitable condition of the career of a manager who goes in for pieces of this sort, that the difficulty of providing something new and effective increases at compound interest with each new production. Mr. Harris, indeed, may be likened to a modern Frankenstein, and has created a monster who is neither to be guided or controlled, and whose demands become less easy of satisfaction day by day. The pit and gallery of Drury Lane are insatiable, and I do not envy Mr. Harris the self-allotted task of finding them the sort of amusement which he has himself taught them to crave.

NATURALLY there is little scope for the display of the actor's art in "A Sailor and His Lass." Mr. Fernandez has one chance, of which he makes the most; Miss Clara Jecks does all that could be hoped with the little part of the stowaway; and what there is of Mr. Harry Jackson, as the good-hearted driver of a four-wheeled cab, is acceptable. The responsibilities of management, and the labour of superintending the working of the piece, seem incompatible with the proper performance of the part of the hero, and it is possible that, if Mr. Harris had less to do off the stage, what he has to do on the boards would be more satisfactorily accomplished. The other ladies and gentlemen engaged do the best they can with unpromising materials, but their efforts call for no special comment.

IN conclusion, I must join in the protest which the presentment of the ghastly details of the condemned cell and the execution have called forth. Mr. Buchanan says, in vindication, that these things are true, and hints that they have been shown because he is opposed to capital punishment. No doubt they are true, and no doubt Mr. Buchanan is perfectly at liberty to entertain such views on the subject of capital punishment as may seem good to him. But there are many terrible things in life, the mere fact of whose existence does not justify their presentation on the stage, and I cannot agree with Mr. Buchanan that the theatre is the proper place in which such a question as that of capital punishment can be legitimately or usefully argued. That the financial history of "A Sailor and His Lass" will emphatically point this moral by-and-by, I entertain no manner of doubt.

C. D.

## Hints upon Playing Duets.

THERE are probably very few people living who have not suffered greatly, at some time or other of their existence, from having to listen to badly-played pianoforte duets. Few, indeed, at one time, were the families who could boast of two daughters of at all approaching years, who did not expect the unfortunate visitor to sit calm and admiring whilst "La Gazza Ladra" or "Zampa" was trotted out by the twin executants.

WITH a generous sacrifice of good material for the sake of a grand effect, neither of them spared the piano in the course of their joint performance, but each player played with as much force and vigour as if she had been playing all by herself. The whole thing degenerated into an ignoble race as to which should be heard the most. The treble-player knocked out the shrill high notes with an incredibly ear-piercing sharpness, and the one who played the bass displayed the greatest meanness in taking a full advantage of the superiority of her position. Lavishly, indeed, did she deal out the thunders which she had at her command. The two sisters not infrequently dressed alike, and there was supposed to be something extremely alluring about the back view of two long pigtailed tied with blue ribbon, two sashes tied in exactly the same place, and of exactly the same length, and drapery of precisely the same hue and texture flowing on each side of those horrible music-stools; but, considering the sufferings of the unfortunate listener, it is not to be wondered at if he felt irritated rather than pleased by the appearance of his twin tormentors, so that he could have found it in his heart to brain them as they sat.

POSSIBLY, one of the reasons why duet-playing was so peculiarly inartistic some years since was, that people did not know enough about music to enable them to make a good choice of pieces. They always seemed to hit upon things that were good for an orchestra, but particularly unadapted to a piano. "Zampa," for example, which was a very universal battle-horse with duettists at one time, is not suited for a pianoforte at all. On a band it is always highly effective—hackneyed as it is, it is still a pleasure to hear it. The admirable division of the wind and string instruments, the change of effect produced by using various combinations of the same, make it very bright and interesting indeed. But all this goes for nothing on the piano; you get the same tone throughout, and the rumbling down in the bass but ill imitates the thunder of the drums, while in the treble part the fingers fly about in difficult passages that are quite easy when played on the violin. Pieces like this are interesting to play as mere reminiscences of having heard them on an orchestra, or as a preparation to understanding them when you are going to hear them at some concert; but they should not be tried in the light of show-pieces at all. Schubert's Symphony in B, for example, is a highly interesting duet to play, the more you play it the more you discover in it, the more the melody and the composition dawn upon you; but it would be quite absurd to play it to any person who had not heard it on an orchestra and understood nothing of its meaning.

It is supposed to be a struggle between the cherished hope of some sanguine disposition, and the cruelty of fate who says "No," and forbids it. The sweet, hopeful melody comes in again and again, in one key and another, rising and falling, getting stronger and more complicated the more it goes on, like dreams which strengthen as the dreamer dreams on; yet just when the hope appears brightest, down comes a dreadful discord—a loud and decided tremolo which says "No" to that poor heart as plainly as ever it was said in music. Again the heart appeals against its destiny. Is there no reason why its dream should not come true? Sadly and slowly it gives up the ghost of its warm and most cherished desire; it dies very hard, it hopes till the last. And when at last it is whirled down in a black gulf of misery, and fate has got the victory, you can scarcely refrain from shedding a tear for the poor soul that has lost its all. One movement remains. After a pause the soul takes up its strain once more. Bent, not broken, after all. A holy calm, a deep religious resignation, breathe through its accents, and the peaceful movement of the andante is like a calm evening after a day spent in alternations of storm and sunshine.

THIS is the sort of duet that is so interesting to read through with a sympathetic companion. The two parts give one a very fair idea of how it goes on the orchestra, and the pianists must study to imitate orchestral effects as much as possible, giving the close smooth playing of the violins to one passage, the hard sonorous tone of the brass to another, and imitating with the tremolo in the bass the musical thunder of the drums.

FOR serious study, however, or for playing in company, it is better to choose duets that are written specially for the piano, and by people who understand the instrument. Mendelssohn, Hoffman, Schumann, and Mofskowsky have all written interesting duets for pianoforte, and the student will find both pleasure and profit in their acquisition. For, because bad players have put the duet somewhat into disfavour, it would be foolish for the young musician to give up what is in reality both a great deal of enjoyment and a valuable means of training.

THE soloist is only too inclined to trifle with the time of a piece; to play slowly whenever an expression mark is put, to drag because there is a difficult passage. All this is impossible in a duet when the other player is keeping strict time; and the treble player may know that if at one particular place the bass seems to be going too fast for him, that is the bar he will have to work up.

It is only in practising with another player that the student discovers his good and bad points. If he can make his runs sound brilliant while the bass keeps on in perfect time, he may feel pretty happy about his execution. If he can introduce nice expression and yet play in time, he may feel sure that his expression does not depend upon the vulgar habit of slackening.

It is only in reading that certain curious defects come out. One pianist may put little expression in his playing, but be a magnificent timist—always "there" at the beginning of the bar, while the other may be a better player in other respects, but perfectly incapable of coming in right after three bars' rest. One player helps the other in cases like this, and gradually the one gains some insight into beauty through the charming expression of his companion, and the other one gets an idea of the value of time that no amount of solitary practice would give him.

GOOD temper must be preserved throughout all trials, and no time should be wasted in proving who was wrong and who was right. If the readers can possibly avoid it, it is better not to count aloud, or only in a very difficult passage, just to tide them over an exceptionally hard part; but, as a rule, the player should endeavour to accent the bars so nicely that his brother player should have no difficulty in telling exactly where he is. One player should not give in to the other too much; at the same time he is a very poor musician who hurries on in a wooden sort of way, making his companion feel as if he were tied to a barrel-organ instead of a living pianist.

SOME players have a marked predilection for taking the treble, whilst some are more attached to the bass. Amongst professionals the one who plays best is always offered the treble, and it is quite right that the one who knows most should lead. At the same time, it is well to practise playing both parts, as a good musician ought to be equally at home in either. When the bass leads (as in classical music often occurs), the treble must instantly sink, so as to form a mere accompaniment to the melody. It must not go on loudly as if seeking to drown the other part, as that is not the composer's intention.

SOME of the most interesting piano duets available are written by Mofskowsky—one of the most promising of the young composers of the present day. He is a Pole, and reminds one slightly of his compatriot Chopin at times; but there is a decidedly strong individuality about his music for all that. His Spanish dances, and Spanish album, are highly interesting, and abound in national colour. When they are gay, they are as bright as the sunshine; when they are sad, they are romantic and pathetic. Even more quaint is a set of pieces called "Foreign Parts," every one of which illustrates a different nation. There is quiet strain like a song about Fatherland for Germany, a rude, wild, peasant dance for Russia, and a tarantelle for Italy. In the Spanish one the national character is perhaps better expressed than in any other; you can hear the sound of the guitar now and then, and can fancy the melody sung by Spanish voices—voices that obey so instantly the changing feelings of the moment. As for the Hungarian, when it begins you seem to see all sorts of savage instruments flashing, and clanging cymbals, and bells, and I know not what. The bass has some splendid "bits" to play, and the treble has to hold on very hard indeed if he means to get half his runs in.

THE two players enjoy this trial of strength, and leave off excited and laughing; for there is a great deal of pleasure in trying over such things, supposing one learns them seriously; besides, it is worth while spending time over duets like these, as they are always fresh and delightful, and a source of pleasure both to players and audience.

## Throwing the Hatchet.

IN the fourteenth century, the situation of the public executioner of the city of Florence became vacant; and as it was a place of considerable emolument, there were three candidates. The first candidate, with a knife, cleverly separated the head of the victim from his shoulders. He was outdone by the rapid stroke of the second, whose glittering broadsword struck terror in the hearts of the surrounding multitude. The third, and least promising, held in his hand a short hatchet, and when the victim was extended with his head on the fatal block, approached him, and in a low whisper enquired if he was a swift runner, and if he could swim well? On being answered in the affirmative, he desired him to spring on his feet and cross the river. The executioner then, putting on a fierce look, swung his weapon round his head, but instead of making it descend on the devoted creature's neck, struck it with great force into the block! Shouts of



execration arose from the crowd, and the trembling wretch, astonished at his wonderful escape, had nearly gained the opposite bank of the river before any steps were taken to pursue him. He had scarcely, however, gone ten yards on dry land, when the executioner, taking steady aim, threw his hatchet with such effect, that the body continued running some time after the head was off! From this rather improbable incident, the common phrase of throwing the hatchet is said to be derived.

## The Entrance Examination to Our Public Departments.

### PART I.

AT the present time, when the question of the employment of "Our Boys" has been so thoroughly ventilated by the public press, we are surprised that greater stress has not been laid upon the advantages which employment in the Lower Division of the Civil Service offers to the sons of the middle class of this country. The principal difficulty in the way is the competitive examination which candidates have to undergo, and in which, easy as it is, failure is very possible. But as no sort of success in life is attainable nowadays without taking trouble for it, it may be useful to consider how this particular matter stands.

IN 1876 a Parliamentary Committee was appointed to consider the whole question of Civil Service reform. Dr. Lyon Playfair acted as chairman, and the scheme which was ultimately adopted by the Lords of the Treasury became known as the Playfair Scheme. The committee advised that the whole service should be divided into two grades, to be known as the higher and lower divisions, and that the bulk of the work in each office should be performed by clerks of the lower division, whilst the senior position of responsibility and direction should be allocated to the higher division. The examinations for these positions, which will in the future afford a much better opening to the very men who are now obliged to content themselves with the lower division, are practically suspended *sine die*, there being so many redundant clerks of the old establishment prior to 1876, whose "vested interest" to be absorbed into the higher division must be satisfied before any new appointments can be made thereto by open competition. Examinations for the lower division are held about four times a year, and copies of the regulations can be obtained from the Civil Service Commissioners, Cannon Row, Westminster, who will also furnish intending candidates with full particulars as to time and place, fees, etc. It may be taken for granted that those rules which are not hereinafter referred to are of a purely formal or unimportant character.

RULE 2 states that any natural born subject of Her Majesty, being of the prescribed age, and of good health and character, may compete at these examinations, with certain exceptions, such as "persons actually serving in the army or navy," etc.

RULE 3 sets forth that a fee of ten shillings will be required from every candidate attending the preliminary, and a further fee of ten shillings from each candidate admitted to the competitive examination.

RULE 4 gives the limits of age. Candidates must be over seventeen and under twenty upon the first day of the examination, which lasts for four days, the papers being set between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of the week in which the examination is held.

RULE 5 lays down the following subjects of examination, with the maximum number of marks awarded to each:—Handwriting, 400; Orthography, 400; Arithmetic, 400; Copying MS., 200; English Composition, 200; Geography, 200; Indexing or Docketing, 200; Digesting Returns into Summaries, 200; English History, 200; Bookkeeping, 200.

RULE 7 is alarming. It states that each successful competitor's name will be retained upon the list for employment until he reach the age of twenty-five years. On completing his twenty-fifth year, or on receiving an appointment, his name will be removed from such list. This is merely so much *brutum fulmen*. As a matter of fact, when an examination is held in June, the very last candidate is appointed, and at work, by the end of October.

ON looking at the statistics published for last year, we find that five examinations were held, at which 1,800 candidates competed for 300 vacancies. So that one out of every six competitors succeeded in gaining a place.

TURNING to the question of salary, we must frankly admit that neither the actual pay, nor the prospects, are so good as they were prior to 1876. The primary cause of this is the present state of the labour-market; the Government being, of course, entitled to hire its labour in the cheapest market just as much as the private employer; nor, indeed, must we lose sight of the fact that this is a plain duty it owes to the heavily-burdened taxpayers of this country.

IN the majority of the public departments the clerks of the lower division work from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., their salary commencing at ninety-five pounds per annum, and rising by triennial increments of fifteen pounds to two hundred and fifty pounds. In addition there are in each

office a certain number of "duty pay" places, to which are attached special allowances not exceeding one hundred pounds per annum, and for which the recipients perform more responsible duties than those entrusted to their colleagues. A steady and industrious clerk may therefore fairly look forward to attaining three hundred and fifty pounds per annum before retiring. After ten years' service a clerk of the "lower" will be eligible for promotion to the "higher" division, when his salary would increase from the figure at which he was transferred, by triennial increments of thirty-seven pounds ten shillings, to three hundred pounds per annum, with, of course, larger prizes in the shape of duty pay than exist in the lower division. As at present advised, "My Lords" state that these promotions will only be made in cases of exceptional merit. But on the occurrence of the next revision of the pay and prospects of Civil Servants, it is confidently expected that the lower-division clerks will succeed in getting the hard-and-fast line drawn between themselves and the higher division removed, when promotion to it will follow as a matter of course, after a certain number of years of approved and meritorious service.

IN comparing a berth in the Civil Service with one in the open market, there are some very important points to be considered.

First. This is almost the only career in which a youth can support himself from the outset. A knowledge of this fact often proves a great inducement to the high-spirited lad, who knows that there are brothers and sisters at home to be provided for.

Second. The newly elected clerk, having once proved his capacity, need trouble no more about the security of his salary than if he derived the same sum from Consols. Now, any impartial observer during the recent commercial crisis through which we have passed, must have noticed that some of the most apparently stable houses of business, the most soundly constituted corporate bodies, came to an untimely end through causes over which they had no control, and without any blame attaching to them. In many of these cases hard-working young men, after several years of patient labour, and just as they were expecting to reap their reward, had to begin life all over again.

Third. A clerk entering the service at twenty, and retiring therefrom at or at any time after having attained the age of sixty, is entitled to a pension of two-thirds of his actual salary at the time of his retirement. Provided, then, that he insure his life in favour of any who may be dependent upon him, he is justified in living closer to his means than a man who has to provide for a certain number of years during which he will be incapable of work.

HE who joins the Civil Service to-day must, however, recognise the fact that the "Circumlocution Office" received its death blow from the pen of the author of "Little Dorrit," that the method of "How not to do it" is rapidly giving place to the method of "How to do it in the quickest and most business-like manner," and that the race of "Barnacles" is being rapidly superseded by the race of "Open Competition" men, who are actuated by the twofold desire to put as much information as possible in the way of those "who want to know, you know," and to show the taxpayers at large that their money is now finding its way into the pockets of those who recognise that they, as well as others, must do a fair day's work for a fair day's wage.

## Gibbon in Love.

MR. GIBBON was at that really dramatic passage of his life in the middle of the year 1787, when he was completing his history, and on a certain night in June had written the last line of the last page of the great work. Very familiar is the description of the almost solemn act performed in a pavilion at the end of his garden. Laying down his pen, he took several turns in the "acacia alley," with a feeling of joy at getting back his liberty, after this long and arduous servitude: but dashed with a certain melancholy, as he thought, however lasting might be the reputation of the book, the days of the writer might be numbered. Lady Elizabeth Foster, who afterwards became Duchess of Devonshire, arrived shortly after, and struck him, as she struck all, with the elegance of her form and manner, her *esprit*, cleverness, and, above all, the nice apropos of her compliments. She took a great interest in the dramatic completion of the great history, and was one morning asked to breakfast to inspect the very scene. In the meantime Mr. Gibbon had interpreted her "sweetness," and elegance, and all the compliments as so many proofs of the impression he was making upon her heart, and it seemed this occasion would do excellently to bring on a *dénouement*. After breakfast was over, he brought her out to look at the famous acacia-walk, and the view of lake and mountain which it commanded. She was enthusiastic in her delight, and expressed herself in all the raptures becoming admiration for scenery, when the historian affected to be suddenly jealous of the praise bestowed on such objects, and electrified her by an eloquent and passionate declaration, at the same time falling on his knees. The astonished lady could hardly understand at first; then burst into a fit of laughter. The situation must have been ludicrous indeed; the unwieldy lover still pouring out his vows, and she remaining some paces off, and trying to soothe him. At last he understood his mistake, and then she bade him get up. But this was impossible; gout, enormous fat, and rheumatism utterly incapacitated him. The brilliant lady, cruelly

ignoring the romance of the situation, came to his aid and tried to raise him; but it was in vain; and it was determined that she should go for assistance, and give out that Gibbon had fallen. She went, and two stout peasants of the place came up, raised him between them, and landed him in his familiar easy-chair.—*Appleton's Journal*.

## The Family Doctor.

### RHEUMATISM.

ONCE more, mist and damp abound; and at such a time, many begin to suffer from aches and pains, which are put down, *en masse*, as "rheumatic." And, indeed, so much suffering is produced by "rheumatism," that we might as well know a little about it, and about the drugs, diet, and precautions best adapted for its cure or prevention. Three diseases are commonly classed under this name, yet differ widely from each other. There is "acute rheumatism," or rheumatic fever, chronic rheumatism, and muscular rheumatism.

RHEUMATIC FEVER is produced by cold and damp. Sudden exposure to chill after excessive heat, or undue endurance of rain and frost, are the main causes of this disease. Even these, however, will only induce it in those predisposed to it. For there can be no question that the tendency to this disease is hereditary. Those with rheumatic predispositions should take them into account, when they decide on the locality and the occupations in which their lives are to be spent.

THIS fever, like all others, is ushered in by shivering. Then follows great heat of the skin, and, what is most characteristic of the disease, the sufferer is bathed in a copious and sour-smelling perspiration. The pulse is rapid, the tongue furred, and the appetite impaired. There is rarely delirium, unless the heart become involved. Use of the thermometer would show the temperature of the skin to be extraordinarily high. Coincident with the above symptoms, one or more of the large joints become enlarged and inflamed; the skin over the joint may be reddened, and the joint is extremely painful—the slightest movement producing agony. In a short time, this joint may rapidly recover, and apparently resume its normal condition, but another will become affected in a similar manner, this shifting feature of the disease being usually well marked. Its whole tendency is to attack "fibrous" structures, and while it confines itself to these in the neighbourhoods of the joints, it is devoid of danger. But, unfortunately, it often attacks those around and within the heart. When this complication occurs, the patient is seized with palpitation, the breathing is oppressed, and a feeling of anxiety and alarm is experienced. Delirium may ensue.

ALL are agreed that this is a constitutional disease, but it is still a question what is the specific poison which causes it. It is certain that a large amount of lactic acid exists in the system during an attack of this fever. Animals that have been largely fed on lactic acid have had their joints affected in a similar manner.

THE treatment of so serious a malady should be at once entrusted to a medical man. But we may say that if a predisposed person suspects that through exposure, etc., an attack is impending, he should at once go to bed, and try to induce a free action of the skin. A glass of good gin largely diluted with hot water may be taken; though, when once the fever is begun, stimulants should be discarded, except, possibly, in cases where they have been habitually taken to excess. The patient should be kept warm, but not too warm. Except in cases where the patient is very weak, the diet should be low, consisting of milk, beef-tea, and farinaceous food. Bi-carbonate of soda or potash should be given every four hours in doses of thirty grains. Quinine is recommended by many. It can be given in two-grain doses, and may be combined with the potash or soda. To allay the thirst, lemon-juice may be freely taken; some recommend it as a specific. The affected joints should be wrapped up in cotton-wool. If the joint be very hot and swollen, some recommend applying compresses wrung out of cold water. This sometimes affords considerable relief. Moderate doses of castor-oil may be taken if required, but excessive purging is to be avoided. The patient should stay in bed for a week after the fever and pains have entirely gone, and the diet should continue simple and unstimulating for at least ten days after the fever has departed. Relapses are common.

If there is the slightest reason for suspecting that the heart is affected, there should be no delay in summoning medical aid. Rheumatic fever, though not immediately dangerous to life, is still to be carefully guarded against, for it lays the seeds of future suffering. Many of the distressing forms of heart-disease are traceable to an attack of this malady, it may be many years before. Further, an attack of this fever gives no security against a future attack, but, on the contrary, predisposes towards it. Those with such a tendency should avoid all food that is difficult of digestion, and should abstain from

stimulants; no malt liquor should be taken. The proportion of animal food should be moderate; there should be care in the choice of a residence, etc. Cold, damp, and over-exertion should be avoided; warm clothing is essential. Each should select the kind of warm clothing in which he feels most comfortable. Anything which suppresses perspiration should be avoided, also anything which keeps the skin too moist. Flannel, woven silk, spun cotton, or an under-dress of chamois leather may be recommended.

SUB-ACUTE RHEUMATISM is a variety of the disease which occurs in young and weakly persons. It is very tedious. The fever is slight, and one or more joints continue affected for a long time with little or no deformity; instead of heat the affected parts often feel cold. Treatment resolves itself into employing every means to strengthen the general health. Quinine in two-grain doses and alkaline waters are useful.

CHRONIC ARTICULAR RHEUMATISM.—This affects old people, coming on gradually as age advances; but it may follow an attack of rheumatic fever. The smaller joints are attacked, and the tendency to shift is not so marked as in the acute disease. The parts around the affected joints become thickened, and so the joints grow stiff, and there may be a dull aching pain. The precautions already recommended may be taken. Baths are useful; warm baths, or the Turkish, salt-water, sulphur, or alkaline bath may be beneficial. The affected joints may be bathed locally. Rub them daily with some liniment, such as opium liniment. Shampooing and kneading them are beneficial. They ought to be kept bandaged, and the patient should be allowed a moderate amount of exercise. The internal remedies are numerous. Quinine, cod-liver oil, or tincture of iron—of the latter five to ten drops twice daily—are useful. Mineral waters, such as those of Bath, Harrogate, Buxton, or Cheltenham, are useful. Good, nourishing, and easily digested food is a necessity. A small quantity of alcoholic stimulant may be of benefit in some cases.

MUSCULAR RHEUMATISM is a local affection caused by cold, wet, or over-fatigue. A direct cold draught will produce it. The attack is usually sudden, or comes on during the night. In some cases the torture is intense. Sometimes the part or muscle may be slightly tender to touch, or it may only give pain when moved. There is no fever or constitutional symptoms save those induced by fatigue from want of sleep. The heart is never affected. When acute, this form of rheumatism passes off in a few days, but when it grows chronic the patient becomes a barometer, whose readings are registered by his pains. It may attack any of the voluntary muscles. In its varieties, it is called wry-neck, or stiff-neck, pleurodynia, or rheumatism of the chest walls, or lumbago, where the muscles of the small of the back are involved, which is a very common and painful form of muscular rheumatism. In acute cases, the chief point of treatment is to keep the affected part quiet and at rest. Hence it is well to apply a plaster—such as a belladonna plaster—of a size suited to the affected part. Warm fomentations sometimes give relief. A sub-cutaneous injection of morphia may be desirable, but should never be administered without medical assistance. A hot drink and wrapping up in blankets further the cure.

In chronic cases, quinine in two to three grain doses, or iodide of potassium in five-grain doses, three times a day, are among the best internal remedies. The iodide of potassium should be taken in a mixture, one drachm of the iodide dissolved in six ounces of water, and of this a tablespoonful may be taken thrice daily. It may be as well to remember that some people are very sensitive to this drug, and that such persons, on taking it, are troubled with symptoms which resemble the beginning of a cold in the head. Under these circumstances they should stop taking it, until these disagreeable symptoms disappear, and they should begin again with a teaspoonful of the above mixture thrice daily. In these chronic cases, ironing the affected part with a piece of brown paper put over the skin has proved useful. Of course, there are a great number of local applications which are recommended and may be tried, such as friction, shampooing, liniments—such as opium liniment—cold compresses, and sub-cutaneous injection of morphia.

WE may mention that a disease exists, which probably has no connection with rheumatism, yet is called *rheumatic arthritis*, which title simply means inflammation of a joint, as in rheumatism. It leads to great deformity of the affected joints and requires medical supervision.

In conclusion, it may be as well to utter a strong word of warning against the growing habit of using sleeping draughts for the relief of pain. In extreme cases, such narcotics are necessary, but anything like the formation of a habit of using them should be strenuously resisted. Such cure is worse than any disease.

SPECIALLY in connection with rheumatism, it is well to remember the adage that "Prevention is better than cure;" a little trouble in changing wet garments, a little care in passing from heated atmospheres into chilly ones, would often save many years wasted in agony. There is no prodigal so reprehensible as the prodigal who squanders health. Money may be said to be even harder to keep than to gain, health is certainly more easily kept than regained.

## A Tiger's Jaws.

GRICE of the Twenty-sixth and I having obtained two months' leave of absence to kill tigers and panthers, made our preparations for the jungle, and started one day in March with a fine band, consisting of one big drum, one big bell, four small drums, and a pair of pistols always loaded with coarse powder and continually being let off. The noise of this concert would have been sufficient to frighten any animal out of the jungle; and, when it was not, we had some twenty or thirty men to set up supplementary yells. Our battery consisted of ten double guns—some of them rifles—and two brace of pistols. We began shooting the day after our start, at about nine in the morning, our plan being always to go some half a mile ahead of our beaters; and, having placed ourselves in some likely spot, to sit quietly, and (if possible) concealed, until they had beaten up to us. Owing to rain we saw nothing until the 22nd; when, after having walked some miles, we posted ourselves, guns and all, in a small tree, and put the beaters in. We had been in the tree about twenty minutes when Grice whispered to me—"Tiger!" I saw her almost at the same moment; we fired four barrels, all of which took effect. She charged with frightful speed right under the tree in which we were sitting, and was into the jungle in a moment. Immediately after, a peacock began calling, a sure sign of a tiger being near; and, sure enough, in another minute out came a small cub, about the size of a dog, and this Grice shot. We then began the ticklish work of "following up," generally done on elephants; but, not being rich enough to sport them, we had to go on foot. We traced our prey about half a mile into the jungle, which was so thick that one could not see more than ten yards ahead. I had separated about six or seven yards from Grice, and was looking down close to the ground, when I heard a frightful roar; and, literally before I had time to cock one barrel (I had imprudently gone into the jungle with my piece on half-cock), I felt myself jammed in the brute's jaws. She carried me about ten yards, my face, I believe, touching her cheek, when Grice, with wonderful presence of mind, put two bullets into her ear. She dropped, but still held me, when Grice running up, pulled me out of her mouth before she was actually dead. I am told that there was not two inches of space between my head and the spot where the bullets hit. Had Grice's hand shaken, I should have probably been shot through the head, as he had so very small a mark to fire at. I was perfectly conscious when pulled out of the brute's jaws.

The skin, of course, I kept as a trophy. It is nearly twelve feet long. The accident occurred fifty miles from camp; and if it had not been for Grice, Heaven knows how I should ever have got back; but he was well known to the natives, in fact they were afraid of him (his nickname was "Tiger Grice"), and he told them they would be well paid if they carried me to the next town, Jaat, about twelve miles off. After some little arrangement, they did carry me on my bed to Jaat, where Grice was almost worshipped, owing to his having, a year before, killed a tigress which had at different times killed twenty-four of the villagers, and at the time he shot her, she was in the act of eating an unfortunate woman. Twenty-four men were sent from camp with a palanquin to meet me. Grice rode all night by my side, to within a couple of miles of the camp, when he went back to continue his sport. I suffered great agony from the moment I was bitten, and a very clever doctor told me that if I had not had an iron constitution, it would have gone hard with me. As it was it took a long time before the wounds healed, and I was perfectly convalescent and able to go about.

## Household Gardening.

We are now in the midst of the Chrysanthemum season, and those who have grown the plants well will have a feast of beauty such as has scarcely been surpassed at any period of the year. Beyond all doubt this is the queen of autumn flowers, and it is as much at home in and near towns as in remote country districts. It is even grown to greater perfection in the environs of cities than in village gardens, and it is on this account it has so many admirers. Wonderful are the magnificent blooms of the incurved varieties, which are almost as round as, and many of them, larger than, cricket-balls. They are also represented in a great variety of colour: golden-yellow, soft primrose, pure white, blush rose, pink, lilac, bronze, chestnut, and crimson. Those are varieties of the Chinese Chrysanthemum which have been improved and ennobled in this country. Then come the more modern, grotesque, and richer-coloured Japanese sorts that are so rapidly increasing in popularity. Some of these have round and twisted florets like gold and crimson threads, others have flat petals which hang like rich tassels that cannot be equalled either in delicacy of structure or richness of colour by the most costly textile fabrics. Besides, there are the distinct reflexed and anemone-flowered varieties, and the chaste and diminutive Pompons. There is thus a great diversity in form as well as a remarkable variety in colour of these beautiful November flowers. As many of our readers have never seen the finest examples of Chrysanthemum culture, they can have no conception of the full beauty of the flowers; but vast numbers of them need not long remain in ignorance, but may see them and admire.

## CHRYSANTHEMUM SHOWS.

By these we do not mean the annual displays in the Temple Gardens, London, which admirably represent the Chrysanthemum as a city flower, and which can be seen free of charge throughout the month; nor do we allude to the excellent collections, open to the public, in the Victoria and Finsbury Parks of the metropolis, nor of the superior examples of culture at the Crystal Palace. All these are worthy of a visit, and are inspected by thousands of persons weekly. But the shows to which we would particularly direct attention are the annual exhibitions of the several Chrysanthemum societies which offer valuable prizes, including many silver cups, for the finest cut blooms and plants that can be produced.

There are many Chrysanthemum societies in the vicinity of the metropolis, and exhibitions are also held in most large cities and towns. Those, therefore, of our readers, and the number is undoubtedly great, who desire to see what can be done by skilful culture, have the opportunity of doing so, and those who avail themselves of the opportunity, and especially those who can visit the finest exhibitions, will, after they have seen them, thank us for directing attention to the subject.

It will be news to many, and probably to thousands, to learn that they are within reach of splendid displays of these flowers; and it may also be observed that they may be inspected in the evening as well as in the daytime, these exhibitions, unlike most others, showing to advantage under artificial light.

Yet we advise all who can do so to visit them in the afternoon, when the plants and flowers can be examined closely and inspected comfortably, as at night the crowd of persons is often so great as to render it difficult to see the stands; no shows, as a rule, being so well attended as these, except, perhaps, some notable Rose shows.

Some of the exhibitions to be held during the month are at Putney, the Westminster Aquarium, Kingston-on-Thames, Lambeth, Hampstead, Stoke Newington, and other places round the metropolis; also at Southampton, Northampton, Bath, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Lincoln, Newcastle, Manchester, and, in fact, in most large cities and towns, and the dates may be found by consulting the local papers.

Thus these beautiful autumnal displays of flowers are within easy reach of millions, and it is difficult to imagine any way in which an afternoon hour could be more agreeably spent. It is for this reason that we direct attention to these, the most bright and attractive of floral exhibitions.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE PLANTS.

A great number of readers of these notes possess Chrysanthemums of their own, and desire to know in what way they can keep them fresh and healthy over the longest possible time.

In the first place they should be sheltered from rains, and no water should now be sprinkled on the foliage and flowers; then those under glass must have as much fresh air as possible—a close murky atmosphere is fatal to the flowers; neither must the air be parchingly dry.

Special attention must also be given to the question of moisture at the roots. The soil must never be allowed to become dry, but water should always be given in anticipation of that contingency, and with the object of preventing its occurrence. Dry soil means withering foliage and short-lived blooms.

Until the flowers are half expanded, liquid manure, such as soot-water, may be given with advantage, or Carter's Fertiliser may be sprinkled on the surface of the soil and watered in. This will intensify the colour of the blooms; but, when these are nearly open, pure, soft water will be all that is needed for their support.

The great enemy of these plants is the mildew, which covers the leaves as if dusted with flour. This is in reality a living parasite, which feeds on the sap and exhausts the plants. When examined through a microscope this mildew is seen to consist of myriads of mushroom-like growths, and if not promptly destroyed they will destroy the plants.

The remedy is sulphur. Damp the leaves slightly—a spray-diffuser being admirably adapted for this purpose—and if a little soft soap is dissolved in the water it will be all the better; then, when the leaves are wet, dredge them with sulphur until the mildew is covered. In twenty-four hours the enemy will be conquered, and the sulphur can be washed off again.

## CHRYSANTHEMUMS IN WATER.

For furnishing vases for the adornment of rooms, no flowers are more suitable, and few last longer, than these. If cut just when they are fully opened, or a day or two before, and the stems placed in soft water, or inserted in sand and water just of the consistency to keep them upright, they will continue fresh for three weeks; but to ensure this they should be removed about twice a week, have an inch cut off the ends of the stems, and be given fresh water; all decayed leaves and mouldy petals to be carefully removed at the same time.

The reason why flowers keep better by having the ends of the stems cut off occasionally is this: The stems are full of small tubes, up which the water passes to support the bloom; but in time the natural decay of the ends of the stems closes the tubes and renders them inoperative; therefore, cutting off a small portion from time to time removes the decaying part, and the sap-vessels remain open for the transmission of the fluid. Now that the matter is explained,

the advice that is given on this subject will be the better understood, and consequently the more readily adopted, to the well-being of the flowers and the satisfaction of their owners.

#### CROCUSES.

We have previously alluded to some of the most beautiful and deservedly popular of spring flowering bulbous plants, such as Hyacinths; but the bright and cheerful Crocuses must not be forgotten, as the bulbs are so cheap and the flowers so gay.

These are true flowers of the sun, and should therefore not be planted in shaded positions, nor should the planting be delayed. Some bulbs may make some growth before they are placed in the soil, and then succeed fairly well when planted; but Crocuses, if they make growth an inch or more long before being placed in pots or beds, cannot be relied on to grow satisfactorily afterwards. Thousands of bulbs are destroyed yearly by the practice of waiting until spring before purchasing, because they are then sold cheaply; they are, however, in reality dear, as not one in ten, even if it flowers, will make roots and form fresh bulbs for another year.

When grown in pots the bulbs should be placed closely together, just covered with soil and buried in ashes or cocoa-nut fibre refuse, as advised for Hyacinths, until the pots are filled with roots, and the top growths are stout and strong. Pots of yellow, purple, white, and striped Crocuses are very beautiful in sunny windows and greenhouses.

When planted in clumps in gardens the soil should be well forked up, so that the water passes freely through it, the bulbs then to be placed an inch or two apart, from six to twelve in a clump, and covered two inches deep with light soil; if embedded in a little sand or gritty matter of any kind it will be an advantage.

For forming a fringe to flower-beds and borders in sunny positions, Crocuses are admirably adapted. They should be planted in a double row, the bulbs being placed about two inches apart. When in flower they are charming, and afterwards the gracefully arching foliage forms an elegant fringe of dark green, which imparts a most agreeable finish to the beds, and shows to advantage the later flowers that it encircles.

### A Noted Duellist.

ONE of the most famous duellists in the beginning of the present century, a period when duelling was of everyday occurrence, was the profligate and riotous peer, Lord Camelford. He was not only a duellist, but a boxer and a wild fellow upon town, notorious for his encounters and for his pugnacious disposition towards high and low; indeed, he was a veritable representative of the Mohocks of a century earlier.

In 1799 he savagely assaulted and wounded a gentleman in a riot at Drury Lane Theatre. Soon after he headed an attack on four "Charleys" in Cavendish Square, and maintained the struggle for an hour, when he and his associates were carried off, guarded by twenty armed watchmen. At the general peace in 1801, he came into collision with the mob, because he refused to light up his apartments in New Bond Street. He had, about the same time, a regular pugilistic encounter with a naval lieutenant in the lobby of the Royal Circus (now the Surrey Theatre), owing to the lieutenant having knocked off his hat, which he had neglected to remove when "God save the King" was being sung; and he became so great a terror to the town, that on a foppish young fellow, who had had some sort of encounter with him in a coffee-house, learning from the waiter who the stranger was, he speedily subsided from his vapouring, and stole out in a state of extreme terror, leaving untasted the wine he had just paid for.

It was after the encounter at the circus, that James and Horace Smith, who had seen the provocation his lordship had actually received, called on him to say that they were ready to testify to the fact in the event of legal proceedings being taken. They found the mantelpiece adorned with bludgeons, horsewhips, and other weapons of offence; and the noble lord, who received them with much cordiality, expressed his gratitude in a very characteristic manner. "All I can say in return is this," he exclaimed: "If ever I see either of you engaged in a row, upon my soul I'll stand by you."

Not very long after, in 1804, his violent career came to a violent close. He got into a quarrel with one Captain Best, and a meeting was arranged to take place the following morning in the fields behind Holland House. Best, who was an old friend, frequently endeavoured to come to an amicable understanding, but the other pertinaciously refused. The encounter resulted in Lord Camelford being mortally wounded. He was carried to Little Holland House, not far off, where he died three days after. With all his ruffianism, there must have been something generous in his nature, for, after he had fallen, he took the captain by the hand and said: "Best, I am a dead man; you have killed me, but I freely forgive you;" and he reproved some labourers who had run up and were endeavouring to detain his adversary, telling them that he himself had been the aggressor. Best had the reputation of being the finest shot in England; and, though Lord Camelford knew himself to be in the wrong, he refused to retract, fearing the imputation of cowardice. The scruple was mere vanity; but it serves to illustrate the half-insane character of the man.

## Correspondence.

#### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

#### ANSWERS.

**BLODWEN.**—Write to Sampson Low, Marston, and Co. for their list of publications; you will then be able to make your own selection.

**BOSCO.**—Paxton's "Botanical Dictionary," price 25s., Bradbury.

**CONSTANT READER.**—The reason why one person should have a naturally hairy skin and another person a smooth one is not known. Constitutional peculiarities, race, climate, and heredity have their several effects. Nothing, at present, is known which can be used with safety to alter the texture of the skin so as to stop the production of hairs. If the superfluous hairs be inconvenient, shaving should be practised daily, or the depilatory which was recommended in our article, "On the Care of the Hair," can be cautiously employed. If properly applied, and the skin be not too tender, it will produce the same result as very fine shaving.

**E. L. T.**—Prevention in such a case is better than cure. Are there creepers such as ivy outside the house? At any rate you must find out the cause of the visitation and get rid of it.

**FRANCES ALICE.**—1. If you wish to have apple jelly of a rich red colour, you must have russet apples, which must not be ripe. The jelly, however, can be made of any firm, good cooking apple. Quarter, pare, and core the apples; put them in the preserving-kettle, with a pint of water to each pound, and boil gently until the apples are soft but not broken. Strain the juice through a napkin and boil for twenty minutes, taking off all scum as it rises. To each pint of the juice thus reduced put half a pound of lump sugar, and boil until it will jelly. If liked, a quince or two may be used, or a little lemon peel. 2. Your handwriting is legible, and for that reason we like it. See answer No. 2 to "Ram Shackle." 3. No reply has yet been given to the question of "O. K. K. B. W. P."

**GUIDO FAWKES.**—In "Murray's Modern Domestic Cookery," under the head of "Gingerbread," we find the following: "Take one pound of treacle, one pound of butter, two pounds of flour, one ounce of ground ginger, sliced candied orange, and a glass of brandy. If not intended to be rich, omit half the butter, the brandy and lemon, and make it of rye-flour, household-flour, or oatmeal. At Leeds it is made with equal quantities of oatmeal and treacle, mixed with an eighth part of melted butter and brown sugar, and one ounce of powdered ginger, with half that quantity of other spice, to four pounds of meal. This is called in that neighbourhood 'Parkin,' and is made in almost every cottage on the 6th of November, and pieces sent about as presents. The treacle should be perfectly sweet, for, if in the least degree sour or too thick, the bread will be indifferent in flavour and appearance. Ginger, too, should be fresh ground, as it loses much of its strength by keeping. When baked, the tin must be well buttered to make the cake come out; and when done, a fork if thrust into it will come out clean."

**HERMIA.**—You had better apply to Messrs. Silver and Co., 67, Cornhill, of whom you will get all the information you require; or you can procure their "Handbook to the Colonies," in which you will find every particular which can interest intending emigrants.

**JOHN R. W. (Philadelphia).**—Newbury kindly sends a copy of the verses for which you ask. He says: "I met with them in a magazine in a coffee-room in London upwards of thirty years ago, and have never seen them in print anywhere since." We will print the verses, which are entitled, "The Nautilus and the Ammonite," as soon as we have space. Can any correspondent tell us who is the author?

**KITTY OF COLERAINE.**—1. We will endeavour to find the quotation for you. 2. "Of" is from the Latin word confer, meaning compare. 3. Darby is an old name in Yorkshire. It is known to fame by the ballad of Darby and Joan, called "The Happy Old Couple."

**LADY JANE.**—The verses were written by John Ruskin at the age of sixteen, and are to be found in a very scarce volume of his poems printed for private circulation in 1850.

#### GOOD NIGHT.

She lays her down in beauty's light,—  
Oh, peaceful may her slumbers be!  
She cannot hear my breathed "Good Night,"  
I cannot send it o'er the sea;  
And though my thoughts be fleet and free  
To fly to her with speed exceeding,  
They cannot speak, she cannot see,  
Those constant thoughts around her dwelling.

Thou planet pale, thou plaintive star!  
Adown whose light the dew comes weeping;  
Thou shinnest faint, but wondrous far;  
Oh! surely thou behold'st her sleeping.  
And though her eye thou canst not see  
Beneath its arched fringes shrouded,  
Thou pallid star! 'tis well for thee  
That such a lustre be clouded.

Oh! haste thee then, thy rays are fleet,  
And be thou, through her casement gleaming,  
A starlight in her slumber sweet,  
An influence of delightful dreaming.



Oh! is there no kind breeze to swell  
Along thy silent looks of light,  
And at her slumbrous ear to tell  
Who sent thee there to say "Good Night!"

**LEPUS.**—You will find all you require in "Book of the Rabbit," 12s. 6d., Upcott Gill, 170, Strand. A useful little book, by the same publishers, is "Rabbits for Prizes and Profit," 2s. 6d.

**LONGEVITY.**—There are not many animals whose span of life is longer than that of man. Camels live from forty to fifty years; horses average from twenty-five to thirty; oxen about twenty; sheep eight or nine; and dogs twelve to fourteen. Concerning the ages attained by non-domesticated animals only a few isolated facts are known. The East Indians believe that the life period of the elephant is about three hundred years, instances being recorded of these animals having lived one hundred and thirty years in confinement after capture at an unknown age. Whales are estimated to reach the age of four hundred years. Some reptiles are very long-lived, an instance being furnished by a tortoise which was confined in 1633 and existed until 1753, when he perished by accident. Birds sometimes reach a great age, the eagle and the swan having been known to live one hundred years. The longevity of fishes is very remarkable. The carp has been known to live two hundred years, common river trout fifty years, and the pike ninety years; while Gesner relates that a pike caught in 1497 bore a ring recording the capture of the same fish two hundred and sixty-seven years before.

**MADGE.**—1. It is not likely that you could mend your ivory umbrella-handle yourself so as to make it serviceable. 2. We can only advise you to follow the directions given with Judson's dyes, and if you cannot succeed, to write to the maker for further instructions.

**RAM SHACKLE.**—1. You are probably thinking of *Lloyd's Weekly London News*. 2. As to "the best person to whom to write to have one's character told from one's handwriting," we can only say that our opinion of such persons is pretty much that entertained by Lord Dundreary, that "one is as good as another, perhaps better."

**VULPUS.**—1. A book entitled "Shorthand Systems," which includes, of course, Odell's, is published by L. Upcott Gill, price 1s. See answer to "Phonetic," *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 125. 2. "Ambulance Lectures," by Dr. Weatherly, 1s. (Griffith and Farran), would probably suit you. We are not aware that the questions have been printed. 3. Many thanks for your kind offer, of which we will avail ourselves should opportunity occur.

## Puzzles for Prizes.

### RULES.

1. Answers should be written on one side of the paper only, and should be posted so as to reach the office, 24, Great New Street, Fetter Lane, E.C., by the first delivery on the Tuesday after date of publication. Envelopes must be addressed, "The Puzzle Editor," and each answer must bear the *nom de plume* of the writer legibly written on the top of the first sheet.

2. A First Prize of TEN SHILLINGS and a Second Prize of FIVE SHILLINGS will be awarded each week to the best and second-best answers respectively to the two puzzles set. The Puzzle Editor reserves, however, the right of withholding either the First or Second Prize, or both, if, in his opinion, the answers received should not come up to the required standard of merit.

3. No winner of a First Prize will be eligible for another Prize during the same quarter. A winner of a Second Prize will be eligible for another Second Prize in the same quarter, but not for a First Prize.

4. Every Prize-winner must consent to send his or her name and address for publication.

5. The Puzzle Editor's decision is to be taken as final.

### PUZZLES.

#### 1. Five Duplicates.

We propose this week a task which our readers will find somewhat worrying and trying to the patience. It is to compose Five Duplicates, that is, sentences in which the letters at the beginning of certain words are duplicates of those at the end of the preceding word. The following example will better illustrate our meaning than further explanation: *Papa patronised Edwin's institute*. We shall afterwards give for solution a selection of the Puzzles that will be sent in. The duplicated syllables must be carefully underlined to facilitate examination.

#### 2. Charade Word-Square.

The lights of the following Charade form a five-letter word-square.

My first, made with care, will your patience reward;  
My second, if wise, you will not over-rate;  
Do my third to the answer ('tis not very hard);  
Of my fourth there's no end in this tolerant state;  
My fifth in the plural, and free from pomade,  
Add beauty and charm to a young woman's pate.

#### Prize-Winners in No. 129.

Three Equal Prizes, 5s. { "Acacia."  
"Ethel May."  
"Abracadabra."

All competitors are requested to send their names and addresses.

The Winner of the First Prize in No. 126, was Mrs. Clarence Joyce The Hops, Hookwood Common, Horley, Surrey ("Hookwood").

#### UNASKED RIDDLES.

1. Why is a twelvemonth tenancy like a very wide mouth? Because it goes from (y)ear to (y)ear.

2. What is the difference between a strawberry and the wife of Ptolemy Euergetes? One is a nice berry and the other Berenice.

3. What is the difference between a man who views a flydriver and one who interviews a lawyer? One sees a flyman and the other fees a sly man.

4. Why does a note of hand resemble the French for yes? Because one is an I O U and the other oui.

5. Why may a bargeman be said to weigh less than General Mite? Because he is a lighterman.

ACACIA.

1. Why is a very pronounced smile like poor Uncle Phulox's hair? Because it goes from (y)ear to (y)ear.

2. What is the difference between an illustrious lady of old and a ripe currant? One is a nice berry and the other is Berenice.

3. How does a person looking at the driver of a hired carriage differ from one who employs a private detective? One sees a flyman and the other fees a sly man.

4. Why does an Englishman's promise to pay differ from a Frenchman's word of consent? Because one is an I O U and the other oui?

5. Why would a Swede make a better bargeman than a Spaniard? Because he is a lighter man.

ETHEL MAY.

1. Why is an annual tenancy like a very broad grin? Because it goes from (y)ear to (y)ear.

2. How does a strawberry differ from the lady who was alone privileged to witness the Olympic Games? One is a nice berry and the other Berenice.

3. What is the difference between a gentleman looking at a cabman, and another who gives a cheque to a lawyer noted for sharp practice? One sees a flyman and the other fees a sly man.

4. Why is the memorandum of a debt unlike a French adverb of affirmation? Because one is an I O U and the other an oui.

5. Why is it probable that a bargeman, if he wrestled with another man, would come off second best? Because he is a lighterman.

ABRACADABRA.

The Riddles do not call for much remark. Those sent by "Irish Exile" are perhaps expressed with greater point and conciseness than the others, but as she is not eligible for another Prize during the present quarter, the Prizes are divided equally between "Abracadabra," "Acacia," and "Ethel May," there being very little difference between these answers. The same ideas have presented themselves to the minds of most competitors, but they have been expressed pithily by some and clumsily by others.

1. Why is a large mouth like an annuity? Because it goes from (y)ear to (y)ear.

2. What is the difference between a strawberry and a lady once famed for her fine hair? One is a nice berry and the other is Berenice.

3. What is the difference between one man hailing a cab and another tipping the railway-porter? One sees a flyman and the other fees a sly man.

4. What is the difference between a promise of money and a promise of marriage? Because one is an I O U and the other an oui.

5. Why should a bargee have a better chance than Fred Archer in riding a handicap? Because he is a lighterman.

IRISH EXILE.

1. Why is a telephone like a clock that needs winding only once in a century? Because it goes from (y)ear to (y)ear.

2. What is the difference between coffee and some Egyptian ruins? One is a nice berry and the other is Berenice.

3. What is the difference between a man hailing a cabdriver and a man paying a private detective? One sees a flyman and the other fees a sly man.

4. Why is a note of hand of no more value than a Frenchman's word of acknowledgment? Because one is an I O U and the other is an oui.

5. Why does a stout boatman, carrying a sack of coals on board a vessel, weigh less than the champion sculler. Because he is a lighterman.

AMBROSIA.

1. Why is "HOUSEHOLD WORDS" like "Humpty Dumpty's" mouth in "Through the Looking-Glass." Because it goes from (y)ear to (y)ear.

2. What is the difference between a strawberry and a lady with famous hair? One is a nice berry and the other is Berenice.

3. What is the difference between a small boy gazing at a cabby and a man paying his lawyer's fee? One sees a flyman and the other fees a sly man.

4. Why is a promissory note like a French affirmative? Because one is an I O U and the other an oui.

5. Why would a bargeman be a better jockey than Archer? Because he is a lighterman.

KATE.

1. Why is a broad grin like an almanac? Because it goes from (y)ear to (y)ear.

2. What is the difference between a gooseberry and an ancient queen? One is a nice berry and the other Berenice.

3. Why is one who hails a driver of a fly like one who pays a detective? One sees a flyman and the other fees a sly man.

4. Why is the acknowledgment of a debt like a French affirmative? Because one is an I O U and the other an oui.

5. Why would you rather carry a dock boatman than a sailor? Because he is a lighterman.

ELLA.

The answer to the Acrostic is as follows:

C	ambri	C
A	lmeri	A
L	eve	L
E	nterpris	E
D	ea	D
O	ntari	O
N	inepi	N
I	rredent	I
A	lfa	A

**OUT OF THE RUNNING.**—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize: No. 118.—1st Prize, "Puddle"; 2nd Prize, "Electron." No. 119.—1st Prize, "Ekalsek"; 2nd Prize, "Ina." No. 120.—1st Prize, "Dransom"; 2nd Prize, "Alice." No. 121.—1st Prize, "Achilles"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 122.—1st Prize, "Midnight Oil"; 2nd Prize, "Stella." No. 123.—1st Prize, "Zyx"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 124.—1st Prize, "Ferdinando"; 2nd Prize, "Ambrosia." No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frenaham," "Ryland," "Malblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood"; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan"; 2nd Prize, "Malblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May."

Answers have also been received from—Ambrosia, Alice, Borderer, Ella, Fishy, Irish Exile, Juno, Kangaroo, Kate K., Ladybird, Manhattan, Mary, Spider, Tarradiddle, Twinkling, Starlight, Zerilla, Zigzag.

**ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.**—CACKLE.—We should have replied to your letter, had we received it early enough for the answer to be of use to you. You will see the explanation in the answer to the Acrostic printed above. BROWN WREN AND JOHN STREAKS.—We regret very much that your papers have been destroyed. Had your request been sent a few days earlier it would have been in time.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 128 received too late from Lara, Conyn, and Bettina.

## Odds and Ends.

DANIEL WILSON, Bishop of Calcutta, was a most eccentric old man. As usual, at family prayers, which he invariably conducted himself, he prayed by name for the people staying with him. There was a gentleman from Madras for whom he prayed, and then he said, "Let us pray for his dear wife and dear children." A thought struck him; he paused, and said to his chaplain, "By-the-bye, is he a married man?" "No, my lord, he is not married." "Ah well, never mind," he remarked, "he may marry, and the children may come." On another occasion it is related that he was preaching against the sin of avarice, when he delivered himself of the following remarks: "My brethren, there are several forms of avarice; one form has recently been brought home to me most unpleasantly. You all know my archdeacon there, a most excellent man. Well, last week he sold me a horse for five hundred rupees; it is not worth ten. This, my brethren, I consider a most unpleasant form of avarice."

A TEACHER finding it difficult to obtain the prompt attendance of the boys in her class resolved to adopt a plan which she felt sure would be successful. She said to the boys: "Now, I will give a bright penny to each one who will be in his place every Sunday." The plan seemed to work well until one Sunday not a boy appeared in his place. The teacher was surprised and somewhat discouraged that her plan had not succeeded. But the next day, while walking down the street and thinking what to do next, she met one of the boys and said to him: "Well, Johnnie, where were you yesterday?" "At home, mum." "But why did you and the other boys not come to Sunday-school and get your pennies?" "Oh, teacher, 'cause we've struck; we won't come for less than twopence now." We were not informed as to how long the strikers held out, or whether the advance was granted.

DR. YOUNG was walking in his garden at Welwyn in company with two ladies (one of whom he afterwards married), when the servant came to acquaint him that a gentleman wished to speak with him. As he refused to go, one lady took him by the right arm, the other by the left, and led him to the garden gate; when, finding resistance in vain, he bowed, laid his hand upon his heart, and spoke the following lines:

"Thus Adam look'd when from the garden driven,  
And thus disputed orders sent from heaven.  
Like him I go, but yet to go am loth;  
Like him I go, for angels drove us both.  
Hard was his fate, but mine is more unkind;  
His Eve went with him, but mine stays behind."

At a period when hotels were fewer and less attractive in Peterhead than they are now, a native of the sunny south made a sojourn at the best one of the time. Before leaving he called for his bill—a request that somewhat puzzled the worthy landlord, who was not in the habit of giving written bills, nor by any means an adept of caligraphy. The traveller, however, was to be puzzled in return, for on glancing at the contents of the bill when produced, he was fairly put to a stand by the following entry: "Threepence for fash." "Fash!" exclaimed the indignant cockney, "what is that? I never got any fash." "Ou no, man," said the landlord coolly, "but ye gied some."

THE depressing intelligence comes from Washington that five years must elapse before the scientists have finished their calculations upon the transit of Venus. The announcement, no doubt, will cause considerable gloom, and the wheels of progress may be retarded by the delay, but as long as we can read in our scientific journals that, if a man had an arm long enough to touch the sun with his forefinger, the burning sensation would not reach his body during his lifetime, we shall try to worry along a few years without the transit calculations.

HORACE WALPOLE gives an instance of ready wit in a Paris fishwoman. The Dauphin having recovered from a serious illness, the "*dames de la Halle*" waited on the King (Louis XV.) to offer their congratulations. "What would have become of us had our dear Dauphin died?" said the spokeswoman; "we should have lost our all." "Yes," put in a second fishwoman, who observed the king's brow darken at this somewhat equivocal compliment to himself, "we should, indeed, have lost our all, for our good king would never have survived his son's death."

A SCOTCH minister was one day engaged in visiting some members of his congregation, and he came to the door of a house where his gentle tapping could not be heard for the noise of contention within. After waiting a little he opened the door and entered, saying, "I should be much obliged if you would tell me who is the head of this house?" "Weel, sir," said the husband and father, "if ye sit down a wee while maybe be able to tell ye, for we're just trying to settle that point."

DR. JOHNSON was very outspoken in his opinion regarding stupid people. Inveighing against a worthy but extremely foolish female acquaintance, a lady present reminded him that she was a very good woman, adding, "and I trust we shall meet her in Paradise." "Madam," roared the exasperated doctor, "I never desire to meet fools anywhere."

A FEW days ago two persons were heard disputing as to the meaning of the word "lampoon." The one accused the other of never having heard of the word before. "What! Do you think I have never heard of lampooning whales!" was the reply.

SOME medical writers maintain that it is conducive to health for a man to sleep with his head towards the north. Without enquiring closely, we may infer that it is but the natural result of the affinity that reaches from pole to pole.

"It is very sad," said a Scotchman, "to think on the number of the world's greatest men who have lately been called to their last account. And the fact is," added he, with unction, "I don't feel very well myself."

JAPAN is unnecessarily cruel to her police. A late press regulation compels editors to hold original manuscripts three weeks to permit their perusal by the police.

THERE is no music in a hat-band. This is, perhaps, the secret of their universal popularity.

HUME relates an amusing anecdote of the Earl of Dorset, in the seventeenth century, who was certainly an ingenious quietist. Some young gentlemen, known to the earl, had foolishly drunk "Confusion to the Archbishop," Laud being then at the height of his unpopularity. Information being laid before the Star Chamber, it might have gone hardly with the rash youths, but for the ingenuity of the Earl of Dorset, to whom they appealed for protection. Learning that the only witness against them was one of the drawers at the tavern, "Tush," he cried, "the drawer was mistaken; you drank confusion to the archbishop's enemies, and the fellow was gone before you pronounced the last word." It is needless to say that the young men adopted this kindly suggestion as their line of defence, and saved themselves from fine or imprisonment.

ONCE Tom Sheridan asked his father for a supply of cash. "Money I have none," was the reply. "But money I must have," said the other. "If that be so," said the affectionate parent, "you will find a case of loaded pistols upstairs and a horse ready saddled in the stable—the night is dark, and you are within half a mile of Hounslow Heath." "I understand what you mean," said Tom, "but I tried that last night. I unluckily stopped Peake, your treasurer, who told me that you had been beforehand with him, and had robbed him of every sixpence in the world."

WHEN Sir Joseph Napier was made Lord Chancellor in 1858, it was found that he was physically disqualified for the duties. To mend the inconvenience of his extreme deafness, however, he mastered, in advance of each case, all the documents connected with it, and the subsequent performance in court partook very much of the character of a dumb show, so far as the observation of Sir Joseph went. Years after he was appointed Judge of Appeal. "What!" exclaimed Mr. Justice Keogh, "a man who cannot hear the sound of his own bell, to make him the Judge of a Peal?"

IN Germany smoking is forbidden in certain aristocratic parks. An Englishman was walking in one of these places puffing a cigar, and accompanied by his servant. Suddenly a policeman halted him, and demanded the fine of ten marks for smoking. "Here is a twenty mark bill," replied John Bull. "But I can't give the change," replied the policeman. "Here is a cigar, John," said the Englishman to his servant, "you smoke off the other ten marks."

A LATE judge was a noted wag. A young lawyer was once making his first effort before him, and had thrown himself on the wings of his imagination far into the upper regions, and was seemingly preparing for a higher ascent, when the judge exclaimed: "Hold on, hold on, my dear sir! Don't go any higher, for you are already out of the jurisdiction of the court."

A CITY clerk has just proved that Paris green on certain kinds of pie is entirely harmless. It is the pie which is generally fatal.

## NOTICE.

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WITH A COLOURED PLATE REPRESENTING

ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD DURING THE HEAVY SNOWSTORM  
ON THE 16th JANUARY, 1861.

PRICE SIXPENEE.

## NOTICE.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 133.]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## Our Lucy.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

THE prettiest girl in the regiment—that's what she was, bless her! and as good as pretty, though I say it who ought to hold my tongue, perhaps, seeing that Lucy is my own daughter—the only child left to me and the missus, out of four. Yes, they're all of 'em gone except Lucy; but she's left to us still, and has little ones of her own now.

Of the other three, all boys, one died of croup before he was twelve months old; another was taken from us by cholera, poor little chap! but the third lived to be near seventeen—a fine, likely lad, who might have been alive still—poor Bob!—but for his own rashness.

No, I won't call it that neither, for it sounds like blaming him, and I don't mean to do that. He was always a venturesome little fellow; though as good as gold, in spite of being brought up in a rough school; and fond of all sorts of games and sports from the time he was first able to run about—cricket, football, running, and jumping, anything, in fact, in which he could use his limbs. But what he took most delight in was the water. He was a splendid swimmer, and never seemed to get tired. One day, poor lad, he miscalculated his strength. He was in the band of ours, and went out one morning with a party of his comrades for a swim in the Goomtee. We were stationed at Lucknow then. The Goomtee is not a particularly wide river just there in ordinary times; but it is deep, and the current swift and strong always, and after the monsoons, as it happened to be just then, the river swells to double its usual width, and runs like a mill-race.

Not far from the cantonments there is an old palace called Bibiapore, where the King of Oude formerly kept his womenkind, and in the garden that surrounds it—the Secundra Bagh—is a *ghat*, or landing-place for the boats that used to come up from the Chutter Munzil. Being dug out of the bank, it made a capital bathing-place out of the current, and most of the lads contented themselves with a dip there. But Bob and another, as venturesome as himself, swam across and made their way along the opposite bank to a bridge of boats nearly a mile up the river—towards the city, that is, and then they plunged in and raced down to where they had left their comrades. My boy was the conqueror, but not by a great distance, for they were pretty nearly matched. His opponent was rather put out at being beaten, and said it was only because my poor lad knew the river better than he, and had chosen the side where the current was swiftest, and challenged him to race part of the way back against stream.

Well, Bob accepted the challenge, though some of the more cautious among the party tried to dissuade them both from attempting such a severe trial of their strength, but neither would listen. They were good friends enough in all other ways, but there was a little rivalry and jealousy between them on this one point, and once more they plunged into the water to decide it.

Poor lads! Neither one nor the other came to the shore again alive. The stream was so swift and powerful, that, strong as they were, it was as much as they could do to make the least way against it. Still they kept on, till a shout from the watchers at the *ghat* told Bob that something was wrong. So there was; for the other lad was sinking. My boy made for him—bless his brave, good heart!—though it was right into the midst of a swirling, twisting eddy on the far side of the river, where it was deepest and swiftest. Those who were looking on could give no help, and under their eyes the two lads, exhausted as they already were, were swept struggling away, never to be seen alive again.

Ah well! it's many a long year ago now since that blow fell on us. We've got over it, of course; but it was heavy enough then—worse, I'rape, on the missus than me. We'd one thing to be proud and thankful for, though. Our lad had never in his short life given us a moment's trouble from any ill-doing, and he died bravely trying to save another from death. Another thing gave us some little comfort. We were afraid that we should never see him again, for it's a lonely country the river runs through for many miles after getting past Lucknow; and infested with reptiles in the water, to say nothing of tigers prowling about the banks, and carrion-birds by the hundred. I had been all through the Mutiny, and many a time seen such horrible sights that the mere remembrance of them made me shudder to think of poor Bob's remains meeting such a fate.

But, thank Heaven, that was spared us! The news of the sad

accident was no sooner brought up to cantonments than the adjutant at once told off a search-party, and in less than a couple of hours afterwards my poor lad and his unfortunate companion were found, washed ashore and undisfigured, not more than half-a-dozen miles down the river; and though, as a general rule, only men belonging to the same troop follow a private soldier's funeral, the whole regiment was turned out by the Colonel's orders in honour of my Bob when he was carried to his last home.

But it was not of him, after all, that I began to tell my story, but of my girl Lucy, only when I mentioned his name I couldn't help retelling the manner in which he was lost to us, and so left her alone for our comfort.

And a comfort she was, to be sure, in every way, being then the only one left us. We didn't spoil her, though, on that account; but, indeed, I don't think if we'd tried to do so ever so hard it would have been any use, for she was the best child ever lived—clever, too; and for good looks—!

Well, for my part, I often puzzled me how she could have come by them. For good looks they were, mind you, not mere prettiness; and there's a deal of difference between the two. Why, she might have been a lady born, might Lucy, instead of the daughter of a rough sergeant of dragoons and his wife, who had worked too hard all her life to have soft, small, and well-shaped hands and feet and delicate features, like our girl, to say nothing of a figure and way of holding herself as she walked that a born princess mightn't have been ashamed of.

Perhaps it isn't quite the thing for me to be sounding her praises, but facts is facts, and, as I said at the beginning, and everyone gave in, that there wasn't another girl in the regiment as could hold a candle to our Lucy. And proud enough we were of her—her mother and me—I need scarcely say.

For all that, there came a time when we both of us felt rather uncomfortable about this very thing, though, and half wished she wasn't quite so different from the rest. It wasn't only that her face was pretty, you see, but her manner was so good, and, as I mentioned just now, she had such a way of carrying herself that no one could help noticing her. Perhaps my drilling her helped to that a little. I didn't see why a girl should stoop and not know how to carry her head any more than a boy, and knowing how many of them I'd changed in my time from lubberly slouching louts into smart-looking soldiers, I took her in hand the same way while she was young. I'd noticed, too, how nearly all the native women I saw had a stately way of holding their heads, from balancing pitchers upon them, and I taught her the same way, and she took to it quite natural.

Then she was clever, too, and taught herself by books a good deal more than was to be learnt in the regimental school, so that, what with one thing and another, as she grew up she came to look and behave like a little lady more and more every day, till, the truth is, I began to get uneasy—and so did the missus, too, for that matter—and afraid Lucy might grow discontented, and perhaps look down upon us for not being as well educated as herself.

But not a bit of it. I say again, she was as good as good could be, a more loving nor obedient daughter never lived; and as to another fear that we sometimes had, lest her good looks might prove a snare to her, why she never seemed even to know that she was beautiful, much less to give herself airs about it or seek for admiration.

But, if she wasn't aware of it, others soon found it out for themselves, and as Lucy grew out of girlhood and came to look more the woman every day, there was more than one tried to make up to her, amongst others a young subaltern of my troop, not long out from England, who was constantly making some excuse or other for dropping in at my bungalow at odd times.

It wasn't all at once that I took any particular notice of this—I was sergeant-major of the troop then, and the captain being away on leave up the hills, Mr. Conyers was left in charge during his absence. Of course all the real work was in my hands—keeping the books, issuing pay, looking after the discipline of the men, and so on, but Mr. Conyers, as a commissioned officer, was in command, and nominally responsible, so that it was quite natural that he should often have occasion to consult me, who knew more about the duties than he could possibly do, and if he was good-natured and easy-going enough to come to my quarters instead of making me attend him at his, it was not altogether so uncommon a thing as to seem strange.

So for a while I suspected nothing, and I don't believe anybody else in my place would either. Mr. Conyers was a fine, manly young fellow, but very little more than a lad after all, and meant no harm, I'm sure. But cantonment life in India is very dreary, especially during the hot months, when all who can possibly get leave are off to Simla, Kussowli, or some of those places in the hills, and only enough officers remain on the plains to do duty, and so, finding time hang very heavy on his hands, Mr. Conyers took it into his head to fall head over ears in love with our Lucy.

My eyes were opened at last, and as soon as they were I knew it would never do, of course. Mr. Conyers was not only my superior officer, he was rich and of good family, while I came of people only just a bit above the labouring class, and my wife's relations were nothing but small tradespeople. So when I first began to suspect the real reason of his taking so much interest in troop affairs, and being so anxious to see that all went straight that he was continually finding his way to my bungalow on some pretext, sometimes as often as two or three times a day, I watched a little more closely, and soon felt satisfied that my suspicions were correct.

I didn't have any trouble in this. For one reason, because Mr. Conyers was really too honest and frank to hide his motives as well as some men might have done, and it wasn't long before I saw as plain as could be that if I chose to take advantage of his folly I might have a gentleman for my son-in-law. There was no mistake about it, he meant honest. If he hadn't—if I'd thought he was seeking my little girl's ruin, it would have been worse for him, that's all.

But I'd no call to be afraid of that, as I soon found out.

I don't take long making up my mind about a thing when I once set about it. Straight ways and always above-board has been my motto through life, and I've mostly found 'em act best in the long run. It's much better to speak one's mind openly than go at it in a roundabout fashion, I say; so when I saw which way the wind was blowing, I made up my mind to put the stopper on at once before matters went too far, and tackled Mr. Conyers one evening after the men had left the horse-lines, and he and I were walking together across the parade-ground.

I didn't quite know how to open the ball when it came to the push after all, and felt a bit awkward, but he gave me a good chance, and I took it up sharp.

"There's the muster-roll to look over for to-morrow's parade, sergeant-major," says he, off-handed like. "I'd better step over with you to your quarters now and see that it's all in order."

"Very well, sir," says I, for the excuse was a fair one this time, but as soon as we got inside, I saw, by the way his eyes wandered round the room, what he was looking for. Lucy was not there, however, as she usually was. I had taken care of that, and I up and told him plump that it would be the same every time he came.

"What do you mean, Miles?" says he, stammering a little, and his face flushed up just like a girl's, and that's no bad sign, I take it, that a man's not a scoundrel at heart. "You surely don't think that I—"

I stopped him there, and told him quite plain just what I did think, and asked him, as a gentleman, to leave off paying attentions that could not be meant serious. At that he blazed up, and declared I insulted and wronged him. It was quite true, he said, he did love Lucy, and wasn't ashamed to own it. He cared nothing for difference of rank, or what the world might say, and, in short, ended by declaring that his firm intention was to make my daughter his wife if she would accept him.

Well, it was a temptation, and I shouldn't be telling the truth if I denied it. I hadn't quite lost my senses, however, if he had, and I told him that though I was proud enough of the honour he did Lucy by such a proposal, more particular as it proved him to be the gentleman I always took him for, that it wasn't to be thought of for a moment. His friends would never consent to it, I knew; and though he was so madly in love then, and so bent upon having his own way, that it would have been easy enough if I had been so minded to make sure of him by letting them get married on the sly, I couldn't bring myself to be a party to any such underhand doings. I told him this, too, and though he begged and prayed that he might be allowed to see Lucy herself, and plead his own cause with her, I held firm, and I thought then—I am quite sure now—I was right.

I dare say that plenty of men would have acted different, and small blame to 'em, p'raps; for it's not every day such a chance turns up to have one's daughter made a lady of. I don't deny that I was sore tempted, but I had sense enough to know that though money and position are very good things to have in this world, they are not all that are wanted for happiness, and that the chances were a good many to one that if Mr. Conyers had his way he'd very soon repent when he found his wife looked down upon by the people he belonged to, or, even supposing his love was a true one instead of the mere boyish fancy for a pretty face I took it to be, and that in time his wife's origin was forgotten and she was received in society, it could only be at the cost of giving up us, her parents, and becoming as much a stranger as though she had never belonged to us.

Still, I think I'd have risked even that to see our Lucy rich and respected if I'd thought it would give her happiness; and I told the missus what had happened, and asked her to try and find out whether our girl had any liking for Mr. Conyers. Indeed, we both of us sounded her on the subject, very carefully though, so as not to let her suspect what we were at, much less that matters had gone so far that he had actually asked for her hand, and the upshot of it was

that I felt quite satisfied she not only didn't care a dump for him, but hadn't the least idea of the fancy he had got into his head.

And I wasn't sorry, for Lucy was only sixteen, after all, and much too young to my fancy to be troubling her head about love and marriage; and so I told my gentleman next day that it couldn't possibly be, and appealed to him again as a gentleman and a man of honour not to persist.

But I might just as well have talked to the wind. He insisted upon seeing Lucy; declared that nothing but her own word should induce him to give her up; and went on like a regular madman. I was at my wit's end what to do, for I couldn't shut the girl up, and sooner or later the young idiot—that's just what he was then, no better—would get to speak to her, and what good could that do except to upset her and make her uncomfortable? If we'd been at home, I might have sent her away for a time to some of my friends or her mother's, but out there it was impossible. I'd got a tidy little sum put by in the regimental savings bank, certainly, but not enough to spend on such an expensive business as sending her to England.

There was only way I could see out of the mess, and I took it. I went to the Colonel and told him all about the affair from beginning to end.

"You're quite right, sergeant-major," he said, when I'd finished. "If Mr. Conyers were an older man I should say let him please himself, but, as it is, such a match would most likely ruin all his prospects in life. However, make yourself easy, I'll take care you shall have no more trouble in the matter."

And Colonel Sartoris was as good as his word, for in less than a fortnight an order came down from the Commander-in-Chief's office at Simla detailing Sub-Lieutenant the Honourable Percy F. Conyers to proceed to Deolalee in charge of invalids and time-expired men who were going home that season, and the Colonel told me on the quiet, that private instructions from head-quarters had been forwarded to the invalid depôt that Mr. Conyers was to be told off for duty there during the season, so that there would be no chance of his returning to Lucknow for at least six months.

"And in that time," says the Colonel to me, "the young idiot will have come to his senses, most likely. Why, he'll be a peer one of these days, and though your daughter is pretty and good enough for any man, it would be folly to suppose that anything but misery could come of raising her so far above her station. However, I needn't point that out to you, Miles," he went on, quite friendly like, "your conduct in the matter has been that of an honourable man"—that's just his own words, though, for my part, I don't mind confessing that I'd thought more about Lucy's happiness than what people might think of me—"and depend upon it you will not regret it."

Well, the upshot was that Mr. Conyers went away—not without making several attempts to see Lucy, but I managed to keep so close a watch over her, without her once suspecting it, that they never met, and she didn't know till long afterwards how near a chance she'd had of being "my lady" if she'd liked. One thing I'm quite sure of, though. If that had come to pass, she wouldn't have been as happy as she is now, bless her heart.

But I shall come to that by-and-by. As I said, Mr. Conyers was gone at last, and I was more easy in my mind. Still, what had passed served to show that our little girl was no longer to be looked on as a child, that men would be seeking her, and I must make up my mind to losing her some day, and that soon, for in India it is a rare thing for any girl of marriageable age to have to wait long for an offer, and one wasn't a great while coming, that seemed to me suitable in every way.

Our trumpet-major, Stephen Redfern, was the man, and as far as I was concerned, there was no need for him to ask twice. He was a fine handsome fellow of about seven-and-twenty, a first-rate musician—indeed, he acted as bandmaster, and had been recommended for the post as soon as it was vacant—a well-educated man, and with the best of characters. Perhaps, however, I shouldn't have been in such a hurry to give my consent, only that I thought it would be much better that when Mr. Conyers came back he should find Lucy married. Anyhow, I told Redfern he had my best wishes, gave him every opportunity of settling it with Lucy, and all seemed to go just as we wished.

Certainly Lucy hung back a little at first. The fact is, she had known Steve ever since she was a toddling wee thing of five or six years old, and he, a trumpeter then, about ten years her senior, used to take her backwards and forwards to school. Then as she grew up, he was a constant visitor at my quarters, and little by little, he told me, love for her had crept into his heart. He was a good-looking fellow in his way, that many a girl would have jumped at, but he kept aloof from all but Lucy, though she, somehow, didn't seem to care for his attentions. This I put down to shyness, however, and both her mother and myself constantly sung his praises to her, till in the end she consented to become his wife.



They had known each other so long, that there was no need for any delay when the matter was once settled, and the wedding was fixed for Christmas, we then being in October. But when the time came it had to be put off after all, for our poor little girl was very ill with a low fever, and the doctor looked very grave over her.

It was nothing actually serious in itself, he said, for her constitution was sound, but he was afraid that another hot season might be dangerous, and advised, if it was at all possible, that she should be sent home by the long sea route for change of air.

As I have said, I had a little money put by, and I needn't say that I'd have spent every rupee of it to save our girl's life, and restore her to health, but there was no occasion to touch it, after all, for our major's wife, a delicate young lady, was going home for the same reason, so she offered to take Lucy with her as her maid, and to bring her out again the next year when she rejoined her husband.

Of course such a chance as that was too good to be thrown away, and though it was hard enough for us to part with her, it would have been harder still to lose her altogether, as the doctor said would most likely be the case if she stayed in India.

So we had to let her go, and Steve Redfern was obliged to wait another year for his wife.

## CHAPTER II.

INSTEAD of twelve months, however, it was two years before our Lucy came back to us, and long and lonely enough the time seemed, I need hardly say, seeing we'd never lost sight of her before in her life for as much as a day. Poor Stephen, too, went about looking quite dismal, and seemed to take no pleasure in anything but getting to our place of an evening and talking to the missus about the one subject that was uppermost in their minds.

And in mine, too, as far as that goes, but then, of course, I'd plenty to attend to, having been promoted to regimental sergeant-major soon after Lucy went away. I didn't want to take the step at first, seeing that I'd a half suspicion as it was offered me as a sort of reward like, for what I'd done by Mr. Conyers and Lucy, but the Colonel assured me that he'd had me in his eye for the berth as soon as it was vacant all along, and as I knew that the only man senior to me really wasn't equal to it, being no drill, and worn out with long service, too, I made no more bones of the matter. It gave me a good deal more work, of course, but I didn't mind that, and a little later on Steve was appointed bandmaster, so we both got a bit of a rise in the world.

Meanwhile it was a long time before we heard any word from Lucy, or any news of the ship she went home in, being a sailing vessel that touched at no port; but as soon as she reached England, as she did quite safe, she wrote regular every mail (it was only once a fortnight then), generally to us, but sometimes specially to Steve instead, and he always brought her letters for me and the missus to read.

And there was no reason why he shouldn't. Affectionate enough they were, no doubt, but I sometimes fancied that if I'd been a young man and my promised wife was divided from me by thousands of miles, I should have liked something from her a little less matter-of-fact in style than the way our Lucy wrote to Stephen Redfern.

However, they seemed to satisfy him, which was the chief point, and, in return, never a mail left for England but carried with it a long letter from him to her.

So the time passed on, but at the end of the first year, when we were expecting soon to hear from Lucy that she had started on her return voyage, there came instead a letter from Mrs. Villiers to her husband, telling him that her doctor had advised another year's stay at home.

There was a message for me, too, to say that the same gentleman had seen our Lucy, and recommended a similar course in her case, as, though she was in perfect health then, her recovery was too recent to make it quite safe to expose herself so soon to the danger of a relapse.

There was no help for it, therefore, and it was settled she should remain the other year, part of which time—while the major's wife was travelling on the Continent—she was to spend with my only living relation, a sister who was comfortably married in Yorkshire, and to Riggdale Farm Lucy accordingly went in due course.

From there she still wrote very regularly, and at first as cheerfully as ever; but after a time both her mother and I began to notice a change, and her letters to Stephen grew less frequent. Her health was quite restored, she told us, and her aunt and uncle were both very kind to her. She had made a number of nice acquaintances, too, for my brother-in-law was pretty well-to-do in the world, and had many friends, and she felt almost sorry to have to leave a place where she had learned to be so happy, but that it would be to come back to her dear parents.

To Stephen she wrote less often, certainly, but her manner was

altered. I thought then—and so did he, poor fellow!—that it was absence had wrought the change. There's an old song tells us that it "makes the heart grow fonder," and that's what we both thought had come to pass, for when she did write to him now it was as though there was no other thing she longed for more than to be back with him, and she made so many allusions to the subject that it was no wonder we were deceived.

For deceiving ourselves we were, all of us, or, I should say, being deceived by her. Not wilfully, though. Our Lucy was too honest-hearted a girl for that; but there's the truth, and it's got to be told.

She came back to us at last, just after the second Christmas she'd been away. Pretty and engaging she'd always been, but now she was beautiful—there's no other word for it. I went down to the station to meet her—a new line had just been opened up to us from Cawnpore—and I could hardly believe my eyes when she got out of the train and came towards me.

"Can this be our Lucy?" I says, taken quite aback, for she looked a lady, though her dress was plain and quiet enough, she never being a girl to trick herself out in finery above her station. "Can this be our Lucy?"

"Yes, father," she cried, sobbing a little as she flung her arms round my neck and gave me a hug; "come back to you again, your own Lucy."

And with that she burst out crying as though her heart was like to break. But between us, me and her mother managed to quiet her after a bit, and while the natives I had brought down with me were collecting her trunks, I went a few steps away and returned with Stephen, who had been waiting impatiently enough in the background till our first greetings were over, and thinking, I dare say, poor fellow! that his claim to welcome her was even greater than ours.

"Here's someone else to say how d'y'e do to, my dear," I says, and she looked without seeming to know him at first, for he wore a suit of coloured clothes—civilian's dress, I should say; but that's what we soldiers always call anything but regimentals—and Stephen seemed rather hurt, for he'd have known her anywhere, changed as she was, and in any dress, he said afterwards; and then she turned first pale and then red as she went up to him and put both her little hands into his.

"Stephen," she said, trying to smile, "I have come back to you, you see."

"Never to be parted again, darling," he answered, kissing her in front of everybody, and there was a good crowd at the station too, for we had got a draft out from the depot by the same ship that Lucy came in.

She blushed prettily, but allowed him to kiss her, though she drew away from him almost directly, and I noticed a sort of half-frightened, appealing expression in her eyes as she looked away behind me. There was something so odd in the glance that I turned my head sharp round, but could see nothing to account for it, except that there was a group of young fellows close by, and perhaps she hadn't liked to be kissed with them looking on, particularly as one of 'em, a smart, soldierly young chap, with as handsome a face as ever I saw, had got his eyes fixed straight on hers. Oddly enough, too, I fancied at the time, though I understood what it all meant afterwards, he was nearly as white as she turned then, but just at that moment the officer in charge of the draft gave the word for his men to fall in to march them up to cantonments, and there was a general bustle and confusion for a few moments, in the midst of which I lost sight of the man whose singular behaviour had attracted my notice, and the incident passed from my mind.

I needn't say how pleased me and the missus was to have Lucy with us once again, nor how we made much of her, and petted her to our hearts' content, particularly as we knew we should soon be called upon to give her up altogether, for there was no further reason for delaying her marriage now, and it was settled to take place in the beginning of February. I may as well mention here that Mr. Conyers was back with us, but all uneasiness on his account was at an end, for he was engaged to be married to a young lady whose acquaintance he had made at Nynee Tal the year before. However, that has nothing to do with my story except to show that I was quite right in the beginning in not trusting to his constancy.

Well, as I was saying, the wedding-day was fixed, and even earlier than we intended, by Lucy's own desire. She was as good and as affectionate as ever, but there was something about her manner that made me, and her mother too, feel uneasy. For one thing her spirits were so variable. At one moment she would seem all lightheartedness and full of fun, even feverishly gay, especially when Stephen was by, and then, all of a sudden, without any conceivable reason, just the opposite, regularly down in the dumps, and with not a word to throw at a dog, as the saying is.

We couldn't make it out, and there was no use questioning her. She was quite happy and contented—quite, she declared, or would be, at any rate, when all the excitement was over and she had

settled down into her new life, and for a little while I was satisfied with her assurances and persuaded myself that it was nothing more than fancy that she was changed.

But I was soon to know better than that.

One night—it only wanted a little over a week then to the day that was to see her Stephen Redfern's wife—I went home rather late from the mess. My bungalow stood by itself in the middle of a compound, or garden, that I took rather a pride in, for there was a clump of fine mango-trees behind, and all round I had planted shrubs and flower-beds. The doors of the bungalow were all open, for the night was warm, and even in winter bolts and bars are things unknown, and under the verandah sat my missus, stitching at some finery for the approaching wedding—her fingers were never idle; she was always doing something. I was going towards her, when I fancied I saw something white gliding among the shrubs.

Now it chanced that, after a great deal of trouble, I had managed to rear some English roses of a fine variety just about that spot, and I was afraid that somebody might have taken a fancy to them, so I slipped quietly round another way, and reached a part of the compound in deep shadow, from where I could see whether my treasures were in danger.

They were quite safe. But what I did see gave me more concern than if every flower and shrub I had planted there and was so proud of had been uprooted and carried away.

My daughter—my little Lucy—was standing there, sobbing fit to break her heart, her head on the shoulder of a man whose arm was round her waist. My first impulse was to burst out upon 'em at once, but I held back, for I could see who he was—the same young fellow I had noticed at the station: a private in O troop, named Leonard Armstrong.

I can't call to mind now all the words that passed between them, nor does it matter. I heard quite sufficient to tell me that they had known each other for some time, that he was urging her to brave my anger and be true to him, but that she refused.

"I cannot, Leonard," I heard the poor girl cry; "I cannot! I told you before that though I loved you, I would never break my promise to the man I gave it to. Ah, why did you come here? Why did you follow me to tempt me so? It was cruel of you—cruel!"

And then she besought him to go, to leave her and forget her, but all the time she clung to him, poor child! in a way that showed me she could no more bear the thought of parting than himself, and I thought it was time to interfere.

I needn't describe their surprise when I stepped out into the moonlight, and I can't exactly remember now what I said, I was in such a state of misery; but Armstrong went away, and I took our Lucy in to her mother, and between the pair of us we soon got at the truth.

And bad enough it was.

Lucy had met Leonard Armstrong at Riggdale Farm, next to which lay his father's, and before long the two young people gave all their hearts to each other. There's the whole story in little. Our Lucy, however, when she discovered his meaning, told him honestly that she was already engaged, and though he would not take no for an answer, she had hoped that, when she left England, as she was soon to do, he would learn to forget her. Poor lass! she was sore tempted, she told us, for she loved Leonard dearly, but she thought of us, of Stephen's goodness, and resolved to do her duty.

It was this struggle in her mind that had brought about the change in her letters. Up till then she had thought that she loved poor Stephen, but the knowledge came to her too late that it was not so. Still, he had her promise, and she would keep it faithfully, as he deserved. So she returned to India, only to find in one of the draft that came out in the same ship the man she loved, and who loved her so much that he had left home and friends and enlisted for the purpose of being near her.

I tried to be angry, but I couldn't. What father could in such a case if he cared anything for his child?

It was about as hard a nut to crack as ever I had. As far as one thing went there was not much to choose between the two men. Indeed, Leonard would have been the better match, for he was his father's only son, and the old man farmed over four hundred acres of his own land. But that wasn't the point.

Lucy had given her promise—she would have been Stephen Redfern's wife long ago, indeed, but for the illness which sent her home—and she considered herself bound by it.

I didn't know what to say or do in the matter, that's the truth. On the one side there was my poor comrade to be considered. He had waited so long and so faithfully for Lucy, everything was ready for their wedding, and to tell him now, at the very last moment, that it must all be over between them!

How could I do such a thing?

But on the other hand there was my child's happiness to be

considered, and that, after all, was of more consequence to me than twenty Stephen Redferns, however sorry I might be for him. Still, it was a hard fix to be placed in, and I got no sleep that night thinking of it, and what I should do.

And when morning came I was no nearer seeing my way clear. There was a brigade field-day, and I was, of course, regimental marker, but I made so many mistakes in taking up position that the adjutant rode up to me at last.

"Are you ill, sergeant-major?" he asked me, rather sharp, for I dare say he thought, maybe, I'd been drinking the night before, and not got over its effects. I told him no, but that I'd had something to trouble me very much, and really didn't feel fit for duty, so he gave me leave to fall out, and I rode home.

Lucy was not out of her own room. She and her mother had been up nearly all night, I found out. Altogether, it was a miserable time for all of us, and when after breakfast I saw Stephen coming across the parade-ground, and making straight for my bungalow, I'd willingly have given a month's pay to be out of the road.

But that couldn't be, I knew, and I waited till he came in, feeling that it was my duty to let him know the truth, but not knowing how in the world I was to set about it.

Poor fellow! One look at his face told me that he knew already. It was so sad, so pale, that he hardly seemed to be the same man.

There was no beating about the bush with either of us then.

"I want to see Lucy," he said—"to see her once more before I give her her promise back, and then say good-bye."

"Who told you?" I asked him. "I only found it out myself last night."

Then he explained how he had followed me from the mess, and passing my bungalow on the way to his own quarters had accidentally been an unseen witness of the scene I have described.

"I heard all that passed," he said, "and there's only one thing to be done now. Let me see Lucy, and speak to her myself. Don't be afraid, old fellow, I shan't reproach her. Poor girl! she has suffered enough as it is."

Of course I made Lucy come out to him, and there and then he rose up and spoke like the good, true, honest man that he was, and told her if she couldn't give him her heart he wouldn't take her hand without.

"I love you too well for that, my dear," he said, and strong man as he was, I could see he nearly broke down as he spoke the words. "I shall never care for anybody else, but I don't blame you. It was all my own fault, mistaking a girl's innocent liking for what I honestly believed it to be. I hope you'll be happy."

He didn't get any further, for Lucy burst into a perfect passion of tears, reproaching herself and declaring she was ready and willing to fulfil her promise, and for a moment there was a look of hope on his face, as though he was tempted to take her at her word.

But it died away again, and he shook his head with a sad smile.

"No," he said, "that would be bad for both of us. Worse for me even than the pain of giving you up, my dear. I'm not afraid but you'd do your duty, but that's not all a man looks for when he marries a woman; if he's worth being called a man. Can you give me your love? If we two kneel together in the church, and take the vows there that can never be unsaid as long as we live, the vow of heart's love till death shall part us, can you keep it?"

Poor girl! She could make no answer to that, only to weep, and beg him to forgive her, and after a few more words he went away, leaving her free.

Ah! a noble fellow he was, no doubt; but he told me afterwards that it hadn't been without a hard fight with himself that he was able to do what he thought right. There was murder in his mind, he said, when he saw the two together, and learned, all in a moment, that the happiness he'd so long been looking forward to, that seemed so near him till that moment, was never to be his.

But Steve Redfern was a man of a thousand, and saw the right thing and did it. He wouldn't take advantage of a girl's weakness to press her into a union which could only bring misery upon her and himself.

And that's about all there is to tell, I think, for it's not hard to guess what came afterwards. Still, I may as well make a proper wind-up, while I'm about it.

Of course, when it became known that not only was the match broken off between Stephen and our Lucy, but that she was going to marry Leonard Armstrong instead of the bandmaster, there was no end of wonderment and talk about it in the regiment. But it's no use trying to stop people's mouths, so we let them jaw as much as they liked, and took no notice. Our Lucy's a happy wife and mother now, with a daughter nearly as old as she was herself when Lieutenant Conyers—he's Lord Hylabroke now, and left the army a long while ago—fancied himself in love with her, though he soon consoled himself with another sweetheart better suited to his rank. And Stephen Redfern, too, got over his disappointment in time, and

married happily enough, I'm glad to say. Perhaps that's not what one would call a romantic ending. He ought to have shot himself, or taken to drink and bad ways, and gone to the dogs, or something else desperate. But the truth is he didn't do anything of the kind, in which I think he showed more sense than if he'd gone moping through the world and making a misery of his life for the loss of a girl, even though she was such a one as "Our Lucy."

## Last Night and To-day.

HARK ! to the thrilling bird of day,  
As to the sky he gaily springs ;  
Joy, joy ! the night has fled away,  
And rosy dawn brings brighter things.  
Gone are the shades and gone the gloom,  
The golden sun is rising fast ;  
And all the dew-filled flowers bloom  
The brighter for the darkness past !  
At eve my heart was sore oppress'd,  
Because my love had proved unkind ;  
But now a sort of charming zest,  
At morn, in her caprices I find.  
For who would love the calm blue sea,  
If he had seen it not when stirred ?  
And why should I down-hearted be,  
Just for a fair girl's careless word ?  
Sing on, oh birds, and shine, oh sun !  
New hope comes with each cheering ray,  
For dawn so brightly hath begun,  
My fate I'll tempt again to-day !  
There's courage in the morning light,  
There's vigour in the morning air ;  
I'll try again—the proverb's right,  
"Faint heart ne'er yet won lady fair !"

## His Own Guest.

(A SERIAL STORY.)

### CHAPTER XXV.

It had been a busy day with Lady Meredith, who, once in a quarter, went through the household expenditure and ways and means generally.

On a small table beside her lay the still untouched luncheon, which, to save time, she had had sent up to her in her own room.

With a sigh she laid down her pen and pushed the book of figures, at which she had been at work, from her, upsetting, in so doing, a symmetrical pile of correspondence which she had read or written in connection with her quarterly audit.

It was a sigh that might have been interpreted as one of relief that the work was over, or one of regret that, whilst the expenditure of the Court had, owing to the election business, greatly increased, there was no corresponding increase in the receipts. It is true there was no absolute deficit in the banker's book ; but then, did not the creditor side of her son's account contain the following pithy entry by the banker's clerk : "Gordon, £2,000." And that money she knew had been lent upon security that no other creditor would have deemed sufficient, and at a rate that would have brought tears to the eyes of a West End money-lender.

Mr. Pennington had told her that Mr. Gordon had money lying idle, which he would be only too happy to know was being employed in returning a Conservative member to Parliament.

But easily as the necessary funds had been obtained, Lady Meredith reflected that, sooner or later, the amount, together with any further loan they would require, must be repaid ; and the more she thought over the matter, the more she approved of the steps she had taken to prevent her son marrying a woman without a fortune.

To obtain her boy a position which she deemed worthy of him, Lady Meredith had hesitated at sacrificing no person or thing, and she felt that the time had come for sacrificing, in his own interests, the feelings of the son himself. In response to her sigh came one from Mrs. Tuttle Morgan, who was imitatively laying aside her tating-needles as Lady Meredith had her pen.

"What on earth, Rubina, is the matter with you ?" asked her ladyship querulously, accentuating the "you."

"I was thinking, dear, how tired you must be. Can I help you any further ?"

The reply was soft enough to turn away even wrath, and Lady Meredith could not repress a smile when she thought in what Rubina's help had consisted.

The previous evening the Court people had been Mrs. Tuttle

Morgan's guests, and Lady Meredith had mentioned she must leave early, as she had a tiring day's work to get through on the morrow.

That was enough for Rubina. She felt that it was her duty to share her friend's burden, and so, after routing out of their beds her own servants as soon as it was daybreak, she found herself at Meredith Court long before its mistress was awake.

From a pleasant slumber Lady Meredith was roused by Rubina's audibly stealthy tread as she entered her friend's room. The visitor, when the bell for breakfast sounded, was not forthcoming, and the meal was delayed whilst she was being searched for, and ultimately found fast asleep in the library over a book of poems, her unusually early rising having caused her to fall into an untimely slumber.

When breakfast was over the pair retired to the hostess's sanctum. But far from being a help, Lady Meredith found Rubina a hindrance, and in order to keep her innocuously employed, gave her a packet of letters in ungummed envelopes to seal. Even in this slight undertaking the unhappy Rubina's good intentions seemed to persistently go awry. Lady Meredith soon put a stop to an operation which consisted in her amanuensis enclosing cheques to tradesmen, and sealing them with a seal which hung on her chataleine, and had for device a dove carrying a four-cornered note, with the device, "This to my love."

After a while the conversation turned into the—to Lady Meredith—congenial topic of the election.

"You have heard," said her ladyship, "that there is a probability of there being no opposition to Sir Charles Meredith's election ?"

"No ; that is good news. I suppose that as soon as the matter is settled, Charles"—Rubina always spoke of her old pupil by his christian-name, and without the prefix of his title—"will take chambers in town ?"

"Unless he marries and takes a house there," replied Lady Meredith.

"They will make a charming couple," observed Rubina gushingly ; "but will the estate be able to bear the extra expense ?"

"Who do you mean by 'they' ?" Lady Meredith queried sharply.

"Charles and Mary, to be sure."

"Oh, I have not put a stop to this matter any too soon," thought her ladyship. "If Rubina has noticed it, then it must be the talk of the county. My good Rubina," she said aloud, "I don't know what put such nonsense into your head ! My son, when he marries, must wed a fortune, and as for Mary, surely you must have noticed Colonel Skooter's attentions in that quarter."

"Colonel Skooter !" ejaculated Rubina, fairly taken by surprise.

"Yes ; he is peculiar, I admit, but wealthy, I believe. Of course, before I gave my consent to an engagement between him and Mary, I should take care to change belief into certainty as to his power of providing comfortably for her. Until my death, Mary has absolutely no fortune, and what I can leave her is but just sufficient to make her independent of her husband for pin-money. I have let Colonel Skooter know this."

"Has the brute asked you for her hand, then ?"

Rubina had not forgotten or forgiven the pointed allusion the colonel had made at the dinner-table relative to marrying grandmothers.

"No, he has not asked me, but I plainly saw the drift of certain questions he put indirectly to me. Mary is a pretty girl, and is as charming and good as she is pretty. To any man who is not absolutely obliged to marry a fortune, she would be invaluable."

"And Charles ?"

"His affection, for Mary, brought up as they have been, is quite natural, and, if he has ever thought of marriage in connection with it, he will on matters being put before him in a proper light see it is impossible."

"I will put them before him," said Rubina resolutely.

"I trust you will not mention a word on the subject to him," exclaimed Lady Meredith in alarm. "What is necessary to be said I will say. I have invited Colonel Skooter over to dinner here to-day ; if he proposes to Mary, I trust to your good offices to show her the advantage of accepting him so far as referring him to me for my consent goes. I will see, before giving it, that it is not a man of straw she marries."

Ready as Rubina usually was to obey the wishes of one whom she still continued to regard as her patroness, she gave but very reluctant assent to the present request. She really had a great affection for Mary Ray, although it was of a very different kind to her almost worshipping admiration of Lady Meredith, and she had a great dislike to the American ; added to this, with a woman's instinct for scenting out a love-affair, she had divined something of the position of affairs between Edith Pennington and Mr. Gordon, and it is not astonishing that what Rubina was pleased to call her brain had got into as great a tangle as the tating which now lay unheeded in her lap, and that she welcomed the sound of the dressing-bell as an excuse to get away to the room which was set

apart as hers whenever she was a visitor even for a day at Meredith Court, there to think matters over quietly.

In the meanwhile Sir Charles had been playing the part of host to Colonel Skooter, who, upon the strength of an invitation to dinner, had looked in, as he termed it, early in the day, and been kept to luncheon. Later on the Penningtons had come to pay Lady Meredith a call, and were easily persuaded by Sir Charles to join their dinner-party in spite of Mr. Pennington's protestations that they were not in evening dress.

That morning Sir Charles had received a telegram summoning him to the chambers of a very dear old schoolfellow, who had been taken suddenly ill, and had no relations in England and no friend sufficiently intimate for him to ask to come at a moment's notice but Sir Charles.

Of this telegram Lady Meredith knew nothing, as it had arrived after she had gone off to her room with the accounts. In due course she would tell her son how money matters stood, but he never troubled himself to go into details which she had managed during his minority, and which her love of authority made her loth to resign even to him. It was an understood thing that only most pressing matters outside those connected with the audit should disturb her ladyship.

That evening, Charles was resolved to refute his mother's statement relative to Mary Ray's partiality for the colonel by asking the girl to become his wife, and the fact of the Penningtons remaining would, after dinner, engross Lady Meredith's attention as hostess, and so give him a chance of a *little à l'été* with Mary.

As yet, at her aunt's request, she had not mentioned the fact of her approaching visit to the Harkers, and she was even at that moment packing up her things in her own room. Lady Meredith would incidentally mention the fact of the invitation at dinner, and invent an excuse for Mary's going at so short a notice.

Edith, hearing her friend was upstairs, proposed going to join her, but Gordon begged for a match at lawn-tennis before she removed her hat, as the afternoon was yet young, and Sir Charles and the colonel had arranged for a ride before dinner.

"And what is to become of me?" asked Mr. Pennington.

"Why, settle yourself quietly in this chair," said Edith, putting her father into as comfortable a looking one as ever beguiled elderly gentleman into an afternoon nap, "and finish the paper which you had not time to get through at breakfast, and brought away in your pocket."

"Anything interesting in it?" asked Colonel Skooter.

"Parliament is not sitting, colonel, so papa is sure to say no. I had a good long read at it before he came down to breakfast."

"And found it interesting for that very reason, I'll be bound. What woman ever cares for Parliamentary intelligence?" teased Mr. Pennington.

"Intelligence! Perhaps it's the want of it that makes the subject so uninteresting, but when we get Sir Charles in we shall cry, '*Nous avons changé tout cela*'—eh, Charley?" laughed Edith.

"When a woman takes up the paper she commences with the agony column, generally skips all the intermediate part between that and births and marriages, and winds up with deaths," said Mr. Pennington, returning to the charge.

"And, pray, what could be more appropriate, sir?" asked Edith. "By the way," turning to the colonel, "I understand you were nearly figuring in one of what papa calls my favourite columns."

"Which was that—the marriage one?"

"No, colonel, the obituary; I hear Charley's horse *Satin* was too much for you when you tried him yesterday. I hope you are not going out upon him again this afternoon?"

"Not exactly, miss. I ought never to have trusted myself on a horse with such a name."

"It's a fine animal, and I thought I heard Colonel Skooter say that when he got on a good thing he always stuck to it."

"Well, I guess there's always exceptions. This brute of Meredith's doubled itself up like a two-foot rule, and sat me on the grass. S'pose it's a nat'ral gift he's got of sending folks flyin' all over the scenery!"

"Folks that he doesn't know he always tries to master. *Satin* is a cunning old hand," said Gordon.

Sir Charles looked surprised, and Mr. Pennington from behind his paper shook his head warningly at the speaker for exhibiting a knowledge of an animal which, as Gordon, he had never ridden.

The former, however, assumed he must have heard the horse's dislike to a strange hand upon his bridle from one of the grooms.

This slip the colonel, however, either did not or appeared not to notice.

"I warned Colonel Skooter against riding him," said Sir Charles apologetically; "but when I told him he had been over twenty years in our stables, he wouldn't believe but that he could manage him."

"And ther ain't many things that I can't ride, from a Jerusalem

pony to an express car; but this animal flew off with such orful rapidity that one minnit I seemed up among the birds, and the next down among the reptiles. The stormy petrel as can fly when he's put to it seemed warring for the mastery with the humble lizard. I did my level best—"

"And found it," laughed Gordon.

The colonel glared at the speaker. He had no objection to making a joke at his own expense, but he was not partial to other people doing so, and that Gordon should take it upon himself to laugh at him was most distasteful to his feelings. There was no love on his part towards the man he had known out in Mexico, and who was acquainted with some of his shady transactions.

"You had better be careful, sir. Those who make fun of Colonel Skooter must look out for trouble."

"Come, come, Colonel Skooter, you must not take offence at Gordon's good-natured chaff," said Sir Charles.

"Waal, I can't see the good-nature in any chaff; it's so selfish; the fun is all on one side," observed the colonel sulkily. "If I'd have had my way, that horse's nearest relations would have been widder and orfans before bed-time."

"Come, forgive and forget, Colonel Skooter," broke in Mr. Pennington.

"It ain't possible to do one in a hurry, and I ain't in a hurry to do the other, Mr. Pennington, when I'm hurt, whether it's in my body or in my feelin's. I may bide my time, but I never lose my opportunity."

The latter part of the sentence, and the malevolent glance which accompanied it, were evidently pointed at Gordon.

During much of the above conversation Edith had not been present, having passed out of the open French-window—although the autumn was somewhat advanced, the weather was bright and warm—to survey the state of the lawn; she now returned, tennis-bat in hand.

"What are you men squabbling about?" she asked. "Is Colonel Skooter still—"

"Trying to ride the high horse—yes," replied Gordon maliciously.

"Come, Miss Pennington, let us go to our game."

"You are in a hurry for another defeat again to-day, Mr. Gordon," said Sir Charles, hoping to turn the conversation into a more pleasant channel for his American guest, although at heart both his defeat by the old family pet and Gordon's chaff amused him.

"When a man lets a lady win, it's hard to be taunted with it," said Gordon.

"You let me win—eh?" asked Edith sarcastically.

"Didn't you win?"

"Yes."

"Well, that proves it."

"Come, then, and take your revenge."

With this invitation Edith walked towards the window again; this time Gordon following.

"Yes, revenge is sweet," said Edith's companion when they were in the grounds.

"How do you know? You have never taken it—at least, not of me at tennis."

"Ah, tennis is very much like real life—one makes love and the other makes game of it."

"Making love at tennis seems your strong point. I think it was at tennis you first made love to me," said Edith archly.

"And you game of me," replied Gordon.

"Come and make love again," laughed the girl, walking backwards, and holding her bat before her face as she smiled one of those bright arch smiles for which Edith Pennington was famous.

"What, not content with conquering me the other day, you want to do so again," said Gordon, accepting the tantalising invitation.

"I declare," he resumed after a lengthened pause, "you must be photographed like that. You looked a living picture—art and nature combined—frame and all complete."

"Photographed like what, sir?" Edith asked saucily.

"I was harking back a bit," said Gordon.

"Beginning again where you should have left off," retorted Edith.

And the happy pair played their game and commenced another, and harked back a good deal, whilst the evening shadows gathered, and the gold, purple, and russet leaves fell from the trees and fluttered about them like a host of night butterflies.

Gordon for the moment gave himself up to the enchantment of the situation, and accepted Edith's decision that if he would not ask her before the world to be his wife until he had freed himself from the accusation which Lady Meredith had brought against him, yet that she would not release him from the burden, as she called it, of her lot being cast in with his.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that the equestrians got back from their excursion by the door, sooner than the lovers came in by the window.

Mr. Pennington had fallen asleep, and at his feet lay the newspaper he had been reading.

Colonel Skooter awoke the one, and picked up and pocketed the other.

He had not read a paper that day, and it would be something to do on reaching home, before he went to bed.

In the advertisement columns was this notice, which none of the party had as yet seen :

"If T. M., who left England and went to New York by the Corrie Roy, in 188—, where he passed under the name of Smith, and has subsequently been heard of in Mexico, will communicate with Messrs. W. and F. Ridge, 217, Broadway, New York, he will hear of something to his advantage.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 124.)

## Arnold.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER III.

"I WONDER how much longer you are going to keep me waiting, Dickie?"

"For what, Uncle Arnold?"

"For a certain confidence of yours, promised me, I can hardly remember how many weeks ago."

"You never asked me again."

"I never press any one's confidence. I thought you would tell me of your own accord."

"Proud thing! But you have descended to worse than that now!"

"Worse?"

"Yes; hinting is a great deal worse than asking right out."

"Well, we will waive the argument and come to the point."

"A very nice way of getting out of it!" she laughed.

We were standing together on a lofty ridge of ground in the West End Park. Down at our feet, and stretching far around, lay the crowded city, the topmost windows of whose grimy houses were burnished with the rays of the setting sun. Up to our perch ascended the murmur of voices, the subdued roar of traffic, the thousand and one sounds of city life, blended all together by the distance into a vague, soothing buzz, save when ever and anon a cry from a pair of lusty lungs, or the sharp bark of a dog, broke into the dreamy monotony for a moment, and then died away.

July was far advanced, but the grass was yet fresh and green beneath our feet, and every tree was in full leaf. Around us and on every hand the dark Scotch firs rose up like huge grim sentinels. Dickie sometimes declared that the stern unbending aspect of these dusky trees frightened her; and when we walked in the park—as we frequently did when the slow summer twilight was drawing on—she would run and peep behind the nearest ones, as though she expected to come upon some grim apparition in hiding, and then hasten back to me and cling to my arm half-laughingly, half-timidly, paling and flushing the while with that suddenness that was peculiar to her, and which formed one of her greatest charms. For she seemed as full of charms as the greatest beauty that was ever photographed; and yet, if I did but look into her, I could scarcely find a single one. A more ordinary girl, when unanimated, could hardly have been found in all the teeming city. She was not ugly; her features harmonised well; and that was all that could be said for her. Yet there were few who escaped her witchery, which, nevertheless, was exercised with perfect unconsciousness, otherwise she would probably have been less irresistible.

"Let us go and sit down a little while," I proposed, looking back towards a seat which stood a few yards behind us.

"Very well," she acquiesced. "I like to see the sunset, and we shall see it here."

We sat down, surrounded, as far as we could see before us, by nothing but sky—wide, roseate-tinted sky—cut off, as it seemed, from the rest of the world. I glanced at the face beside me. It was so serenely content that I could not refrain from speaking of what was in my mind:

"Dickie, you look very happy, and yet I hardly dare to believe that you can be contented in this black, smoky place after your pretty suburban home—with our quiet, uneventful life—"

"Contented, Uncle Arnold!" she interrupted. "I am more than content—I am very, very happy—happier than I have been, oh, for a long time! I want only one thing now."

She held one of my hands in both of hers as she spoke, and looked at me with the smile of an angel.

"And what is that?"

"A letter from father. How soon do you think I might expect to hear?"

"Oh, any day now. But, Dickie, I expected a very different answer to my question."

"Why, what do you mean?"

She looked up without a shadow of consciousness in her clear, questioning gaze.

"I thought you meant that you could never be quite happy while one person was absent from your side. You know whom I mean."

She looked at me again, and then smiled and cast down her eyes, flushing a little.

"How can I know, Uncle Arnold?"

"You know. You know I mean that 'Arnold'—the fellow for whose sake you love that name." I spoke half jealously, half angrily—perhaps more so than I was aware of.

She laughed.

"Uncle Arnold, don't ever talk to me again about women jumping to conclusions. You have chosen to assume that there is an 'Arnold,' dropping her voice a little on the name. 'I never said there was one.'"

"No, but you never denied it—you have tacitly admitted it."

There was silence for a few minutes, while the sun shot his red parting rays across the girl's bent head and into my eyes. Nobody was in sight. We were in an unfrequented part of the park, and though footsteps and voices could be heard at no great distance, there was nothing to be seen save the wide sunset sky above and the rocky eminence upon which our feet rested. I put my hand half affectionately, half encouragingly, upon her shoulder.

"Was he very handsome, Dickie?"

"I—I think he was," she replied in subdued tones. "Oh yes, he was. Everybody said so."

"And what did Miles say to it? Did he know him?"

"Father? Oh no; he did not know him; he never saw him. I met him at the house of a friend with whom I was staying."

"And he knows nothing?"

"There was nothing for him to know. See here, Uncle Arnold, I will tell you all about it, and then you mustn't always be talking about him, because it doesn't do a bit of good."

I told myself, bitterly, that she loved him so much that she could not bear to hear his name pronounced by careless lips.

"What are you looking like that for, Uncle Arnold?" she demanded, looking up at me with the air of confident affection that she frequently assumed, and which made my long-unstirred heart beat wildly against my breast.

"Like what?"

"Oh, as if you were going to bite a piece right out of me. But it's gone now, so I'll look over it this once."

"About Arnold," I reminded her.

"Well, two years ago 'come August,' as the washerwomen say," stopping to laugh.

"You would never hear that expression about here."

"No; but then, you see, I'm a real *bond fide* Londoner, and have brought away some charming cockney vulgarisms with which to spice my conversation and astonish the natives."

"Come now—to the point."

"Two summers ago I went to stay with an old friend of my mother's, who lives in the country. Father was glad for me to go, to get the change of air and enjoy myself, as he thought, and so did I, at first. There I met Arnold. He seemed to like me directly, and we became great friends. I soon liked him very much too, and—I don't want to seem conceited, Uncle Arnold, but I am telling you things as they really happened—he did not seem to care to be with anybody else; he—he made no secret of his liking for me. But Mrs.—no, I won't tell you her name—it isn't fair, when I am telling the story against her, as it were—was very angry about it; she tried to keep him away from me, and when he wouldn't be kept—you see the two families were very old friends, so that he was almost like a son of the house, and did not stand so much upon ceremony as a stranger must have done—she made the place too hot to hold him, and soon succeeded in getting rid of him. Of course he couldn't stay on when he was openly told to go. She wrote to his mother, I know, and made a breach between her and him. She did not care what trouble she made, so that she succeeded in separating us."

"But why? What objection had she? I should have thought that, as an old friend of your mother's, she would have taken pleasure in seeing you nicely settled. Was he not eligible?"

"Oh yes, he was very well off. His mother had estates in France, which would come to him at her death. But you see the lady had a daughter, and she wanted him for her. She, the daughter, was very pretty indeed, but, no doubt through having known her from a baby, and seeing her so often, Arnold did not seem so impressed by her beauty as her mother wished, so— Oh, Uncle Arnold, don't think me malicious and uncharitable!"

"You need not be afraid, dear. Every word you have uttered goes to prove the very opposite of that."



"Well, you know, I have eyes and ears, and an average amount of perception, I suppose. I could not help seeing, very soon, that I had been asked down there as a—a sort of foil to the daughter's beauty. The lady knew I was plain—she had not seen me for two or three years, but she knew I could not have grown pretty—nothing could make me that."

I clenched my teeth and my hands, and my heart throbbed with passionate anger as I pictured to myself the mortification to which the dainty, delicate girl must have been subjected at the hands of the selfish, designing woman. She did not notice my emotion. She went on slowly, as if to herself:

"She thought the great, immense difference between us would strike him, and that his eyes would be opened to her daughter's loveliness by the comparison. But when he cared for me she was so angry that she scarcely tried to conceal her scheme. She was one of those people who can form plans, and carry them out, too, as long as nobody contradicts them, but who have not sufficient coolness to persevere in the face of opposition. She 'threw down her cards,' as people say, not washerwomen though," smiling a little, "in a rage, and we, I especially, could not help seeing what was on them. Arnold, being a man, was not so quick-sighted," she added a little slyly.

But I did not smile at her sally; I was too deep in bitter rumination over her simply-told little story. Perhaps I was ultra-sensitive; certain it is that the sorrows of one whom I already loved with an absorbing affection—though of what nature that affection might be I had scarcely as yet attempted to analyse—caused me far keener pain than it seemed to give her to recount them.

"So poor Arnold was driven away," she continued; "but I don't think he had any idea that we should never meet again. I know I expected to see him again soon, though I did not know how it was to come about; but I didn't trouble about that then. After he was gone she did not trouble herself to be unkind to me, and I finished my visit on father's account, because he would wonder if I returned sooner than I was to have done, and I wanted to keep him from ever hearing a word about it all, partly for my own sake, and also because I knew he would be so angry if he heard the truth. Father has always been very good to me, and taken great care of me," she went on with an exceeding simplicity that was touchingly childlike. "He would not let anyone treat me as Mrs.—as she did, if he knew of it. He doesn't sympathise, as you do"—with an accent that made me draw her close to me for a moment—"but he would go down and see the—the lady, and want to cut her head off, or something. He is like you there," with an uncertain little laugh.

"And you have never seen or heard of him since?"

"Never. He knew that I lived in London, but he might as well know that I lived in Europe, or the world. He may have tried to get our address from her, which I am sure he would not succeed in doing; or he may have forgotten all about me—I cannot tell. But, somehow, I hardly think that—I think he did really care for me as—"

"As she cared for him," finished I to myself when she stopped.

"I know where he lives," she went on. "He told me, and described the place. No"—answering my look—"I am not going to tell you, or anyone, where it is. I have never been there, and I should not like to go—now—if I had the chance."

"And his name?"

"You know that," blushing rosily.

"Then you are not going to tell me his surname? You will not give me the means of identifying him if I should ever—"

"Uncle Arnold!" She was scarlet from forehead to throat now. "Not for the world! What would he think? What should I feel? Uncle Arnold, I would never have said a word to you if I thought you could ever betray my confidence."

"Don't alarm yourself, my dear child; your secret is safe with me." I felt relieved. I did not want to know the name of Dickie's lover. "I only thought to do anything I could for your happiness. Do not tell me his name unless you wish, and I will never breathe a word of all this, I assure you."

And in my heart I thanked Heaven that London life had not succeeded in rubbing the bloom of this most delicate peach.

"And you have not forgotten him?" I ventured presently, after a long pause.

"He is not the sort of man to be forgotten," she returned softly.

"Was he so—"

"I will tell you what he was like," she said, pressing my hand nervously between her small soft fingers, as though to allay some freshly-stirred emotion within her heart. "He was tall and well made, with an air of—of—"

"Fashion?" I suggested, as she paused for a word.

"Well, it might be that—I suppose it was; but one would never think of calling him fashionable-looking. He was too manly for that, and too aristocratic."

"A prince in disguise—eh?"

"Uncle Arnold, if you laugh at me I won't say another word."

"Dear, I wouldn't laugh at you, or at anyone for whom you cared, for the whole world, with the moon and principal planets thrown into the bargain."

"Well—I believe you are laughing, but never mind—he was very dark, darker than you are, and he had a long nose, and more moustache than you have, but no whiskers or beard. His hair was cut very short, of course; but it had a wave back from his forehead that made him look noble. He knew all about everything, and there wasn't anything that he couldn't do," she finished up, with a simple faith in her lover's capabilities that touched her listener oddly.

"After that, Dickie, I wonder you could go back to your old life so cheerfully, or ever learn to be content with the society of commonplace men like Miles and me."

I said this experimentally, though not with any idea of her answer, as it proved to be.

"Commonplace!" she repeated, looking at me. "How can you call yourself commonplace, Uncle Arnold? You must know that you are nothing of the kind. Why, your beautiful, sad, fierce, dark eyes would make any face uncommon; and to hear you talk is like listening to a beautiful story!"

I cut her short with my laughing; but how her sweet, frank, partial flattery made my old heart beat with pleasure! It was not true, I knew; but she thought it was, and that was all I cared about.

"At any rate," I said, "if my little niece admires me, I shall not trouble myself about anyone else's opinion. But, Dickie, to return to our subject. Was it not very hard to be cheerful—at first?"

"I was not always cheerful," she returned simply. "Sometimes I would think about him, and wonder, and wish he would come, until I made myself miserable. But that could not last—nobody can be miserable always, I think; I never could be for long."

"True, my little dickybird; and you have a most bright spirit."

"But you must not think," she went on affectionately, "that since I have seen him I am unable to appreciate anyone else because they are not like him. I loved father just as much after seeing him, and directly I spoke to you, I knew we should be friends. That is all, Uncle Arnold. Do you think me very silly?"

"Silly? No. Why should I? But suppose you never see him again, Dickie; are you going to sacrifice your life to his memory? Could you never care for anyone else?"

"I don't know," she answered, looking up at me with a contemplative air; "I never thought about it. I never did care for anyone else."

I was not dissatisfied with her answer. She seemed so cheerful, too; her spirits were generally so bright and buoyant, I did not know how to believe that this love-affair had been a serious matter to her, though she had looked very sad for the moment, and her voice had taken a wistful tone that had touched my heart to the quick.

"I think he might have found out your address somehow or other," I remarked, half angry at the way in which she had apparently been slighted, half irritable at the very idea of this paragon of perfection and embodiment of all the graces in the shape of a handsome and fashionable young man.

The best part of my own life was lived; when I had had youth and health I had wasted them recklessly; when riches had come to me, half of them had been squandered without a thought; now I was old and sad and broken-down; my health was none of the best, and good-looks had never, at the best of times, been mine. How, then, must I appear in the eyes of this romantic, yet most critical young girl? Such were the bitter thoughts that chased one another through my mind as I spoke.

"No, I am quite sure he could not," she replied, "unless the lady chose to give it him, and I am equally sure that she would not do that."

"He might have asked the daughter."

"Hardly. He and she certainly understood her mother's wishes, and she acquiesced in them. Besides which, I do not think she knew our address. She and I had never corresponded, and her mother wrote to invite me, and arranged all about my going there. No, Uncle Arnold, please don't suggest any such thing. Don't try to destroy my faith—"

Her voice broke. I clasped her to my side with a passionate impulse of pity and protection.

"My dear, I will never say a word, never think a thought, that could make you unhappy. Have patience with me, and if ever I vex you with my stupidity, remember that nothing in the world could be farther from my wish or intention."

Her forehead was bent against my arm, her face turned away from me. I stooped my lips to her fluffy, light-brown hair, and then we sat still for a little while, and I watched the last rosy sunset cloud fade into grey, and the twilight gather apace. But it was not long before she raised her face, and then she got up restlessly and went to the railings which closed in the rocky point on which we stood, drawing me with her by my hand that she still held. Side by side we stood looking down upon the city streets, bright with gaslight and thronged with people. Nothing poor or tawdry could be

descried at that distance and in that light; all looked brilliant and beautiful, like a painted show; rags and bare feet were invisible; the roar of traffic, the rough voices of quarrelsome men and the scolding scream of wrangling women, were softened into a dreamy beauty of low sound to us two on the silent, starlit hill-top.

"I love the city," said Dickie softly, as she had often said it.

"I think, if you had seen anything else worth seeing," I replied, smiling, "you would not think so much of the city, or of this black, smoke-choked Glasgow in particular. In two or three years, when Miles retires on his laurels, and you go out to him, to live on the shores of the blue Mediterranean—"

For those were my brother's plans.

"I will not go!" she interrupted.

"Child, you don't know what it is! You would think you were in fairyland."

"This is my fairyland. And how could I leave you, dear Uncle Arnold? For I am conceited enough to think you would miss me."

"I could not tell you how much, my Dickie."

"I, too—how I should miss you! Father is very good and kind, my own father could not be kinder, but he cannot talk to me, or listen to me, as you do. He thinks it nonsense to talk as you and I often do," with her eyes still bent dreamily upon the Rembrandt-like picture beneath, with its deep shadows and brilliant bursts of light.

I looked at her long and earnestly, and thought again of the story she had told me. Her profile was distinctly outlined against the golden light in the western sky where the sun had gone down. She thought she was plain, and perhaps she really was, in one sense; she did not know, unless she had been told, how she smiled and glowed into loveliness with every happy word that she uttered, with every joyous glance out of her bright eyes; she did not understand how such a face as hers could be preferred to one more regularly beautiful, but without the witchery of her smile, the charm of her ever-changing expression.

We went down to the waterside, and strolled under the trees for a little while, but so many pairs of lovers were there, that spot being a favourite trysting-place with the descendants of the brave followers of Bruce, that Dickie soon proposed leaving them to themselves again.

"It is really too bad to put the poor things out," she naively remarked. "I sympathise with them, and can imagine how vexing it must be to be disturbed."

I laughed, and wondered if she were thinking of that other Arnold as she spoke thus lightly. Could she really care for him? She was but sixteen when she met him; did she know what love really was? Yet I had witnessed on that very evening the first sorrowful emotion I had known her to display, and that was when she spoke of him.

It began to grow dark in earnest then, and there was no moon to beguile us to farther wanderings, so we turned our steps homeward, Dickie twittering away like any little bird on a bough. Her talk was worth listening to; it was full of bright keen observations on persons and things which crossed our way, while yet an odd pleasing vein of romance ran through all her speculations concerning them.

Did she look up at the lighted and, frequently, uncurtained windows of the ascending "flats," each little home-scene that she spied was made the foundation of a story; the faces of the little gutter-children as they popped up momentarily into the garish light of the shop-windows would be commented upon, criticised, or admired, according to their merits; the long, even rows of lighted lamps that ran up and down the steep side-streets like a glittering train of stars were not overlooked. No effect of light or shadow seemed to escape her, and I, accustomed to solitude and silent observation, and apt to ponder over things that came under my eyes, was able to see all that she saw, and follow her flights of fancy to their height.

I could well understand her meaning when she said that Miles did not "sympathise." In her company just then he would have been as a blind man walking with one who saw. Neither the beauty or the romance of the city by night would have been apparent to him; he would have remained untouched by the emotions of the crowd; and her happy, wandering, speculative talk would have sounded to him rather less intelligible than Chinese.

And so, though he was truly good at heart, his face had grown a little hard, his eyes a little cold, while my darling, who sorrowed for every sorrow that was brought before her sight, and rejoiced in every joy, would, in spite of the lines and wrinkles that Old Time must perforce draw on her smooth forehead, remain ever soft, and fresh, and young with renewed youth in the lives of others.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"UNCLE ARNOLD, what do you think I heard at Mrs. Crichton's last night?"

Dickie made this enquiry of me at one of our *tête-à-tête* breakfasts. We had spent the previous evening at the house of one of our

few friends. There had been a small gathering in honour of a guest of theirs, and my mother and I had been glad to seize the opportunity of a little change for Dickie, who had in consequence created quite a small sensation with her delicate English face and winning ways among the stiff Scottish folk.

"A good deal of flattery, I expect," I replied.

"Oh, but I didn't mean that. I meant that I heard some news—about you."

"About me? From whom?"

I looked up from my coffee-cup half angry, though I did not know why, and met her gaze—a little doubtful, a little grave, upon my face.

"It wasn't told me as news. I was asked for further information—that is how I came to learn it."

"Well, what was it?"

"I was asked when your marriage with Kirsty Crichton was coming off. There, Uncle Arnold! What do you say to that?"

There was a gleam of laughter in her hazel eyes, but yet she did not seem so merry as usual.

"Who asked you that?" I enquired.

"Mr. Hanahan."

"Could he not find in his own affairs sufficient food for conversation without interfering in those of other people? But I can guess why he said it," I said, frowning darkly.

"Oh dear, what are you looking like that for? You don't mean to say you are angry?"

"Not with you," I replied. "But I am vexed with Hanahan for putting such ideas into your head. And I am surprised that he should attempt to draw information out of you in that way."

"Well, I can tell you this, Uncle Arnold, that it is no new idea to me. I have often thought the very same sort of thing, but could hardly have mentioned it to you without seeming inquisitive and suspicious. But when another put my—my thought into words, I could not keep it to myself any longer; I—"

"What made you think it?" I enquired abruptly.

"Oh, two or three things. You seem so friendly together, and you always call her by her christian-name."

"Is that the evidence on which I am convicted? Well, let me ask you a question—why do you call her Kirsty?"

"That is a very different thing."

"Perhaps; but still, why do you do it?"

"Oh, I—I hardly know. It seems natural somehow—it does with some people. I tried to call her Miss Crichton at first, but it sounded almost ridiculous, and I continually forgot and said 'Kirsty,' and soon she told me not to mind about it—everybody called her 'Kirsty.'"

"Exactly my own reasons, except that I have never had her explicit leave to drop the more formal address. I fell into the habit quite unconsciously, and we have known each other so many years now that it is not noticed by either of us. Why, Hanahan himself never calls her anything else."

"But she calls you 'Mr. Challenge.'"

"Yes. That, to use your own expression, is rather a different thing."

Perhaps there was, quite unconsciously, some slight reserve or shortness in my manner; at any rate, Dickie, quick to interpret my every look and tone, seemed to apprehend something of the kind.

"Don't be angry, dear Uncle Arnold," she said. "I won't even ask if it is true, if you mind."

She was standing beside my chair now, one hand laid appealingly on my shoulder. I put my arm round her and looked up into her face half smilingly, though the cloud was hardly chased from my brow.

"Do you wish it to be true, Dickie?"

She hesitated a while, and when at last she spoke it was with a visible effort:

"I wish you to be as happy as ever you can, Uncle Arnold."

The time was forgotten. My coffee-cup was pushed back untasted, while I gazed up at the girl's delicate face, which revealed every emotion, and into her bright expressive eyes.

"And do you think that to marry Kirsty would make me happy?"

No answer.

"Tell me what you think," I persisted.

"How can I, Uncle Arnold?" she said then. "How can I criticise the arrangement if it is already made? It would not be fair, either to her or to you."

"But if I tell you that the arrangement is not made, and never will be, then you will favour me with your opinion."

"It is not? Then"—as I emphatically shook my head—"I am glad! I don't mind saying it now, Uncle Arnold. I think there are not two persons in all the world more unsuited to one another than you and Kirsty."

"Why? She would make an excellent wife, everybody says, and you have already told me that I should make a good husband."

She laughed, and blushed a little at the finishing clause.

"Yes," she said, "she would take great care of you, and give you good dinners, and see that you always wore flannel next to your skin, and all that kind of thing; but she would starve the other part of you—your heart and your soul. She could not appreciate you; she would not know how to appreciate a real love."

She spoke with unconscious warmth; her eye kindled; her cheek paled and glowed alternately. I watched her curiously.

"Then you think I could give my wife 'a real love'?" I questioned.

"Yes, I do."

"What makes you think that?"

"Oh, I hardly know. Nobody who looked at your face could doubt it, I think."

She looked at me as she spoke, surveying the countenance raised to her own with a grave, considering gaze. But something in that long look of ours, too passionate on my part, I fear, seemed to awake sudden consciousness on hers. A quick nervous flush leaped to her face, and she turned away. My hand fell from her waist. A sudden chill breath of reserve seemed to float in between us—we, who had been so happy and confidential together in our happy and confidential relations of uncle and niece. There was a silence; I could not have told whether it lasted an hour or five seconds. Then I spoke in my usual tone—or, perhaps, I made it a trifle more fatherly than was my wont.

"My dear child, don't you trouble your head with any of Hanahan's absurd ideas. I thought he had more sense. And rest assured that the day is not down in my calendar which will see Kirsty Crichton and me anything but quiet old friends, as we are now, and have been for years. I should not suit her, not to speak of her not suiting me."

"I dare say if you wanted her you could make her like you," remarked Dickie, who had far more confidence than I in my powers of fascination.

"Not she. She would never have patience with a lazy fellow like me. And I do not wish it, Dickie, so there is an end of it, so far as I am concerned."

"Perhaps he wants her himself," I presently went on to suggest, more to find out whether Hanahan had, by his marked attentions on the previous evening, made any impression upon the child's fancy, and wanted to discover whether the coast was clear, than from any belief in my own words.

For even as I spoke I knew the very idea was absurd. Kirsty Crichton was a staid, sensible Scottish lassie of five-and-thirty, while Hanahan was a dashing young Irishman of scarcely five-and-twenty.

Dickie laughed and clapped her hands.

"That would be lovely!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, you wouldn't mind that?"

"Oh no! And, though it seems ridiculous, they are really not so unsuited as one would think at first sight—in some things, at any rate. They would never tread upon one another's mental toes, as you and Kirsty do."

"Do we? I never knew it," I answered in surprise.

"No, and that makes it worse. You say something that vexes Kirsty, and you never know it, and so can't be sorry for it; and she snubs you violently, and is equally unconscious, and you feel very cross, but don't know why. Oh, you needn't look so alarmed—you have not behaved very brutally to her, and she is, however unintentionally, quite a match for you!"

"You keen little observer!"

"I can't help it, Uncle Arnold. I can't help seeing and hearing."

"And putting two and two together and making five out of them—eh, Dick?"

"No, four precisely, Uncle Arnold. I never add anything, or take anything away. I should if I were writing a story about you, very likely, to make things fit in nicely."

"About me and Kirsty?"

She nodded.

"I hope you'll never do that. It isn't worth while. If you ever write a story, let it be about you and me—the happy hours we have spent together—the long walks and talks we have enjoyed—and finish it up, Dick, finish it—well, the way you would like best yourself."

I rose abruptly from my seat. She was trembling; I could see that.

"It is time I was off," I said, trying to speak carelessly, but only succeeding in making my voice very rough.

"Aren't you—aren't you going to finish your breakfast?"

"No; haven't time. Good-bye. Take care of yourself and mother. Wherever is my hat?"

The last sentence was uttered as I went out into the lobby, and searched high and low for the missing article. She had to come to my aid at last.

"Here it is," she said, giving it to me from almost under my nose.

And then she went back into the room, and I opened the door and went out and down the resounding stone flights, scarcely knowing where I was or what I did.

After that I saw less of my Dickybird. A constraint sprang up between us, though I could not have told the reason, nor, I am sure, could she—and more than once I heard her sigh. I thought she was pining for that lover of hers—that other Arnold—fretting, perhaps, over his apparent forgetfulness of her; and brooding over this and over my own hopeless love for her—yes, it had come to that—I grew more silent and sullen, more of a bear than ever I had been. In my new happiness the summer had seemed to pass too swiftly; but now its latter days dragged intolerably, and I longed for the time when the bright morning sunshine should be quenched in autumn rains.

But more happiness than I had dared to hope for was in store for me.

Coming into the drawing-room one evening I found her alone and in tears—such an unusual thing for her that I felt alarmed.

"Dickie, what is the matter?" I enquired anxiously, for, however miserable I was, I could not bear to think that she, too, was unhappy. "You will distress poor mother terribly if she comes in and finds you like this," I went on gently, taking what I thought would be the best means of calming her.

She stopped her sobbing with a great effort, but did not raise her head.

"She is lying down. I thought you went out after dinner."

"I did, but I came back again."

"I did not know—I did not hear you; I——"

Her voice was quenched in fresh sobs.

"Dickie," I said, sitting down by her side upon the sofa, where I had found her with her face buried in the cushions, "you have some trouble that you had not when you first came here. You have been quite different lately—not at all like the bright little bird who fluttered into this quiet, dull home of ours and made a fairyland of it for two sober old people who had thought they had forgotten that there ever was such a place."

It was long since I had dared to trust myself to talk to her in this strain. I did not know what made me resume it on this particular evening.

"I know there is something troubling you," I went on; "but you do not tell me anything now; you don't confide in your old uncle as you used to do"—thinking of the time when we sat together on the hill-top, and she told me of her handsome young lover—that other Arnold, so different from the Arnold who sat beside her now and held her hand.

There was no answer; but she did not withdraw her fingers from my clasp.

"Why have you avoided me lately, Dickie?" I pursued. "Why have you not come out for any walks with me? There was a time when you would have hardly let me go alone even if I had wished it. And why do you nearly always steal away to your room in the evenings now? I have missed you so, my little Dick."

"I—I have been busy," she stammered.

"And why has your manner towards me altered so much?" I asked, impelled onward by I hardly knew what impulse. "Have I done anything to offend you?"

But I knew I had not, and her tremor and confusion made my heart begin to beat wildly with sudden, mad hope.

"No," she answered, still keeping her face out of sight. "And I did not know that—that I was different. It is nothing, only I felt lonely this evening, and it made me miserable, I suppose."

"You should never feel lonely again if it rested with me," I replied sadly. "But it does not. I could never fill your life, though you have already filled mine."

"Uncle Arnold!"

The low sobbing exclamation roused my hopes afresh.

"Dickie, don't you know that I love you?" I whispered passionately. "You might have guessed it long ago."

A half-smothered sob was the only answer.

"Dickie, my darling! do you think me very presumptuous? I know I am old, and ugly, and broken-down—not at all the sort of lover a young girl would choose. But I have dared to love you, and to wish that you could care for me enough to— Dickie, you always said you loved your Uncle Arnold, but that, of course, was quite a different thing. If it is quite impossible for you ever to think of him in any other relationship, just shake your head—you need not look up—and he will never trouble you again with his foolishness, but always take the greatest care of you as his dear little niece."

But she did look up, and shaking off the tears that disfigured her face, there rushed over it such a roseate glow of love and beauty as fairly transformed it. There was no need for words; I read my answer in that lovely, radiant face, and my life's love and happiness came to me in that moment.

"I loved you, Uncle Arnold," she told me a little while afterwards, between my passionate kisses; "and once or twice I thought that—that you loved me. But then you seemed to change, and I thought how unlikely it was that you could ever care for such a silly little thing."



Edited by Charles Dickens.)

"My dearest, I dare hardly believe in my own happiness! Yet I have always thought that we seemed made for one another."

"Uncle Arnold—"

"Do you know what you have called me twice in the last minute, Dickie?"

She laughed, and blushed beneath my loving scrutiny.

"Well, I will call you anything you like."

"Will you call me Arnold now?"

She blushed more deeply, and her eyes fell.

"Yes, if you wish it."

"What about that other Arnold, Dickie? Are you going to forget him now for my sake?"

"I—I think I have forgotten him, since I came here. It seems like a dream now. I can hardly believe it ever happened."

And at her words the slight misgiving that I had felt concerning that handsome young lover in the past died altogether away, and, as I bent to kiss her, I devoutly thanked Heaven for its goodness to me.

Ah me! that autumn evening, when we sat in the window together and looked down from our eyrie upon the surging crowd beneath! Many and many a pair of lovers did we see amidst the shifting throng, but none, we thought, so happy as ourselves. It passed like an Elysian dream, and when I woke the next morning, and remembered it all, and knew that it was true, it seemed too much happiness. Our summer storm had gathered, and burst, and passed away, leaving only new brightness behind it, new flowers springing in the old path. We seemed twin souls; and when I saw how her happiness returned—how the shy light sparkled in her eyes—how lovely she grew, with a new loveliness, in the days that followed our exchange of vows, I was confirmed in that impression.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 132.)

## Ghosts.

I FELT them take their seats that night  
Beside us, as we drew around  
The wood-fire's warmth, whose cheerful light  
Threw curious shadows on the ground.  
I felt them open wide the door,  
And enter in our lives once more.

Mine was a ghost with hazy brow,  
Faint eyes that were not really eyes,  
Long hair that curling fell adown,  
A mouth that uttered naught but sighs;  
A maiden such as ne'er is seen,  
The ghost of what, perchance, had been!

He sat beside our hearth, and gazed  
From her to me, and held her hand.  
I did not feel one whit amazed,  
So oft had I his features scanned.  
It did not need that ghost's sad lore  
To know that we were two once more!

And she who shared our fire that night,  
The guest we loved, had, too, her ghosts;  
They trooped around the glowing light,  
Dead days, dead loves in motley hosts.  
She did not speak: yet could I see  
Her thoughts were years away from me.

Ah, we are quits! Sure all the world  
Has somewhere folded near its heart  
(That heart that never is unfurled,  
That bears alone its dreary part),  
Days sweet with fragrance all their own;  
Thoughts, hopes, that not one more has known.

Nay, 'tis not well to know too much;  
Play we our parts, love, laugh, or kiss.  
We cannot hope to know our touch,  
The only one that makes her bliss.  
Is hers the only one we've known?  
Ah me, we live, we love alone!

## A Goldfield Reminiscence.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

"How long have you been in the colony?"

"I arrived just a week ago."

The answer to my interrogation was given by my neighbour, a fresh, vigorous, handsome young fellow of five-and-twenty, or thereabouts, who had been my travelling-companion on the top of Cobb and Co.'s coach during the transit between Melbourne and Castlemaine.

He was a Welshman—a farmer's son, I inferred, and one of the last batch of recruits who had rushed out to the great battle-fields where the daily strife for gold was waged so passionately and bitterly.

Of course, he had all the energy and enthusiasm of a new hand, and, as I looked at his fair face, deep chest, and bold blue eyes, I asked myself, sadly enough, how long it would be before, like many others, he would have become a dispirited failure or a reckless mining desperado.

I was in the first batch myself, not through any lack of industry or honesty: perhaps because of the presence of the latter quality, the 'cute ones might have told you.

It was not the prospect of an El Dorado that had lured me to the colonies. I had been settled there, and prospering, before the world-famed shepherd saw nuggets in the creek; but, bitten by the mania that turned peaceable citizens into ravening beasts, and left once happy homesteads desolate, I got rid of my stock and impedimenta at ruinous prices, and decamped for the mining districts.

Of course, I had the usual gleams of luck that make the race for wealth a passion here; but they were so few and brief, and the long nights of despondency that lay between were so toil-filled and bitter! It was the navy's existence without the navy's recompense. But, naturally, we sent home good accounts of the big nuggets as one and another turned them up, and, Briton-like, we kept our disasters to ourselves, and so the new recruits kept pouring in, and extortion, and rapacity, and dishonesty spread like a plague. I do not deny that noble things were done and cruel things borne, now and again, heroically. Even in its lowest depths, humanity retains some stamp of the divine; but I must reluctantly confess that these stirring memories are matter of tradition, and not of personal experience with me.

Anyone who has ever thought about mining must understand that it cannot be carried on single-handed; that for the processes of digging and washing alone, not to speak of protecting, cooking for, and serving each other, at least four partners are almost a necessity, and, could so many work together harmoniously, each claim could run a gang of double that number. But these partnerships are the main difficulty of the miner's life, the scope for his choice of a kindred spirit being so limited, and the strong probability that the first gleam of prosperity will turn his mate into a swindler or a drunkard, so very disheartening.

For some time past we had been working in a gang of three; two old miners, far more experienced in the life than I was, having picked me up; but, our late washings having been more profitable than usual after the rainy season, I knew Rogers and Smith were on the look-out for a fourth hand. Not guessing that any but a man of their own selection would be unfavourably received by them, and feeling much drawn towards my young companion on the stage-coach, and friendships being rapidly cemented here, I made him acquainted with our circumstances as we bowled along over the uneven, dirty highway.

"I have nothing to offer you but the chance of gold, and the certainty of hard work," I concluded; "but such as it is you are welcome to it, for the present, at any rate."

"I'm your man, and thank you heartily," he said, grasping my hand with British warmth; and then as we neared Castlemaine, and the sun, like a red ball, dipped towards the east, I enumerated to him the tools he would require, and narrated, as closely as I could, what our life would be together.

The more I talked to Ramsey the more I liked him. His spirits were so good they seemed to rouse my own, and the drawbacks to our claim, that I rather suggested than described, were pooh-poohed in the cheeriest way.

"We were far from the creek." "Well, he was strong enough to carry the clay any distance." "When we had found any dust we had to watch it armed all night." "Well, he could do with as little sleep as any man." "On the whole, I had not very much confidence in Rogers and Smith." "In that case how fortunate that we were now two and two!"

So, encouraged in spite of myself, we advanced to the claim together. But the surly reception my new acquaintance met with, soon intimated to me that I had been considered over-bold in my arrangement, and the discomfort of the first evening did not diminish as days passed. Instinctively our little gang of four fell into two companies, Rogers and Smith keeping entirely to themselves, and leaving Ramsey and me to support each other.

We had been about a month together, and it was the autumn of 1852, in the rainy season, so that the manner of life I had bestowed on Ramsey would have been no boon in any eyes but those of a miner. Our clothes dried on our backs or remained wet, as the case might be, and our claim was generally flooded, while he and I worked on the night-shift, keeping the shaft constantly baled, and digging as we could; and it would have required eight men to be of any service, for the ground was so heavy and the digging so deep. But the prospector's claim was not far off, and so we toiled like slaves, knowing that if we struck gold at all it would likely be in large quantities. But, in spite of hope and energy, Ramsey and I

were dead beat on Saturday night, and so, for the first time, we urged our hitherto unthought-of right to a change of hours. Why should not we rest at night and labour by day? Why should the others have this advantage exclusively? We made our proposal good-temperedly, but it was rejected in such surly fashion that I lost patience, and thinking to reduce our opponents to terms, offered to sell our interest.

"For what price?" Smith asked quickly.

"A hundred pounds each," I answered, feeling sure so much coin was not in the whole firm.

Without a word Rogers opened a canvas bag and counted out the gold, and then I knew that we had been literally bought and sold.

"They have bottomed," Ramsey said, as we walked off with our few belongings.

"Of course they have, the infernal rascals!" I answered viciously; "that is why they wished us to keep on digging while they washed."

On the following morning the rain had ceased, the day was fine, and the creeks were well filled with water, but I could not see beauty or promise in anything, because the scoundrels who had cheated me had netted two thousand pounds. And then we were the beaten men, and the rude laugh that greets failure was ringing over us.

For a couple of weeks we remained idle, chewing the cud of bitter discontent, even Ramsey's hopefulness having been damped by this lesson on men and things. And then our chances of making a fresh start were poor, the ground being occupied for miles, and any abandoned claim that we might have taken possession of requiring at least eight men to work it. But we were sick of partnerships, and coldly rejected any outside advances towards comradeship. As a kind of forlorn hope we at last decided to move up the hillside to some unclaimed shallow ground, which on inspection held out a vague kind of promise; but we were not rushing to it very hopefully now, having encountered facts, and the facts having conquered us. But action of any kind was likely to be less unprofitable than inaction, and so we were on our way to remove our tent and swag to the new settlement, when on the way we ran across two old Ballarat acquaintances, who were packing up their belongings for a start to a new rush in the Gympie Ranges. The claim they were forsaking had not been wholly unpromising, but better luck, like an *ignis fatuus* lured them ahead, and so their forty-foot shaft was about to be abandoned.

"These brilliant things never turn out of much value," I said warningly, from the depths of my past experience; "better stay where you are;" but they shrugged their shoulders, declared they would risk the exchange, and so left us.

"Suppose we settle down here?" I suggested, thinking the deep shaft more promising than the shallow ground.

"I dare say it's much the same here or there," Ramsey acquiesced dismally, and so, before sundown, our tent stood on the spot so recently vacated by our friends.

For five days we worked, and such work! One with pick and shovel at the bottom, the other with windlass-rope and bucket, hauling the earth to the surface, and still not a trace of the precious metal had met our hungry eyes, while every fellow-labourer who passed us thoughtlessly tantalised us with the success of our old chums, or told us how some new arrivals had struck gold on the very piece of shallow ground we had meant to peg out on the hillside.

"You had better leave me, Ramsey, bad luck sticks to me," I told him despondently on the sixth morning.

"Just as likely I have brought it with me," he answered with a dash of his old cheeriness; "at any rate we'll have one other fling into the old hole on this last day of the week."

"Well, it must be the very last," I answered, taking up my pick listlessly and descending.

There is a certain comfort in the thought that you are doing a hopeless thing for the very last time; there is a certain satisfaction in the knowledge that there are still other corners of the world open to you. Perhaps it was this that lent me new energy, at any rate I pounded away for a couple of hours with a will, and none the less energetically as I discovered that the character of the ground was changing. It was gravel I had laid bare, gravel which before many hours must prove to us of what value our labours had been.

"Now then, that decides it one way or another," I said as I sent the first bucketful to the surface. "If there is no gold there I shake the mud of this claim off my feet for ever."

So determined was I in this resolution that I intimated my ascent after the bucket, and taking my pick and shovel with me, cast what I expected to be a last look into the depths as I mounted. And yet in spite of myself excitement and a vague half hope were stirring at my heart.

"If there is nothing here, we'll shake hands and part," I told Ramsey, as, with our burden between us, we started for the creek. He nodded without answering, and then in silence we bent over the gravel, washing it as for dear life. Two—three—ten minutes passed,

and then we stood erect and looked at each other. A thimbleful of a yellowish substance lay at the bottom of the pannikin.

"What is it?" Ramsey asked huskily.

"It's gold!" I answered with white lips. I don't know what we did then. We dared not embrace each other, for there were neighbours close enough to observe any unusual demonstration. I think we stood gazing at our treasure, and interjecting brief comments hoarsely.

Then we gathered up our tools and returned to the claim, feeling all at once strong as Samson, and young with an eternal kind of youth. After all, these brief moments do compensate for many a month of toil and privation!

Past experience had taught us the wisdom of keeping our own counsel now, but, in spite of our best efforts, it was soon understood along the line that we had bottomed, and were washing off sand. A certain *esprit de corps* among miners necessitates the comparative value of a yield being made known, nevertheless we managed to secure most of the big nuggets from the bottom of the cradle before the final washing off.

Possession has its own pains and penalties. For a month, while toiling by day, we scarcely ventured to sleep at night, lest someone should descend our shaft and despoil us of our treasure; but after a time the vigilant watch on us abated. Some of our neighbours in adjoining claims had bottomed, and their proceeds scarcely giving them wages, the value of our find was gravely questioned and finally forgotten.

Before we left that shaft we had sold eight thousand pounds worth of gold, while in no other claim on the creek had the treasure amounted to as many hundreds. The explanation was not far to seek. All the gold was large, and across our claim lay a ledge of rock that, in past ages, had formed a barrier to the descent of the nuggets as the current washed them from the reef above, and here, sought for to right and left, to front and rear, they had lain for centuries to enrich Ramsey and me just when our worst moment had come, and when we were nearest to despair.

Of course I know people would laugh if we asserted that that gold had been left there that we might find it then, but I know that miners, and sailors, and men whose lives and fortunes are not exactly in their own hands, grow to believe more in luck, or chance—call it what you will—than others do, and somehow it affords us a kind of consolation even when things are dead against us, to think that there is a plan in them somehow, and that they will right themselves for us sooner or later, here, or somewhere.

## The Editor's Note Book.

THE Government seem to have entered upon quite a new policy in regard to such bodies as the Metropolitan Board of Works and the Gas Companies. Probably the course which they have adopted, although undoubtedly judicious in the second case, will strike most people as being vexatious and obstructive in the first.

THAT the Board of Trade should have issued circulars to the various governing bodies of the metropolis inviting the expression of their opinion as to the proposed absorption by the Gas Light and Coke Company of the only other Gas Company now in London, is quite right and proper. Such a scheme should not be carried out till after the fullest examination and discussion. It is not, however, easy to see why the Treasury should have refused to allow the Board of Works to continue the corn dues, which have helped to pay for many great improvements and could pay for many more, and the burden of which, on any individual, is so small as to be unappreciable. If the dues are to be given up, and metropolitan improvements are to go on, the rates must be raised, and that would certainly not be a popular measure.

As the two explosions on the Underground Railway occurred almost, if not quite, simultaneously, there can be little doubt that they were the work of the dynamite gang. Indeed, they resemble other outrages of a similar nature in almost every particular, for, like the explosion in "A Sailor and His Lass" at Drury Lane Theatre, there does not appear to have been any particular reason for them, nor do they seem to have led to any particular result.

It is true that the loss of life at Praed Street might have been most serious, but, so long as the conspirators keep more than half their minds fixed on taking care of their own skins, there is always reasonable hope that the damage caused by their cowardly attempts will be comparatively small. It is only where the would-be murderer is prepared, like another Samson, to sacrifice his own life if only he can ensure the destruction of his victims, that real danger is to be apprehended. Fortunately, such cases are rare, and the cowardly ruffians who are supported by money subscribed in America, and are

only repudiated in a half-and-half sort of way by the heads of the Irish Land League party, have not as yet shown any particular desire to run any very serious risks.

It would be too much, perhaps, to expect that the members of the Clerkenwell Vestry should display much of the dignity and judicial calmness which ought to mark a typical governing body, but the disgraceful manner in which they behaved during the discussion on the great refreshment question was surprising, and indeed almost unprecedented even in the natural history of Bumbledom.

MR. KELLY, the vestryman who brought the accusation of extravagant feeding at the parochial expense against some of his fellows, had an extremely bad time of it. Indeed, so much smoke was raised that it is impossible to suppose that there was not a good deal of fire. One of the opposition boasted that he knew that Mr. Kelly wanted to know something and that he accordingly "stuffed" him—in other words this representative of the ratepayers of Clerkenwell vaunted himself exceedingly for having told a colleague, who was anxious to do his duty, a parcel of lies. Constitutions differ, I suppose, but I cannot myself see what cause the stuffing gentleman had for self-gratulation.

THE great Irving "boom," as such things are called in the United States, has begun in New York, and the actor's first appearance seems to have been, on the whole, very successful. Some of his tricks and manners evidently puzzled the audience, and still more the critics, not a little, and the utterances of most of the newspapers are somewhat uncertain and hesitating. The principal exception is the *New York World*, which formulates its objections to the English actor in a vast number of words. As, however, the article begins by talking of his "superb acting," the meaning of what follows is not altogether intelligible.

MISS MARY ANDERSON did not altogether do herself justice when she elected to make her first appearance before a London audience in so formal and uninteresting a part as Parthenia in "Ingomar." The mannerisms and faults of Mrs. Lovell's play were accentuated by the mannerisms and faults of Miss Anderson's acting, and the general effect was to convey to the mind of the critical spectator the idea that Miss Anderson was an actress of method, of formula, and of education only.

THIS impression is effectually dissipated by her performance of Pauline in "The Lady of Lyons." It is true that a considerable amount of affectation, and of what one may call, for want of a better word, stageiness, attends Lord Lytton's play, and that these are emphatically the defects which mar Miss Anderson's histrionic efforts.

BUT, underlying the high-flown romance of the story and the terrible inflation of much of the dialogue of "The Lady of Lyons," there is much real and even touching human interest. And so it is with Miss Anderson. Under the conventionalities of her style and certain tricks of manner and expression, which probably come from a self-consciousness which may be forgiven in so charming a young lady, there are real dramatic instinct and a sympathetic power for which her Parthenia had by no means prepared me. Indeed, Miss Anderson's Pauline deserves the most cordial recognition, and I do not know that I have ever seen the third act of "The Lady of Lyons" so well played.

MR. J. H. BARNES'S Claude Melnotte is also a very interesting piece of acting, carefully studied and boldly executed. With plenty of fire and vigour Mr. Barnes has also the necessary delicacy and ease, and manages to make Lord Lytton's singular hero as probable as could be hoped for.

THE rest of the cast, which comprises several well-known names, is, oddly enough, better on paper than in fact. Mr. Frank Archer altogether misses the mark as Beauseant, and the other parts are played in strict accordance with the most stagey conventionalities. The piece is carefully and handsomely mounted, the new scenery being a reproduction of that used by Mr. Irving when he and Miss Terry played Claude and Pauline, and a fair run may safely be predicted for it.

THE recent publication in America of some of my father's letters shows how great is the demand for even the most trivial details of the private lives of public men, and in what a cynically unscrupulous spirit every opportunity is taken to gratify it, and at the same time to turn a possibly honest, but certainly dirty, penny.

IT was obvious on the face of this correspondence that the majority of the letters were private communications from my father to his solicitor, which could never have been intended for publication; which had come quite accidentally into the market; and which most people with any claim to respectability would have refrained from publishing. The American publisher, however, acted after the manner of his kind on the other side of the Atlantic, and evidently looked at nothing but the dollars which might be made.

THE story of my father's early life, and of the troubles and struggles of my grandfather's family, has already been told, both in

Mr. Forster's Life and in my father's published letters. It surely could not have been necessary that further details should be hawked about, and I feel certain that, in the days when the *Times* was ruled by the clear brain and sound judgment of John Delane, the article which appeared the other day would never have been given to the world.

FINALLY, as the leader-writer of the *Daily Telegraph* paid me and my brothers and sisters the bad compliment of assuming that the book of which I complain could not have been published without our sanction, and as the letter of a writer to the *Times*, signed "An Admirer of Dickens," hesitates to give due weight to my aunt's repudiation of responsibility in the matter, I take this opportunity of saying in the most emphatic and unequivocal manner that not one of us had any knowledge of, or gave any consent to, the publication of the correspondence in question; and that my aunt, as executrix under my father's will, and Messrs. Chapman and Hall, as the proprietors of the copyrights in his works, will take every legal step that is open to them to prevent the circulation or re-publication of the correspondence in this country.

AMONGST the curiosities of the modern *Times* may be noted the fact that in its issue of the 30th of October, forty-three lines were devoted to a letter from a correspondent who found something altogether extraordinary and even startling in the circumstance that two customers of a certain bank had amounts of £22 0s. 7d. paid into their respective accounts on the same day!

C. D.

## Pincher Astray.

HE was not handsome, at least in the common acceptance of the term. He had a speckly muzzle and a hanging jawl, rather watery eyes, and short crop ears. His legs were horribly bowed, and his tail curled over his back like the end of a figure of nine. He was a morose brute and of most uncertain temper. He would rush out to a stranger with every demonstration of welcome, would leap up and bark round him, and then would get behind and bite him in the calves. He was the terror of the tradespeople; he loathed the butcher; he had a deadly hatred for the fishmonger's boy; and when I complained to the post-office of the non-arrival in due course of a letter from my aunt's legal adviser, advising me to repair at once to the old lady's death-bed (owing to which non-arrival I was cut out of her will), I was informed that the savage character of my dog—a circumstance with which the department could not interfere—prevented the letter-carrier from the due performance of his functions after nightfall. Still I loved Pincher—still I love him! What though my trousers-ends were frayed to strips by his teeth; what though he towzled all the corners of the manuscript of my great work on Logarithms—shall I reproach him now that he is lost to me! Never!

I saw him last three mornings ago, leisurely straying round the garden with the strap of the baby's shoe hanging out of his mouth, and wagging his tail as much as to show me how he was enjoying himself. I remonstrated with him on the shoe question; for a moment he seemed somewhat touched; but suddenly catching sight of a predatory cat on the wall, he galloped off without further parley. I watched the cat scuttle up a tree; I heard Pincher growling angrily at its base; when the noise of the milkman's boots crunching the gravel attracted his attention, he darted off and was lost to me for ever. There was a fiendish grin on the housemaid's face when she announced to me that Pincher wasn't nowhere to be found. Visions of unworried stocking-heels, and unsnapped at ankles rose before that damsel's mind as she broke the news; and she smiled as she said they'd looked everywhere, they had, and nothing wasn't to be seen. I was not crushed by the intelligence. I knew my dog's extensive visiting list, and thought that finding he had outstayed his time, he had, perhaps, accepted the friendly offer of half a kennel, and was then engaged in making night hideous, and conducting to the sleeplessness of some neighbourhood unaccustomed to his vocal powers. But as I lay in bed next morning I missed the various little dramas—the principal character always performed by Pincher—of which I had so often been the silent audience. The butcher's boy—a fierce and beefy youth, who used openly to defy the dog, and beat him off with hurlings of his basket and threatenings with his feet—now entered silently; the baker's last apprentice, a mild and farinaceous lad—who proffered Pincher the raspings of black loaves, and who endeavoured to propitiate his enemy by addressing him as "Poor fellow!"—now entered silently; while the fishmonger's boy—who generally made one wild scuttle from the garden-gate to the kitchen entrance, and upon whose back Pincher usually hung, as the wolves hung upon Mazeppa—now walked slowly up the path, and whistled. Then I knew that he was gone indeed!

I engaged the services of an unintelligible crier, and had the dog's description bellowed round the neighbourhood. I brought the printing art into play, and all the palings and posts within a circle of two miles burst out with an eruption of placards, of which the words "Lost," and "Dog," were, without the aid of a powerful microscope, the only legible portion. I concocted an advertisement for the *Times*, and then waited patiently for the result of my various schemes.

They had results, I allow. I received at least twenty letters from sympathisers, who told me that in the event of my not recovering my lost favourite, they were happily able to provide another in its place. I suppose that on the evening of the day the advertisement appeared, at least five-and-twenty pairs of boots had printed themselves off on my dining-room druggot, which, being red in colour and fluffy in texture, is singularly capable of retaining a clear impression. In every instance, the boots belonged to short-haired stable gentlemen in large white coats, from the inner pockets of which they produced specimens of dogs—ugly and morose indeed, but not Pincher.

I need not say that my intimate friends came out nobly under the circumstances. Jephson, who wore checked trousers of a vivid pattern, which had always aroused Pincher's ire, thanked fortune that "the infernal beast was got rid of somehow." Podley, who, labouring under the delusion that all dogs were intended for swimmers, had once tried to throw Pincher into the Hampstead ponds, and had his hand bitten to the bone for his pains, hoped that "the brute had been made into sausages." Blinkhorn, who was of a facetious turn, was sure that Pincher had been sewn up in the skin of some deceased dog of fabulous beauty, and sold to some old dowager by a man in Regent Street. The only one who gave me the least consolation was Hallmarke, who said that perhaps he had been picked up by some benevolent person, and had been sent to the Home for Lost Dogs. But my hopes were short-lived. I went in hot haste to that excellent institution; but, alas! Pincher was not among its numerous happy inmates.

Pincher did return, however; not from the Home, for he knew better than so far to jeopardise his social standing. He returned with a ruffled coat, a torn ear, and a fierceness of eye, which bespoke recent trouble. I afterwards learned that he had been a principal in a combat held in the adjoining parish, where he acquitted himself with honour, and was in the act of pinning his adversary, when a rustic person from a farm broke into the ring, and kicked both combatants out of it. This ignominy was more than Pincher could bear. He flung himself upon the rustic leg, bit it through, and brought him to the ground; then fled for his life, and remained hidden until hunger compelled him to return to his home. We have exchanged no communication since, but regard each other with sulky dignity, and I clearly perceive he intends to remain obdurate until I make the first advances to reconciliation.

## Cookery.

### PLAIN DINNERS.

A LEG of mutton with trimmings and a pudding was still in the early days of Queen Victoria's reign the housewife's idea of a good, plain, wholesome dinner. "There is nothing cheaper than a leg of mutton;" "There is nothing better than a cut of mutton for the children," were the opinions stoutly maintained against all suggestions of other fare. There is a survival of these opinions to this day, in spite of the great cost of the joint and the difficulty of procuring fine mutton at all.

Many sacrifices have to be made in other directions to enable housekeepers of moderate means to provide this plain wholesome fare for their families, and no little anxiety is often felt by those who have a fixed idea that the growing boys and girls will not thrive on less costly material.

There are, no doubt, some of our readers who can remember how, when mutton or beef was boiled, the broth was served first, then the dumpling, and that it was an axiom that those who could not eat the two first did not need the last. Until about forty years ago, even at the table of well-to-do farmers and tradesmen, it was the custom to serve pudding first, with the avowed intention of diminishing the appetite for meat. Gradually the idea that this was mean, that it was vulgar to allow anything less delicate than soup or fish to precede the joint, gained the ascendancy. Nowadays, as it is clear that, with meat at its present price, there are comparatively few persons who can afford to satisfy the appetites of their children with such expensive food, it is worth while to consider how far it would be well to return to the ancient order of "pudding first."

There are so many people, both young and old, who have such a marked aversion to suet-puddings, or who so soon tire of batter, that the question what to provide is difficult, unless some little pains are taken in cooking. Of course, any dish which precedes the joint with the object of saving meat, is pretty sure to be received with suspicion or contempt, if not by the girls and boys, by the kitchen party. It is, therefore, highly desirable that the first dish should be of a tempting character, as good as possible of its kind, and thoroughly well prepared. There is, for instance, nothing better than haricot beans and lentils. But these are, as a rule, plainly boiled and sent to table without any seasoning; then, of course, they are disliked. From their earliest years children should be accustomed to food of this kind, oatmeal, macaroni, etc.; then they grow up with a taste for it, greatly to their advantage.

Bread, fried and served with gravy, or stewed vegetables of any kind, are good. Small dumplings in any sort of sauce which is found to suit the family taste, and savoury rice, are most useful, and the same may be said of the savoury oatmeal-pudding given in the first

bill of fare. In short, there is a large number of good, cheap, and nourishing dishes which are suitable as a first dish, the only difficulty being that they require care in the preparation.

It is unnecessary to repeat what has been said in this Journal on the dietetic value of soup, and we will only now say that it is much to be regretted that soup is not more popular as an article of family fare, the more so as it can be made of materials which are too often wasted.

From month to month, it is proposed to give in HOUSEHOLD WORDS hints and directions for serving plain dinners well and economically, and to show how every scrap of material may be utilised. In the present paper the case of a dinner of beef, and how to make the joint go farthest, will be considered.

Decidedly the most profitable piece of beef to have for a family dinner is that known as "top-side," and is without bone and has little fat. If the meat is fine, this is an excellent cut, but if it is not of the first quality, it is hard and flavourless, and is not fit for roasting. After the top-side, in point of economy, come three or four of the ribs of the cut called "wing-rib"—that is, the shortest of the ribs. The longer ribs are more profitable when rolled, and make a dish fit for any table or any occasion.

There is no difference of opinion as to which, both in respect of appearance and quality, is the best joint of beef. Sirloin has always carried the palm, and in consequence commands a high price. Of the three cuts into which sirloin is usually divided, the middle is the best and most economical. The first cut, which butchers sometimes call "wing of the sirloin," is apt to shrink, particularly at the thin end, and, having an undue quantity of bone, is extravagant.

The chump end of the sirloin, if bought at a price less than the middle cut and used with management, is not unreasonably expensive. The end of this roasted is often wasteful, yet makes an excellent stew, and is best lightly salted and used within three or four days. The undercut can be removed without damage to the upper side of the joint, and from ten to twelve pounds of the chump should make, with some such dish as we have suggested, a sufficient meat dinner for a family of six or eight persons for four or five days. On the first day this undercut can be used, on the second the joint itself be roasted, on the third this will be served cold, on the fourth the end of the joint be stewed.

The order of serving, then, will be something as follows:

#### FIRST DAY.

Savoury Batter Pudding.  
Fillet of Beef. Potatoes à la Maitre d'Hôtel.  
Stewed Carrots.  
Baked Apple Pudding.

#### SECOND DAY.

Dumplings with Gravy.  
Roasted Sirloin. Browned Potatoes.  
Greens.  
Batter Pudding with Fruit Sauce.

#### THIRD DAY.

Stewed Haricot Beans.  
Cold Beef. Fried Potatoes.  
Treacle Pudding.

#### FOURTH DAY.

Savoury Rice.  
Stewed Beef with Onions, Carrots, and Dumplings.  
Boiled Oatmeal Pudding.

#### FIFTH DAY.

Soup of the Beef Bones with Lentils.  
Rissoles. Curried Rice.  
Apple Pie.

Recipes for the dishes will be given in future papers.

## American Engine Drivers.

AN American newspaper gives the following graphic account of an engine-driver's troubles:

"Oh yes, engineers do lose their nerve," said Old Throttle, "especially one who has a night-run all the time. You see, in the night-time an engineer's eyes, thoughts, and all are confined to a very small space; it's nearly or quite dark inside the cab, and if his engine is workin' all right, carryin' her water, good lots of steam, and the fireman wide-awake and lively, that engineer don't have much to do with his eyes, only to look out ahead over the little space made bright by the head-light, and his thoughts are naturally confined to what his eyes take in. In the daytime it's different; he can look around and see lots goin' on. He notices that this field of 'taters looks good, and wonders if his little patch at home will turn out as well; he sees a feller fishin', and remembers the last mess of trout he caught in the Shohola; he sees a woman and a baby in the little white house near the big curve, and his thoughts fly back to his home and his wife and children, and he wonders what they are doing just now.

"And this he can take in, and be 'tendin' to business strictly; but



In the night-time all is changed, and his vision and thoughts, as I said, are confined to the small spot made visible and distinct by the head-light, and his ideas naturally follow the rails. He remembers that the culvert just ahead is the very spot that was washed out last spring, and nothing left under the ties and rails for ten or fifteen feet; true, his engine jumped the chasm, and only five cars loaded with express matter and baggage went down and were smashed and piled on top of each other, but it might have been the ten cars of emigrants that were coupled in the rear, and it isn't pleasant to think of what might have been.

"Just around the curve is the place where his engine struck a draw-head some careless brakeman had left lying on the track; his engine only turned over on her side, and fortunately the air-brakes had so stopped the train that no further damage was done; but he shudders as he recalls the sensations he experienced while the engine was turning over and crushing its mad way through the ties, and 'tisn't pleasant to think of. He flies over a huge embankment at a pace of forty miles an hour, and thinks of the feelings that were his on a certain trip last winter when a side-rod came crashing through the side of the cab, while passing over the same embankment.

"In the cut just ahead is where, on the last trip, a watchman, intent on watching a train on the opposite track, had forgotten the express was due, and the horror and agony depicted on his face as the pilot threw him high in the air, will never be forgotten, neither will his mangled and stained body, picked up and cared for as soon as the train could be stopped. And so on every mile of the road something of this kind is brought to mind, as his thoughts follow the circle of light ahead, which flashes and changes constantly, now shining on a bridge, now showing an embankment, flashing its rays now on a house, and now through trees and foliage, and if the man is easily worried or bothered he gets very nervous indeed, and wishes he was at the end of the trip—anywhere off the rail.

"Why, I've known men to give up the best trains on the road and big pay because they had to run in the night-time, and take trains that were much harder to run and poorer pay, simply because the latter run in daylight. Yes, engineers do sometimes get frightened and lose nerve, and it is not to be wondered at when we think of his standing one hand on the throttle and the other on the reverse lever, with his thoughts going back to incident and accident of his busy and hazardous life on each curve and straight line of the road, as revealed by the head-light of his engine."

## The Entrance Examination to our Public Departments.

### PART II.

It will have been seen from the list of subjects given that the exam. should be easily within the compass of every public school boy. Indeed, were it only "qualifying," instead of "competitive," there is little doubt that nearly three-fourths of the entire number of candidates would pass. The simple character of the subjects in reality constitutes the severity of the exam. This may be readily seen by glancing down a list of the successful candidates' marks, when it will be observed that groups of names often occur separated from each other by a single mark only.

WE think it is to be regretted that the Civil Service Commissioners have not seen their way to providing a more liberal *menu*. A Latin paper, and one in French or German, at the candidate's option, would give a greater chance to many who are at present severely handicapped by this rigid adherence to English subjects. We should here remark that there is a preliminary examination of a very simple character, merely imposed with the view of weeding out those candidates who possess no chance whatever of passing the competitive examination, a certain number of obviously incompetent men invariably presenting themselves upon each occasion.

WE shall now endeavour to indicate briefly the nature and extent of the various examination papers.

**DICTATION.**—Two rather lengthy extracts from Standard English authors, such as Lord Macaulay or Sir Walter Scott, are given, and ten marks are deducted for each mistake in spelling from the total of 400 awarded for orthography. A similar number of marks is also deducted for each mistake occurring in the other papers set during the examination.

**COPYING.**—This is purely a test of handwriting, and must not be confounded with "Copying Manuscript," of which more anon. A tabulated statement of some kind is usually provided, with a corresponding blank form, into which as much of the printed form must be copied as can be got through in half an hour. By exercising great care and considerable ingenuity, the printed form can be reproduced in the blank one, and the "test" consists in doing so without giving the latter a cramped or unsightly appearance.

**ARITHMETIC.**—This paper usually contains fifteen questions of a distinctly difficult character, and has been known to give considerable trouble to those candidates whose attention has been principally

confined to the higher branches of mathematics. For instance, no credit whatever is given for problems solved by the aid of algebraic formula.

**COMPOUND ADDITION** (half an hour allowed).—In the first fifteen minutes six very long compound addition sums have to be added up. There are usually twenty rows of figures, with about six figures in the pounds column, to each sum. In the second fifteen minutes, sets of figures, known as "cross tots," and arranged in twenty horizontal lines and ten vertical columns, have to be added up from left to right, the total of each horizontal line being placed on its extreme right.

This subject, for which one hundred marks are allowed out of the total of four hundred given for arithmetic, decidedly pays, since a large number of the competitors utterly fail in it; whereas, if only sufficient practice be devoted to it, absolute accuracy, and consequently the maximum number of marks, can be obtained.

**ENGLISH COMPOSITION.**—Three subjects are given, and the candidate is at liberty to choose the one best suited to him. They generally comprise: (1) A well-known proverb; (2) the life of a given celebrity; or (3) some topic engrossing public attention at the moment. Candidates would do well to bear in mind that the examiners visit very severely any attempt at "fine writing" or high-flown diction. The matter should be carefully weighed before being committed to paper, and should be expressed in simple narrative form—grammatical accuracy and correct spelling being, of course, of the utmost importance.

**BOOKKEEPING.**—The paper set is of the character usually found in any treatise on the subject, with this exception, that it is sometimes framed in accordance with the special requirements of one of the large financial departments, such as the Exchequer and Audit Office.

**PRÉCIS WRITING** in the Foreign Office, **INDEXING** in the Legacy and Succession Duty Office, and **DOCKETING** in the Customs Department, are practically one and the same thing, the elegance of the synonym declining from west to east in accordance with the topographical position of the office using it.

This exercise consists in tearing the heart out of a set of lengthy official documents, and of expressing it in short and concise language. This subject well repays any amount of careful study devoted to it.

**DIGESTING AND TABULATING ACCOUNTS AND RETURNS.**—A confused mass of statistical matter is placed before the candidate, together with a specimen, on a small scale, of a form into which it can all be packed. A similar form must be spaced out and ruled, each item must be entered under its appropriate head, or sub-head, all totals must be cast, and, in short, the candidate is expected to evolve perfect order from this chaotic medley of facts and figures.

**GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.** The questions in each of these papers approximate very nearly in style and scope to those set in the senior Oxford and Cambridge local examinations. These two papers should give the boys from the modern side of our schools a great advantage over their co-competitors from the classical side.

**COPYING MS.**—The late Horace Greeley stood admittedly an easy first amongst illegible writers. He once wrote a letter dispensing with the services of one of his staff. The journalist, when next applying for a situation, with the utmost coolness produced this letter from the well-known editor of the *New York Tribune* as one of personal recommendation, and was immediately elected on the strength of the signature, no other portion of the letter being decipherable. It would almost seem as if the examiners had secured a large quantity of the late talented editor's "copy." The candidate is required to transcribe (sic) and transcribe as much of these caligraphic hieroglyphics as he can in the given time. Complete sets of these examination papers can be obtained through any bookseller, and they are always kept in stock at Stanford's, Charing Cross, and Longman's, Paternoster Row.

If there are any points connected with this subject on which any of our readers would like further information we shall be very pleased to answer their queries through the medium of our correspondence column.

## The Beefsteak Society.

ONE of the most famous convivial associations of the last and present century is the Beefsteak Society. We read of a Steak Club in the *Spectator*, in April, 1712, Steele speaking in terms of the greatest affection of Dick Eastcourt, the provider of the club, and who also so eloquently records his death in a very touching manner. This club, however, was not the same as the famous society, established a few years later, though it may, perhaps, have been in some measure suggested by the former. The "Society" (for the members disdained to be considered a club), originated, as is well known, in Rich, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, cooking and eating his beefsteak in the presence of a distinguished visitor, Lord Peterborough, who was so charmed with the odour of the simple fare that he begged to be allowed to join; a further supply of steak was sent for, and a few bottles of wine from a neighbouring tavern gave a zest to the feast. On going away at a rather late hour, the old earl proposed to renew



the meeting, and on the following Saturday, Peterborough returned with three or four friends, "men of wit and pleasure about town"; and so jovial was the meeting that it was agreed to form a Saturday Club, to assemble in Rich's room, the fare to be restricted to beefsteaks, port wine, and punch. The "Steaks" soon became fashionable, and the greatest lords, as well as the most intellectual men, were ambitious of belonging to such an illustrious association. The meetings were at first held in a room over Covent Garden Theatre; but when the house was burnt down in 1808, the members met for a time at the Bedford, and then in apartments over the English Opera House, now the Lyceum Theatre. Here again they were burnt out; but, strange to say, the original gridiron of the society (according to some, Rich's own gridiron) was saved from both fires. Churchill and Wilkes, in the last century, were members of the Steak Society; but the former made himself so disagreeable, that he resigned to avoid expulsion, and the latter also fell into disgrace on account of his *Essay on Women*. George IV. was a member when Prince of Wales, having been elected in 1785; and various dukes, royal and not royal, have felt proud of presiding in the chair. Very naturally, considering its origin, the "Sublime Society," as it was sometimes called, enrolled many actors in its lists, and in the club-books occurs the entry: "J. Kemble, expelled for his mode of conduct." He had probably been giving himself pompous airs. His predecessor, Garrick, a more genial man, was very much liked, and one night when he had to play *Ranger at Drury Lane*, of which he was the manager, he stayed so late with his brother Steaks that he kept the stage waiting. He was sent for, and arrived hot and breathless. "I think, David," said Ford, one of the patentees, "considering the stake you and I have in this house, you might pay more attention to the business." "True, my good friend," replied Garrick, "but I was thinking of my steak in the other house." Another good thing was said by Garrick at one of the club dinners. He had made the remark that, in order to prevent irregularities at the theatre, he always made a point of ticketing and labelling every play that was to be returned, so that it might be found in a moment. "A fig for your hypocrisy," exclaimed Murphy across the table. "You know, David, you mislaid my tragedy two months ago, and I make no doubt you have lost it." "Yes," replied Garrick; "but you forget, you ungrateful dog, that I offered you more than its value, for you might have had two manuscript farces in its stead." We cannot dismiss the Steaks without mentioning old Captain Charles Morris, the bard of the club, who wrote indifferent poetry (called by courtesy *Anacreontic*), browed the finest of punch, made himself universally beloved for his good-nature and joyous spirits, and who died in 1838, at the patriarchal age of ninety-two.

The old room of the Beefsteak Club, at the back of the Lyceum Theatre, has been recently fitted up as a dining-room by Mr. Henry Irving, and no doubt in days to come the history of the present room will add much interesting matter, and many brilliant anecdotes to the dramatic and literary history of to-day.

The present Beefsteak Club in King William Street is only a namesake and not a lineal descendant of the old institution.

## Cheap Home-Made Christmas Boxes.

PART I. SIXPENCE EACH.

THE relationship between Old Father Christmas and Santa Claus is very near and dear. Take away from us our Christmas gifts, the blessing of bestowing, and the pleasure of receiving, and the annual festival would be stripped of half its joyousness. The holidays would be very dreary, and even plum-pudding would lose half its richness if Christmas-boxes were to be abolished by some suddenly enacted Act of Parliament.

THE importation of toys, dear and cheap, in such large quantities from Germany makes the choice of gifts by those who live in towns very simple. But for young people away in the country, with no shops near, and very little money in their purses to send to town for what they want, it is quite a different case. Time and deft fingers may be theirs, and, perhaps, a great deal of sweet self-denial and loving thoughtfulness is called into exercise for many weeks previous to the 25th of December. It is a serious thing to provide gifts for a father and mother, and several brothers and sisters, perhaps one or two servants, with only eightpence; there may be even half-a-crown, or as much as five shillings available, but the outlaying of sums like these calls for a great deal of thought, and an amount of calculation which would do credit to a Chancellor of the Exchequer.

THE great variety of working materials now in use, some of them very cheap, simplifies the question of home-made Christmas-boxes no little. All that is required are nimble fingers, guided by a little artistic taste.

POCKET-HANDKERCHIEFS with fancy borders are exceedingly cheap. In their original form they look scarcely good enough for a present, but made up into a tie, bow, or morning-cap, they become quite transformed. Border the handkerchief with lace, being liberal at turning the corners so as to leave the lace a little full. If

the edging be narrow, two yards and a half will be enough. If wider, three yards. Divide the lace in four, tack it at the corners before beginning to sew, in order to keep the quantity for each side distinct. Fold two of the corners inwards, so that they meet in the middle of the square. Pin them in their places, and run some gatherings straight across from edge to edge, passing exactly through these corners, and draw up closely. The two corners left free should hang down gracefully in natural soft folds; turn one over the other, keeping the turned-in corners outside. If the handkerchief be large enough, it may be tucked up into a bow; if small, or only made of a square of muslin, crepe, silk, or lace, the ends can remain flowing. This bow looks pretty when worn in front of a dress, tucked under the corner of a turned-down collar, having also the superlative advantage that its materials can be bought for sixpence.

ANOTHER, which comes to about the same price, for it requires a better lace, is made of a strip of Indian muslin, about three inches wide, and half a yard long, and joining the two ends together. Sew one row or two rows of lace on the two sides of the muslin—one row if the lace be wide, two if it be narrow. Run three threads up the centre and draw them as tightly as possible and fasten the ends. If the middle looks too plain, a knot of ribbon, a little more lace, or at Christmas-time a branch of holly and berries redeems the bare look. Surah, or Indian silk, or coloured gauze, may be substituted for muslin.

FRILLS and collars of lace may be made in a variety of patterns. If the lace be narrow, a foundation of stiff net is required to sew it on; but a quarter of a yard, at a cost of twopence, will make several collars. Cut the foundation, if circular, exactly to fit the wearer, taking in little seams at the shoulders if necessary. If the work is to be kept secret, the dress-bodies of the person for whom it is intended will give the proper measurements. Sew a row of lace round the edge of the foundation; another above it, just overlapping the upper edge of the first row; and so on up to the throat, when the final row is to be reversed, so as to stand up. A row of ribbon or black velvet where the last two edges meet makes a neat finish. This is an extravagant pattern, as it uses up a great deal of lace.

A COLLAR made of one row of deeper lace is more economical. Make a narrow band of a cutting from the foundation net. Mark the middle and two sides. Take a yard of lace—a yard and a half if be very deep; pleat it, having regard to the pattern, and press the folds with a warm iron. Run a thread along the top, fastening each pleat in its place, but taking no back-stitch. Tack it on the band in such a way that, when sewed inside the dress, it will fall loosely over. It requires no standing-up row. Ruffles to match may be added. All imitation laces for fichus, dress-trimmings, etc., should be pleated with an iron.

ANY little odds and ends of lace, scraps remaining over from other occasions, can be used for the ends of muslin ties. All muslin ties must have the hems folded and pressed. Ties for mourning are made of strips of muslin, with hems and little tucks to finish the ends. These require no lace, so are exceedingly cheap. A plain deep frill, box-pleated, with a hem at the edge, is a neat finish for a mourning tie.

IN these travelling days a railway time-table is always in requisition. Whether it be Bradshaw, or some less bewildering guide which is to be consulted, it is quite necessary to have one always at hand. But the untidy covers often cause the banishment of time-tables from the drawing-room, the very place where they are most frequently required. A pretty, loose case with pieces of elastic down the centre inside to hold in the book makes a very acceptable Christmas-box, and it need not cost more than sixpence, ribbon strings, and all.

FOR the sides, two pieces of pasteboard, or one folded so as to leave a centre part for the back. The cover, if money is no object, may be of silk, satin, plush, velvet, and it may even be embroidered in silks, gold thread, and seed-pearls. But such decoration would swallow up a year's pocket-money. A piece of unbleached linen, one with a rough surface to be preferred. Stretch it over the pasteboard frame, turning over the edges, as books for a parish library are provided with saving covers, and fastened with a needle and thread. If the worker can draw she has only to etch with a pen and ink a neat design—a floral outline looks best on the cover—adding a monogram. The less elaborate the pattern, the more in keeping with the groundwork, the coarse linen.

IF the young lady is not artist enough to draw the pattern, she can transfer one, in the same way as embroidery patterns are put on cloth or velvet, and then go over it with a pen afterwards to give it the outline effect of having been sketched. The inside of the cover is finished by pasting down fly-leaves to hide the sewing. Elastic bands down the back inside, and ribbon-strings sewed on the back outside, complete this gift.

SINCE the parcel-post constituted itself our benefactor, everything that weighs lightly can be had from town. For instance, those rush hats, which came from Japan in such quantities that they can be bought for two or three pence each—this ought to cover postage—can be turned into cheap Christmas-boxes.

To make a work-bag, or useful hand-bag, take a rush hat or bonnet. Ornament the outside by working stars, leaves, or flowers in crewels. Prepare a lining by making a bag exactly the width of the hat-leaf at the outside edge, but rather deeper than from the edge to the bottom of the crown. For the bag—sateen, chintz, serge, flannel, silk, linen, or any cheap material that will come within the price. Cut a round piece the size of the crown. Sew the bottom of the bag to it, so as to make a neat lining. Put it into the hat, seams downwards. Tack it down at the bottom; then at the place where leaf and crown join, finally round the edge. Upon the surplus make a hem for string case, put in double strings, and a neat bag is the result. It makes a good luncheon-basket for a short journey. To cut off the leaf of the hat altogether, and use the crown as the bottom of a bag, with some bright material for lining and bag-top is pretty, but the top must be carefully bound as the first step, or it will ravel out. This is a cheap bag, as so little material is required to make the top.

ANOTHER use for the rush hat is to line the leaf with some bright colour, tack one side back to the crown, and hang it up as a wall-basket. A good deal of the effect of this pattern depends on the lining and decoration. An ordinary straw, or a man's chip-hat can be made into a pretty flower-pot stand by tacking back the sides, and for Christmas by sewing evergreens and moss all over the leaf so as to conceal it.

SINCE Miss Ellen Terry inaugurated the Portia fan, which hangs at the side, is circular, and does not fold up, all sorts of pendent screen-fans are worn. The palm-leaves, which cost about a penny each, can be made to look seasonable by sewing on coloured everlastings, red berries, and ivy leaves, and tying some little bows of ribbon round the handles. If something better is required, the frame of the palm-leaf can be retained, a piece of foundation-net sewed over it, a few rows of lace run round, and the centre filled with flowers. The lace for this fan will be the chief expense, and it ought to be pleated and pressed before being sewed on.

## Some Curious Judgments.

A CURIOUS escape from a judicial difficulty was that resorted to by the Areopagus, to which renowned tribunal Dolabella, when pro-consul of Asia, referred a case he found himself unable to decide. A Smyrniish woman was accused before him of the murder of her husband, in revenge for the latter's having slain her son by a former marriage. Here was a dilemma. He could not acquit a convicted murderess, and yet shrink from condemning a mother whom love for her offspring had betrayed into crime. The law allowed no mitigated penalty. He sent the case to the Areopagus, who, equally perplexed, tided over the difficulty by directing the criminal to come up for sentence in—one hundred years!

The Emperor Claudius, who was certainly no Solomon, nevertheless pronounced a judgment which might bear a parallel with that of the wise king. A mother who disavowed her son was cited by the latter before the imperial seat. The evidence proving conflicting, Claudius cut the Gordian-knot by ordering the woman to marry the young complainant. This unexpected decree awoke the inner witness, and the mother acknowledged her son.

Pedro the Cruel's judgment in the case of a tiler, is deserving of record. While pursuing his calling on the roof of a lofty mansion, the man lost his balance, and after clinging some agonised moments to a slight projection, let go his hold, and fell into the street. As fate would have it, he dropped plump upon an individual unluckier even than himself, who was passing at that inopportune moment, and killed on the spot, the tiler himself sustaining no serious injury. The son of the man who was killed commenced a process against him who had fallen, and the case being heard by the king, he decreed that the tiler should be absolved from all demands. Leave, however, was reserved for the plaintiff to jump from an elevation equal to that from which the defendant had fallen, the latter being first placed below in a convenient position to break the other's fall. The plaintiff, however, declined to avail himself of his legal right. Charles V., on one occasion, appealed successfully to the inner testimony in the case of two ladies of quality, who, after much disputing, applied to the king as to which should take precedence of the other. "The sillier," decided his majesty.

The records of French law present us with the following remarkable case. A worker in tapestry sought to recover from a lady a certain sum for goods supplied. He was his own lawyer, and availed himself of the opportunity to make a speech of such unnecessary length, that the fair defendant, out of all patience, broke in: "Gentlemen, permit

me to explain the matter in two words. This person undertook, for the sum named, to supply me with a piece of Flemish tapestry, comprising several figures well designed—one, especially, being as handsome—as engaging—as—whom shall I say?—as M. le President! Instead of that, he delivers me a work displaying a group of creatures of almost diabolical hideousness—the principal an exact portrait of himself!" A decision adverse to the plaintiff was recorded.

Bertrand Solas, a wealthy Spaniard, a resident at Naples, was accustomed to "take his walks abroad," clad in gorgeous apparel. On one of these excursions he was run into by a porter carrying a huge bundle of firewood, a portion of which caught and tore his silken robe. In a furious rage he carried his complaint to the viceroy himself. The latter knew it was the invariable custom with porters to call out to anyone approaching, "*Gare!*" (Anglice, "Take care!") and enquired if he had given the usual warning, Solas replying in the negative. "Then I will punish him severely," said the viceroy. The porter was apprehended, but was cautioned by the viceroy's orders, that whatever questions might be addressed to him, he was to remain perfectly mute. The case was then heard—the prisoner only responding by signs. "What penalty," asked the judge, turning to Solas, "can I possibly inflict on this wretched dumb fellow?" "He is trifling with your excellency," said the hot Spaniard. "He is no more dumb than I am. I heard him shout out '*Gare!*'" "Ah, you did? Then why didn't you take his warning? You will pay him ten crowns for his loss of time."

## Household Gardening.

FEW persons are, perhaps, so completely satisfied with their gardens that they desire no alteration whatever, either in their design, arrangement, or planting. Still, there are such individuals, but they are those, as a rule, who take little or no interest in the surroundings of their homes. These, however, are in a minority; the vastly overpowering majority taking pride in the attractiveness of their home-plots, whether they are large or small; and such persons, however well they succeed, are always seeking to do something better, and are never more happy than when engaged in making improvements. A walk may need making or altering, a lawn forming, a rockery building, a fern-dell excavating, a mound raising, borders trenching, or trees and shrubs planting. Something of the nature indicated is certainly required by nine persons out of ten who delight in their gardens, for to delight in them is to strive to make them more enjoyable than before; and this leads us to a consideration of the important subject of

### MAKING ALTERATIONS.

All alterations, it may be remarked, are not improvements. A great amount of money is expended yearly, much labour involved, and discomfort endured for the time being in changing the character of a garden, under the delusion that it is necessarily being improved. So far from improvements following as a matter of course, we have known on many occasions a totally opposite result. Hasty, ill-considered action in the remodelling of home-enclosures usually ends in disappointment; but on the contrary, when a full grasp of the natural resources of a garden is obtained, and the obstacles to its satisfactory management are clearly realised, then, by thoughtful action, improvements of a very marked kind may be made; and the present is the time for effecting them.

### REMOVING TREES.

When walks, lawns, and borders are littered with the leaves of some familiar tree, so familiar, perhaps, that its full value is not appreciated, it is not unusual for a sudden determination to be arrived at to have it removed. It may be the reverse of attractive now, and it is remembered that "nothing will grow under it," hence it is doomed. In the case of moderate-sized gardens, near towns especially, always consider long and well before cutting down a tree. First look beyond that tree, and ascertain if it does not mask something more objectionable than itself. Reflect, too, that the work of twenty years may be undone in twenty minutes; and if a mistake should be made it can, perhaps, never be rectified, for the tree that has been cut down probably established itself before the atmosphere was polluted with smoke, whereas, to rear another better than itself, or even as good, now, might be an extremely difficult matter. All this should be thought about before condemning established trees in suburban gardens. There are, of course, instances where the removal of a tree may be advantageous; but if any doubt exists on the point, it will always be safe to decide in favour of the retention of the tree.

### VEGETATION UNDER TREES.

While it is undoubtedly true that many plants and crops will refuse to grow under trees, it is nevertheless a popular fallacy to suppose that nothing will grow there. Enter the wild woodland, and traverse the unbraveous forest for miles in spring and early summer, and see if the earth is destitute of beauty. So far from this being the case, a step can scarcely be taken without crushing some pretty flower or graceful fern. If "nothing will grow under trees," how has come that great

expanse of Bluebells there, a rich corerulean carpet, extending, as we have seen, for miles? Is that nothing? On the contrary, it is something with which the flower-bed on the lawn is puny in comparison. Again, observe that where nothing is supposed to grow, we find acres of Lilies—the sweet May-flower, with its waxy bells, and ever-welcome fragrance. These lovely flowers grow under trees, from thence being gathered by cart-loads, and the spikes are often the finest where the shade is the densest.

Then let us not forget that pretty favourite flower, the pale Primrose. Whence come those countless numbers of bunches that meet the townsman at every step on a certain day in April, on the date of which a not-forgotten statesman died? Did these shoals of flowers come from sunny gardens? No; they were gathered in shady banks and copses, from the roots of hedges, and clustering round the stems of trees. And where do wood Anemones grow? Their very name supplies the answer. They clothe the shaded earth with their starry flowers, seldom or never being found in any marked numbers in the sun; and then for a green setting, if we want more than the soft delicacy of the Fern-fronds, we have it in the deeper, firmer, ever-constant green of the Ivy, and yet the cry is heard that the ground under trees is barren. The alarm is false, and the utterers of it blind to the wealth and beauty of the floral world.

#### A LESSON FROM NATURE.

We have not noticed a tithe of the plants and flowers that grow under trees in woods, but have indicated sufficient to show that we may derive a useful lesson from Nature in rendering certain positions in our gardens more enjoyable. For instance, we may have a good-sized round-headed tree on the lawn, it may be a Hawthorn or a Lime-tree, and pretty enough when in flower, while its shade is welcome in the sultry days of summer. But the ground is bare beneath it, nothing is growing there, not even grass. We like the tree, but the dirty barren earth under it is unendurable, and the tree must therefore give place to a flower-bed set in a new smooth lawn. If the tree is in itself an ornament make no such mistake. Dig well and carefully the ground around the tree, and if poor, as it probably may be, add manure liberally. Then plant it all over with Ivy, either the large or the small leaved sort, pegging the runners down, and amongst the Ivy plant the golden nodding Daffodils, and the chaste Poet's and Pheasant-eyed Narcissuses. Towards the margin insert some roots of Primroses or Polyanthus, with here and there a clump of Lily of the Valley, also wood or garden Anemones, and await the result. Instead of barren earth an evergreen carpet will be provided that will in itself be pleasing, while from it will spring in their season the flowers that have been planted, and the spot once despised will be amongst the most agreeable in the garden. That is what Nature teaches if man would but learn; some, however, have learned, for what we have advised has been carried out with great success.

#### SHADED BORDERS.

Along the margin of the long narrow enclosures arranged side by side, and attached to suburban dwellings, rows of trees were planted, it may be some years ago. They were admired at the time, and flowers of all sorts grew well between them; but now their roots have impoverished the soil, and their branches cover the entire space. The flowers that were once so bright will no longer thrive, and it is almost resolved to remove the trees, or at least some of them. Well, perhaps a few of them may be spared, but hesitate to destroy even these. Remember the trees over the fence. Their roots will still impoverish your soil, and their branches shade your garden, while you may still remain practically flowerless, and treeless too. Something may be grown in even such a border. Ivy will flourish, and Ferns, also Periwinkles, with their glossy leaves and pale-blue flowers. The St. John's Wort, (*Hypericum calycinum*) sometimes called the Rose of Sharon, will grow there, and never be unsightly, while for weeks in the summer it will produce its large, golden, many-stamened blooms. The German or Flag Irises will answer well, and their richly-coloured and chastely-pencilled flowers cannot fail being admired. Funkias, which are not sufficiently known and cultivated, beautiful in foliage and flower, succeed in such positions, and are highly attractive, as will Lilies, and Primroses, and Hepaticas, while all kinds of hardy bulbous plants that can be mentioned will be quite at home in that troublesome border, in which "nothing will grow." Let the ground be well dug and fresh soil and manure added, the planting be carefully done as soon as possible, and in the summer let the border be deluged with water frequently, and it will no longer be unsightly, but agreeable.

#### FRUIT STORES.

Examine fruit that has been gathered and stored away, removing every decaying specimen promptly, or the evil will spread through the entire bulk. Do not keep either Pears or Apples too warm or too dry, or they will shrivel prematurely. A cool, rather damp and dark place is the best for the preservation of the fruit, but it must be safe from frost.

#### VEGETABLE GARDEN.

Finally earth up Celery, covering every part of the stems with soil, leaving only just the tops of the plants visible above the ridges; also draw soil to the stems of Cabbage-plants, covering them quite up to the leaves, and they will be protected from severe weather which is often so destructive to this indispensable crop.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### ANSWERS.

BERLIN.—You do not say if the readings are to be in German or English. If German, there are the plays of Goethe, Schiller, etc. If English, Shakespeare, and other standard works too numerous to mention.

CAROLUS.—If you only belonged to what is commonly called the "inferior sex," the one word "knitting" would answer your requirements. As it is, we are almost at a loss what to suggest to you, except you could study elocution and give lessons in it.

CARRIE.—Is not the first of your two songs, "Thou art passing hence, my brother," written by Arthur Sullivan, and sung by Mr. Santley? You will find the song, "I once had a sweet little doll, dear" (both words and music), in a book called, "A Day in a Child's Life."

DIETITIAN.—Horseradish powder is prepared from the roots gathered in November or December, and dried by a gentle heat or exposure to a current of dry air. It is true that horseradish resembles the root of aconite, or wolfsbane, in appearance, and has occasionally been mistaken for it, with fatal results. The two are, however, readily distinguished from each other, as the taste of horseradish is warm and pungent, approaching that of mustard, whilst aconite is bitter, and its odour is earthy and disagreeable, and after a few minutes' contact with the lips, tongue, and fauces, produces a sensation of numbness and tingling.

ECONOMY, No. 4.—The following is a well-tried recipe, which we think is what you require: "Rolled Herrings.—Choose the herrings with soft roes. Having scraped and washed them, cut off the heads, split open and cleanse the fish and take out the roes. Hold one in the left hand, and with thumb and finger of the right press the backbone to loosen it, then lay flat on the board and draw out the bone; it will come out whole, leaving none behind. Dissolve a little fresh butter, pass the inner side of the fish through it, sprinkle pepper and salt lightly over, then roll it up tightly with the fin and tail outwards, roll it in flour and sprinkle a little pepper and salt, then put a small game skewer to keep the herring in shape. Have ready a good quantity of boiling fat, it is best to do the herrings in a wire basket, and fry them quickly for ten minutes. Take them up and set them on a plate before the fire, in order that all the fat may drain from them. Pass the roes through flour mixed with a sufficient quantity of pepper and salt, fry them brown, and garnish the fish with them, and crisped parsley. A difficulty is often felt in introducing herrings at dinner on account of the number of small bones in them, but this is obviated by the above method of dressing, as with care not one bone should be left in."

EYE.—1. The best place to go to is V. Marcot's, fan manufacturer, 18, Newman Street, Oxford Street, W. It is rather expensive to have a fan mounted in real ivory; it costs 45s. for a 12-inch fan, in best ivory, and 35s. in the second quality. Bone is what is generally used, and you can get that at V. Marcot's for 12s. 6d. in the best quality, and 9s. 6d. in the second. 2. The song about Lillibullero was sung at the siege of Londonderry. You will find an account of it in "Macaulay's History of England," Chapter II.

HELEN.—1. Making browning in an iron spoon every time it is wanted to colour gravy is certainly a method of some antiquity, but, for all that, it is slovenly. An easy way to make gravy browning to keep in store is as follows: "Put one pound of raw, or crushed lump sugar into an old frying-pan, set it over a slow fire, and stir it until dissolved and a deep brown colour. Care must be taken at this point that it does not boil over. Pour in gently a pint and a half of water, stir until mixed, let it boil up, remove from the fire, and, when cold, bottle it. A few drops will colour gravy, sauces, or liquors. 2. You will find full and valuable information on "Staining Floors" in a paper entitled "From an Old House to a New One," HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 125. 3. Glucinum is a totally different thing from glycerine. In 1798, Vauquelin discovered the earth glucina (so termed from the sweet taste of its salts). It is found in the beryl and other crystals. From glucina, Wöhler and Bussy obtained the rare metal glucinum in 1828.

JOHN R. W. (Philadelphia).—

#### THE NAUTILUS AND THE AMMONITE.

The Nautilus and the Ammonite  
Were launched in friendly strife,  
Each sent to float, in its tiny boat,  
On the wide, wild sea of life.

For each could swim on the ocean's brim,  
And when wearied its sail could furl,  
And sink to sleep in the great sea deep,  
In its palace all of pearl.

And theirs was a bliss, more fair than this  
Which we taste in our colder clime,  
For they were rife in a tropic life,  
A brighter and better clime.

They swam 'mid isles, whose summer smiles  
Were dimmed by no alloy;  
Whose groves were palm, whose air was balm,  
And life, one only joy.

They sailed all day through creek and bay,  
And traversed the ocean deep;  
And at night they sank on a coral bank  
In its fairy bowers to sleep!

And the monsters vast of ages past,  
They beheld in their ocean-caves;  
They saw them ride in their power and pride,  
And sink in their deep sea graves.

And hand in hand, from strand to strand,  
They sailed in mirth and glee,  
These fairy shells, with their crystal cells,  
Twin sisters of the sea.

And they came at last to a sea long past,  
But as they reached the shore  
The Almighty's breath spoke out in death,  
And the Ammonite lived no more.

So the Nautilus now in its shelly prow,  
As over the deep it strays,  
Still seems to seek, in bay and creek,  
Its companion of other days.

And alike do we, on life's stormy sea,  
As we roam from shore to shore,  
Thus tempest toss'd, seek the loved, the lost,  
But find them on earth no more.

LILLIE M.—1. Yawning is a natural action when one is tired; but it may occur as a symptom in several diseases. It is probable that in your case it is due to what may be called, generally, "nervousness." Therefore, you should be careful to avoid tea, coffee, or stimulants, and to guard against undue excitement of any kind. And lead as bracing and active a life as possible. Should the yawning continue, then a medical man who can see you ought to be consulted. 2. Indigestion might cause great pain and swelling on the left side; but this may not be due to indigestion. However, be careful what you eat, and choose those articles of diet that experience has taught you suit you best. And follow the advice given for yawning. Here again we must urge you to see a doctor should the trouble continue. 3. Your handwriting is neat and legible, but since you wish for our candid opinion, we cannot say we think it pretty.

MARY D.—The lines you ask for are very well known, and are by Robert, Lord Lytton:

There is a pleasure which is born of pain,  
The grave of all things hath its violet.  
Else why, thro' days which never come again,  
Roams Hope with that strange longing, like Regret?  
Why put the poey in the cold dead hand?  
Why plant the rose above the lonely grave?  
Why bring the corpse across the salt sea-wave?  
Why deem the dead more near in native land?

ME MONK.—By all means go on with "Principia Latina, No. II." You cannot do better.

PATER.—1. It is not a large allowance, but might be enough with very great care and cleanliness, provided the goats had a run elsewhere. The usual allowance for six hens and a cock is fifteen feet by nine feet. 2. We should recommend two kinds of fowls, say Brahma and Dorking, as the cross is good. 3. Goats require little more than standing-room for night-quarters, provided they are at liberty in the day. 4. If you wish to keep the breeds distinct, you must have two separate houses, and runs fifteen feet by nine feet, the smallest size.

PERPLEXED.—1. If you refer to the article you mention, you will see that the writer says, "Almost any kind of varnish can be used." Try white spirit varnish or copal; you can buy them at any shop where artist's colours are kept. 2. All the twelve varieties of pheasants mentioned by you are quite distinct. You will find a full account and description of most of them in the "Bird World." 3. a, to rhyme with Holland; b, as in French; c, the French is correct; d, the name is pronounced "Lewis." 4. It is always best to use fish knives and forks for fish of any kind; steel knives give fish an unpleasant taste.

ROSA DARTLE.—1. An "inch of rain" means a gallon of water spread over a surface of nearly two square feet, or 3,630 cubic feet—100 tons upon an acre. 2. We are not prepared to say that you can live on sixpence a day, and maintain the standard of health for any length of time. Dr. Thomas King Chambers says: "A person brought to bare existence diet can undergo no toil, mental or bodily, under the penalty of breaking down." And this writer goes on to say that "the love of purposeless destruction exhibited by the Parisian Communists in our own day, may fairly be credited to deficient food. No well-fed people could have wrecked the Vendôme Column, or burnt the Town Hall and Tuileries, of which they were so proud. They were like hungry children smashing their dolls." 3. Of course you have toothache if you do not live well. Put yourself on a good and sufficient diet, and most likely this trouble will vanish.

ROSEITA.—The lines are from "Thalaba," by Robert Southey, and are correctly given as follows:

How beautiful is night!  
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;  
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,  
Breaks the serene of heaven;  
In full-orbed glory, yonder moon divine  
Rolls through the dark-blue depths.  
Beneath her steady ray  
The desert circle spreads  
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky,  
How beautiful is night!

WORRIED.—You may probably avoid the trouble of taking up the carpet in order to get rid of the moths, if you wring a coarse towel out of

clean cold water, spread it smoothly on the carpet, and iron it dry with a good hot iron, wherever the moths appear. There is no need to press hard, and the colour of the carpet will not be injured, as the moths are destroyed by the heat and the steam.

## Puzzles for Prizes.

### RULES.

1. Answers should be written on one side of the paper only, and should be posted so as to reach the office, 24, Great New Street, Fetter Lane, E.C., by the first delivery on the Tuesday after date of publication. Envelopes must be addressed, "The Puzzle Editor," and each answer must bear the *nom de plume* of the writer legibly written on the top of the first sheet.
2. A First Prize of TEN SHILLINGS and a Second Prize of FIVE SHILLINGS will be awarded each week to the best and second-best answers respectively to the two Puzzles set. The Puzzle Editor reserves, however, the right of withholding either the First or Second Prize, or both, if, in his opinion, the answers received should not come up to the required standard of merit.
3. No winner of a First Prize will be eligible for another Prize during the same quarter. A winner of a Second Prize will be eligible for another Second Prize in the same quarter, but not for a First Prize.
4. Every Prize-winner must consent to send his or her name and address for publication.
5. The Puzzle Editor's decision is to be taken as final.

### PUZZLES.

#### 1. A Single-Rhymed Alphabet.

Some years ago a writer sent to *Notes and Queries* a single-rhymed alphabet, and challenged the English-speaking world to produce another. The challenge was accepted by several, among whom was Mr. Mortimer Collins, whose verses began as follows:

"A is my Amy, so slender of waist;  
B's little Bet, who my button replaced;  
C is good Charlotte, good maker of paste;  
D is Diana, the forest who traced;  
E is plump Ellen, by Edward embraced;  
F is poor Fanny, by freckles defaced."

We ask our readers to write an alphabet on the above model. The lines must consist of ten syllables, and the rhyme is left to the choice of the writer.

#### 2. An Arithmetical Charade.

My 21, 20, 3, 13, 7, 11, is a plant; My 18, 30, 17, is fiery; My 9, 16, 24, is at a distance; My 25, 23, 27, 19, is a useful plant; My 28, 4, 6, 8, is trial; My 22, 14, 1, is a bog; My 5, 10, 12, is to rest; My 15, 2, is a pronoun; My 31, 26, is part of the French negation; My 29 is a vowel; My whole is a proverb consisting of 31 letters.

#### Prize-Winners in No. 130.

1st Prize, 10s., "The Arabs."  
2nd Prize, 5s., "Alice."

Both Prize-Winners are requested to send their names and addresses.

There is not much to be said in favour of the Macaronic Verses, most of our readers having evidently felt their energies unequal to the task. "Alice" has already gained a Second Prize during the present quarter. The verses sent by "Warwickshire Lass" failed in point of metre, but are otherwise good, and would probably have gained a Prize had it not been for this drawback. "Mary" is also ineligible for a Prize, as she has not attempted the Hidden Verse Puzzle.

The Verse hidden by "Manhattan" is as follows:

"We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not;  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those  
That tell of saddest thought."—*Shelley*.

The Verse hidden by "Maiblume" is as follows:

"And the Spring arose on the garden fair,  
And the Spirit of Love fell everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on earth's dark breast,  
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest."—*Shelley*.

OUT OF THE RUNNING.—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize: No. 119.—1st Prize, "Ekalsek"; 2nd Prize, "Ina." No. 120.—1st Prize, "Dranssem"; 2nd Prize, "Alice." No. 121.—1st Prize, "Achilles"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 122.—1st Prize, "Midnight Oil"; 2nd Prize, "Stella." No. 123.—1st Prize, "Zyx"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 124.—1st Prize, "Ferdinando"; 2nd Prize, "Ambrosia." No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frensham," "Ryland," "Maiblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood"; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan"; 2nd Prize, "Maiblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May." No. 130.—1st Prize, "The Arabs"; 2nd Prize, "Alice."

Answers have also been received from—Emma Jane, Incognito, Mary, Oats, and Warwickshire Lass.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 129 received too late from Carrot, Cackle, and Cropped Un.

## Odds and Ends.

ON one occasion, an English gentleman, who possessed a keen wit, was at a brilliant assembly of the *élite* of Vienna, where a distinguished lady of that city frequently amused herself and immediate circle of friends by saying smart and rather uncourteous things, evidently for the purpose of annoyance. "By the way," enquired his fair interrogator, "how is it your countrymen speak French so imperfectly? We Austrians use it with the same freedom as if it were our native tongue." "Madame," retorted the Englishman in the blandest manner, "I really cannot say, unless it be that the French army has not been twice in our capital to teach it, as it has been in yours."

A CUSTOMER, with wrath in his tones and fire in his eye, entered a ready-made clothing establishment in one of our towns the other day. Throwing down the bundle he had bought the day before, he exclaimed: "Here, take back this suit, and give me my money. You warranted it all wool, when it is half-cotton." "Well, I declare!" exclaimed the tailor, throwing his hands into the air. "Well, I declare! Now, that is surprising. I suppose the wool that cloth was made from came from a sheep bred in the south that had been allowed to run through the cotton-fields. That's the only way we could possibly get any cotton in the clothing we sell here."

"I REMEMBER," said a boy to his Sunday-school teacher, "you told me to always stop and count fifty when angry." "Yes? Well, I'm glad to hear it. It cooled your anger, didn't it?" "You see, a boy came into our alley and made faces at me and dared me to fight. I was going for him. He was bigger'n me, and I'd have got punished. I remembered what you said and began to count." "And you didn't fight?" "No, ma'am. Just as I got to forty-two, my big brother came along, and the way he licked that boy would have made your mouth water."

A NEWLY-ARRIVED emigrant in America, in soliciting work, stated that he wanted the money he hoped to earn to send home to Ireland, "where," he added, "I've a wife and seven children, and never saw one of them." This seemed such a bald and stupid lie that the person to whom he was making application for work angrily exclaimed, "How dare you tell me such stuff? How could you have a wife and seven children in Ireland without ever having seen one of them?" "Because, your honour, the one I never saw was born after I sailed for Ameriky."

"It is not calumny nor treachery," says Ruskin, "that does the largest share of mischief in the world; they are continually crushed and are only felt in being conquered. But it is the glistening and softly-spoken lie; the amiable fallacy; the patriotic lie of the historian, the provident lie of the politician, the zealous lie of the partisan, the merciful lie of the friend, and the careless lie of each man to himself, that casts the black mystery over humanity through which every man who pierces we thank, as we would thank one who dug through a well in a desert."

A WITTY old judge, who had spent an evening with a young lawyer in the country, whose office was on the second story, on taking his departure stumbled on the stairs and fell to the bottom. The young lawyer, hearing the noise, rushed out, and seeing the judge lying on his back at the bottom of the stairs, hastened down, and with great anxiety asked, "Is your honour hurt?" "No," said the judge, scrambling to his feet, "but my legs are."

DEAN SWIFT was once dining with a family in which the matron boasted of the number of centuries in which the magical prefix "de" had been the rightful property of her ancestors. The dean heard the tedious and oft-told tale to the end, and then delivered his opinion of all that sort of nonsense by saying, "Madam, will you kindly help me to another piece of de-umpling?"

A NERVOUS man whose life was made miserable by the clattering of two blacksmiths, prevailed upon each of them to remove by the offer of a liberal compensation. When the money was paid down, he kindly enquired what neighbourhood they intended to remove to. "Why, sir," replied Jack, with a grin, "Tom Smith moves to my shop, and I move to his."

A POLITICAL discussion at a club in Paris, which grew warm and threatening, was happily pleasantly stopped by a *bon mot* of a peacemaker, who exclaimed: "I am opposed to the Bonapartists for this reason, which I hold to be financially profound—the Bonapartists gave us but three Napoleons, while the Monarchists gave us eighteen Louis."

An author was reading some bad verses in his poem to a friend, in an apartment without a fire. The critic cried out, in a shaking fit: "My dear friend, either put fire into your verses, or your verses into a fire, or I shall not be able to stand here any longer."

NORTHCOTE, the painter, being asked by Sir William Knighton what he thought of the Prince Regent, answered, "I don't know him." "Oh, but his Royal Highness says he is acquainted with you." "Does he? Ah, that's only his brag."

IN modern Egypt a young man is not permitted to see his wife's face before marriage. As a consequence, not infrequently soon after marriage he makes up his mind that he never wants to see it again.

FOOTE, being once annoyed by a poor fiddler straining harsh discords under his window, sent him a shilling, with a request "that he would play elsewhere, as one scraper at the door was sufficient."

THE best toast of the season was, we think, given by a printer, viz.: "Woman—the fairest work in all creation. The edition is large, and no man should be without a copy."

"I THOUGHT you told me Mr. Brown's fever had gone off," said a gentleman. "So I did," said his companion; "but I forgot to mention he went off with it."

"You say your brother is younger than you, yet he looks much older." "Yes, he has seen a great deal of trouble; but I never married."

A CORN-DODGER—A man who avoids wearing tight boots.

THE worst of collisions—Running into debt.

SUBLIME Porte—The crusted article.

At a French provincial theatre recently, in a military play, an actor, who was performing the part of a general, slipped on the stage, and fell ignominiously at the very moment when he was supposed to be conducting his troops to battle. With ready wit, however, he saved himself from ridicule by exclaiming, "Soldiers, I am mortally wounded, but do not stay to aid me. Pass over my prostrate body to victory."

THE Irish are naturally witty. As we rode home in a jaunting-car, one of our party, a disciple of Mr. Bergh, reproved the driver for belabouring his horse so constantly with the lash. "Pat was good-natured about the matter. 'Why,' said the gentleman, 'we do not employ whips at all, nowadays, in America.' 'So I have heard,' replied the driver quietly. 'You use revolvers.'"

It is not every one who possesses the coolness of the ambassador whose imperturbable *sang-froid* so piqued Louis XIV. The monarch vainly attempted to impress him with the glories of his Court, and then thought to embarrass him by interrupting his first speech by calling to him to speak louder. The ambassador merely bowed low, raised his voice, and went on unmoved.

A PHYSICIAN, examining a student as to his progress, asked him: "Should a man fall into a well forty feet deep, and strike his head against one of the tools with which he had been digging, what would be your course if called in as a surgeon?" The student replied: "I should advise them to let the man lie, and fill up the well."

SINCE Mr. Bucolic has learned that there are but four pecks to a bushel, he has come to the conclusion that he cannot afford to feed his hens on corn. "Why," he says, "I have seen them take twenty pecks in as many seconds."

A PAINTER, who had turned physician, was asked why he had quitted his profession. "Because," replied he, "my former exhibited my mistakes in too glaring a manner, therefore I have chosen one in which they will be buried."

AN ingenious French writer observes that those who depend on the merits of their ancestors may be said to search in the root of the tree for those fruits which the branches ought to produce.

THE difference between a "country" and a "city" greenhorn is, that the one would like to know everything, and the other thinks he can tell him.

"It's a grand spoot," remarked a native of Fifeshire to Dr. Hamilton, at Niagara, as he surveyed the grandeur of that stupendous cataract.

BROWN told a friend that he had a great project on foot. The counsel of his friend was that he should go at once to a chiropodist.

WHEN a poor fellow begins going to the dogs, it is only his dog who continues to sympathise with him.

PARADOXICAL.—Tea comes from China, and yet it is poured into it.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 134.]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## "Into Port Greatly."

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

In the discoveries which have revolutionised society, Mr. Harmer had run neck and neck with the scientists of the day, always contriving somehow, however, to get tripped up at the goal.

He was a profound and original thinker, yet his system of philosophy, admirable though it was, gained ground but slowly. His views, in fact, were so advanced that in a busy world, where it is as much as most of us can do to keep pace with the present, few were to be found with sufficient leisure to anticipate the misty future. He tried poetry: his verses bore the impress of genius; nevertheless, on the first appearance of the little volume every critic's pen was against it, and in due course it became stock-in-trade for the waste-paper dealers.

Notwithstanding these repeated failures, Mr. Harmer's abilities were undoubtedly of a high order, and various causes were assigned for his non-success. He himself held a modest opinion that he had come to the birth a decade or two too soon, in which case he might naturally be expected to reap the reward of his temerity. But a poacher on all domains of knowledge, whom no profession could claim, no clique dared patronise, and with ever so many irons to heat, both impatient and impartial—obviously immortality was not for such as he. And thus it happened again and again that, even when his schemes prospered at the outset, none arrived at maturity.

"It maddens me," once said a disappointed friend, alluding to a recent venture, "when fellows with not a spark of native talent carry off the prizes from under your very nose. If your perseverance were equal to your promises, what might you not achieve?"

Mr. Harmer, who accepted the buffets of Dame Fortune with the equanimity of conscious superiority, laughed good-humouredly.

"Pooh! anyone to hear you would suppose I was snuffed out altogether," he said. "That was a small affair. I have a torpedo in hand that will bring me to the front at a bound, as it were."

The reply was characteristic. And the torpedo condemned by a Government committee on account of a slight defect, which would have escaped no man less hasty, he forsook the thorny path of the inventor for the fascinating study of Egyptian hieroglyphics. But presently led to consider the educational question, and perceiving the urgency of reform, he elaborated an enlightened programme, of which his motherless children were the earliest victims, and, abandoning the Pharoahs, henceforth applied himself to the intellectual development of the British masses.

"He discards the primer, does he, and begins with Darwin? Heaven pity his boy and girl!" ejaculated Mr. Heriot, the friend already mentioned, when a mutual acquaintance reported Mr. Harmer's latest craze. "He's incorrigible. And the torpedo should have been the making of him," he groaned.

"Oh, he can take it up at any time," rejoined Mr. Simmons.

But any time is no time, and while the big torpedo, with a model of the wonderful locomotive which was to supersede all others whatsoever, and sundry trifles of a similar description, lay useless in the workshop, biding the master's pleasure, Death, who dallies for naught, and defers to none, hurled his unerring dart. And struck down without warning, Mr. Harmer left little behind to console the young people, with whom our story deals, for the loss of an indulgent and affectionate parent, save these unsatisfactory relics of his versatile genius and the remnant of a once noble fortune.

Happily, however, the orphans were not entirely friendless. Mr. Heriot, a Samaritan of a rare type, quickly appeared on the scene, and, having installed them beneath his own roof, he propitiated the legions of creditors, settled just demands, and otherwise wrought miracles on their behalf.

But not until his demise, which event occurred when his wards were of the age of nineteen and sixteen respectively, did Frank and Jessie Harmer learn that the sum rescued from the general wreck, albeit untouched, would barely suffice for the University career on which the former had set his mind. And realising the situation further, it became evident that either Jessie must accept the offer of a home from a distant relative, for whom her brother entertained an ineradicable aversion, or that he must bid farewell to his long-cherished hopes.

With many pangs—which, to do him justice, he did his best to conceal—Frank chose the latter alternative, and his decision, prompted as much by prejudice as self-denial, was communicated to his sister, as, discussing future plans, they sat side by side in a favourite retreat, the big bow window of the room dedicated to their privacy from the hour they had entered the house they were so soon to quit.

"I'm so sorry, dear," Jessie burst in; "Mr. Heriot always said that you would be senior wrangler one day, and that afterwards you might—"

"Don't turn Job's comforter," he interposed with an uncontrollable ring of pain in his voice. "Pshaw!" bitterly, "you're a girl. How can you understand that a man's ambition dies hard?"

"I think I do," she rejoined quietly. "I had elected to go to Merewether. Why not let me stay with Mrs. Storey?"

"You can't go to her," he said obstinately. "A prim household where they laugh—when they do laugh—by the clock. You'd flash out before a week, and be sent back in disgrace. Besides, if I obtain that appointment in Calcutta, there is nothing to prevent your living with Nan until you can come out to me."

Nan was a superannuated retainer, deaf as a post, residing in a village remote from the haunts of civilisation; the prospect, therefore, apart from a separation wide as the ocean, was not inspiring, and poor Jessie murmured an indignant protest.

"She's not a cheerful companion," Frank granted sympathetically, considering the magnitude of his sacrifice and his sister's lack of appreciation. "But defend me from Cousin Storey. I have a vivid recollection of my early visit to Merewether. The house was the cleanest I had ever been in, and the moral atmosphere was so frigid that I felt frozen up."

"Poor Frank! After unlicensed liberty and Nan's untidy ways I imagine your sufferings. But you were only a little chap."

"You may laugh. If you went you'd freeze up too. Cousin Storey isn't a woman; she's a snow-image. I don't exaggerate. I can't recall her stony dignity and glittering black eyes without a shudder."

"Your picture is irresistible; you stimulate my curiosity," Jessie said with animation. "Be a good boy," linking her arm lovingly within her brother's, "and write and tell her to prepare for my reception."

"Do you mean it?" he asked abruptly, his resolution wavering. "You really want to go to Merewether?"

"I do," she answered firmly. "Be reasonable, Frank dear; father intended you for a great scholar. And—who knows?—by-and-by you may clamber into a professorial chair. Anyhow," she added, "Nan's cottage is no fitting asylum for me. Submit to my guidance for once."

A wild gleam lighted up the young fellow's handsome face. What wonder that, possessing hereditary talent, indomitable perseverance, and the future lavish of its promises, he at last perceived the wisdom of Jessie's counsel?

"I've warned you," he said, but as if the words were forced out of him, and with a tinge of remorse, as he conjured up his visionary Mrs. Storey, "and if you are bent on tempting fate—"

"You forget," interrupted Jessie demurely, "in an emergency I shall have 'son Cuthbert' to fall back on."

"Your audacity aspires to him?"

Whereupon came a merry peal of laughter, and brother and sister, bright, hopeful spirits whom the past, fraught with tender regrets alone, had no power to daunt, wandered forth into the enchanted land where youth supremely reigns—the sunny land where all things are possible, and no wish is nipped by chilling wintry winds, and weaving golden spells—sweet the privilege, if brief!—built fairy palaces anew.

The saddening autumn twilight deepened, familiar shadows stole along the floor into the dim arched recesses by the fire-place, crept up the quaintly carved mantel, and played on the dingy walls as they had played night after night times out of mind. A spectre of a different humour, a horrid form with wings outspread, begrudging the dead a place among the quick, perchance, brooded solitary above the sideboard, veiling the portrait of their late benefactor. A like-minded curious phantom intercepted his accustomed chair. And Jessie, recognising each, shivered somewhat as she, for the first time, noticed the absence of the brooding magian profile on the door, which had been wont to inspire their childish mirth. Gloom sped on to darkness, the household goblins vanished. Still the two talked on, or rather Frank, who, in the plenitude of his eloquence, pacing the thick soft carpet, had come to a stand on the hearthrug, his face irradiated by the red lamp at the corner of the street opposite, talked, and Jessie, proud, patient little woman, listened abstractedly.

"For power to lead right the erring, to reclaim the lost, to awaken the divine within us, that none should be a coward in presence of a wrong, that right might be upheld in no half-hearted way, who would not barter the fairest years of life and never reck the cost?"

At last, "Who is she?" Jessie asked, as her ignorance of nearly everything concerning Mrs. Storey occurred to her.

"Who is she?" Frank iterated gruffly, pausing in his lofty flight. "Say at once that you're languishing to know all about the woman. She's Silas Storey's widow, and he was our mother's second cousin. Mr. Heriot," he continued, "confirmed my boyish

impressions. "In her prime, and of a majestic figure, no regal robes," he said, "could add to the stateliness of her mien." He also informed me, that with an ample income, she's inclined to personal austerity, and that her prudence borders on parsimony, that, not generous, she's charitable on principle, and that her periodical disbursements may be freely counted upon. In other respects, depend upon it, Jess, she's no better if no worse than her neighbours. Mr. Heriot sent your photograph to her," he ended, "and as the one passion, the sole romance of her life, was her love for her husband, I have no doubt that we're indebted for her invitation to your resemblance to our faraway kinsman."

"And lucky for us she detected it," Jessie thought. "How foolish it would have been to have refused her offer!"

Her brother's consent obtained, and Mrs. Storey communicated with, in high glee at the easy solution of their difficulties, Jessie's arrangements were soon complete.

"Don't blame me hereafter if you grow tired of Merewether," Frank reiterated at parting, when his sister was about to start on her journey.

The carriage-door banged to, a laughing reply was cut short, the lovely face, framed in rippling brown hair, clouded and in a mist of tears, Jessie nodded a final adieu from the window.

The down-train had been signalled. The officials at Manning Mead, where passengers change for Merewether, roused up from their habitual torpor, bestirred themselves, and the gate opened. Cuthbert Storey brushed past the porter on duty, mounted the steps, and traversed the bridge.

A tall, personable young fellow, freshly coloured, his well-knit frame hardened with much out-door exercise and manly sports, he stalked up and down the platform with a masterful air that was habitual to him until the train glided in, when eagerly scanning the occupants of the carriages, his piercing black eyes suddenly encountered another pair, softly grey, which from under long, dark, curling lashes returned his gaze with grave steadfast seriousness. And the owner—what a pretty dainty little creature she was! Out-and-out prettier than her photograph—was the object of his quest.

His honest face glowing with pleasurable emotion, his pulses quickening, without more ado he strode forward; a mite of a hand was held out trustfully, then came a warm clasp, and an introduction was effected. And the murmured words of kindly welcome, transparently sincere, dispelling the nervousness which had been fast taking possession of Jessie, when they had driven a mile or so, she recovered her gaiety and they were excellent friends.

The country around was gently undulating, and following the course of the river, the road wound in many a sweeping curve, so that they were upon the Granite House, lying in a sequestered hollow on the outskirts of the town, before she was aware of its proximity. A square, solid-looking block of masonry, its exterior was not prepossessing. Ruthless autumn, too, had painted out the gorgeous tints of summer, and stripped the trees; dank decaying leaves, their faint, earthy odour subtly suggestive of mortality, strewed the ground. The fields were bare and brown; the afternoon was waning; no twittering birds hopped blithely in the hedges; not a breath stirred as they drove up the avenue, and a lonely rook, flapping his wings overhead, cawed hoarsely, a strange uncanny silence seized upon the girl.

The disturbing sense of an all-pervading stillness cleaving to her, dumbly she crossed the threshold of her new home. Mrs. Storey's kiss was not chillier than her own. Cuthbert also, she noted, was apparently succumbing to the same mesmeric influence. The domestics, the very dogs, seemed tongue-tied, and even poor puss's mew sounded low and dolorous.

How thankful she was when ten o'clock struck and the Bible and Prayer Book were taken from their baize bags and the servants filed in and out, and the day ended and she could go to bed.

But Jessie was a healthy little maiden, not wont to indulge in morbid fancies. Petted and spoiled by her father and Mr. Heriot, and everybody with whom she had hitherto been brought into contact and having ministered to her pleasure, the world to her was a garden of thornless flowers, to be plucked without let or hindrance by whomsoever would.

And at breakfast, with the morning glory resting on the sloping hills, the river meandering through the meadows shimmering like burnished silver, and the room a blaze of cheerful light, her natural vivacity reasserted itself. The confidential maid who waited behind Mrs. Storey's chair, smiled grimly at each fresh sally. Within her knowledge, no such fearless and freespoken young lady had set foot in the house, and foreseeing a bad time for Miss Harmer, she good-naturedly resolved to caution her.

"We're a bit stiff and formal," she said, diplomatically insinuating advice with the hair-pins as she essayed to smooth Jessie's tangled locks after her scamper with the dogs when out with Cuthbert.

"But then we're dependable. Neither gay nor gloomy is our temper, and meals to a minute, and things in their places"—a glance at the hat on the floor—"and the maids set their tasks of a morning after 'Holy living and dying,' which is our regular reading, miss; we're spared the moil and toil and worry of London ways. And any young lady as 'd settle down and not run counter, the mistress 'd make much of."

"Am I running 'counter,' as you call it?" Jessie asked in astonishment. "There doesn't appear to be anything to run counter to," she said mournfully. "Please be more explicit. Merewether must be very dull."

"Dull! Bless you, miss, if you belong to the ladies' sewing club, and can sew nicely, you may go out to tea every night of the week."

"But I can't sew. And I sha'n't join the club. A sewing club—good gracious!"

"The mistress'll expect it; she's cutting out for you."

"But I've been cutting out for myself, Ursula. I'm going to read hard."

"I'd think twice, miss, before I ran counter to Merewether ways," slowly. "Mr. Cuthbert tried it on, but the tide was too strong for him. My! the dinner-bell."

"Frank is at his best pulling against the stream," thought Jessie contemptuously, shrewdly interpreting Ursula's figurative speech, but with no immediate intention of allowing the hint so plainly conveyed to regulate her conduct, as may be inferred from a short passage in a letter to her brother which she dispatched the same evening.

"If there is room for only one mind and one will at the Granite House, as Ursula says, a collision is inevitable. But at present, dear, to reassure you, I have nothing much to complain of. And although I don't profess to be as respectful as Cuthbert, nor shall I attempt to imitate him, I am, I believe, notwithstanding the maid's scepticism on the point, in his mother's good graces. And if everything, including the kennels, hadn't such a newly-washed, newly-polished aspect, and the furniture—it's of the style auctioneers describe as 'handsome'—didn't seem quite so much as if it were nailed to the floor, and a portion of the latent fire smouldering in the depths of cousin's eyes could be transferred to the grates these cold mornings—we have frost already down here—I don't know but that I might be grateful that my lines had been cast in a pleasant place. Yet I—No, I won't commit myself."

As the months rolled on, Ursula's incredulity was clearly justified. Unaccustomed to the yoke in a punctilious household, the girl, with her outspoken frankness and independence of control, was not unlike the firebrand to which she was frequently compared. And as the girl contrived daily to offend, Mrs. Storey, grown indifferent to the casual likeness which had ensured her temporary indulgence, and repenting of her leniency, deemed it a moral and religious duty to crush so rebellious a spirit, and addressed herself to the task with an ardour that threatened a fulfilment of Frank's prognostications.

"You have been shamefully neglected, my dear," she said, in a horrified tone, beginning the good work; "don't let me hear you quote your father's heterodox sentiments again."

"Why not, Cousin Storey?" innocently. "But I didn't tell you of the visit we once received from a foreign prince whom Nan showed straight into the family sanctum. We were in a state of hopeless confusion as usual. Every chair and table was littered with diagrams, magazines, and newspapers. But it was the proudest day of my life," Jessie asserted rapturously. "Dear father was born orator. His words ran through one's veins like quicksilver, and our illustrious guest, enthroned on a pile of cobwebby folios, was so fascinated with his conversation, that he sat and sat as if he were never going. No wonder," she wound up, "I hated the girlish gossip at the college."

"Most girls would be ashamed, and properly so, of the wretched muddle you depict so very graphically," commented Mrs. Storey dryly.

"Yes. Isn't it a curious feature in girls, cousin, that they're only ashamed when shame is ridiculous? Ours was a charming house," with marked distinctness. "Everybody who ever entered it was at home directly."

"You're not an admirer of your own sex?"

"Oh dear no. I often wish I were a boy. Boys are freer. They may bang doors, climb trees—what may they not do?"

"You must curb your tongue, Jessie," sharply, "or you will shock the majority—people with old-fashioned notions of womanly propriety—and likely enough die an old maid."

"Majorities don't govern us yet. But I'll bear that in mind, Cousin Storey," gravely. "If Frank should tire of me, as you cruelly suggested yesterday, I ought to think of marrying a rich husband provided—"

Mrs. Storey, significantly arching her brows, exchanged glances with her son.

"You shouldn't talk so, Jessie," he interposed, reddening. "A woman marrying for money—faugh!"

"You put the worst possible construction on all I do and say," she laughed, unabashed. "You two never can understand."

"You spoke plainly," he muttered.

"Out of evil cometh good," reflected Mrs. Storey complacently as he strode out of the room, shutting the door with a jarring violence that ought to have diminished Jessie's envy of masculine prerogatives. "He will think no more of her."

And in her elation waxing confidential, while dressing she poured into the ear of her trusted maid the haunting fears that had of late beset her, and their removal, adding:

"Miss Harmer's training has been against her, and I have overlooked much. But a rich husband, forsooth! Her mind is warped. She glories in wrong-doing, and contrition is unknown to her. As my son's wife she would have been intolerable to me."

"Who can read a young soul aright, ma'am?" asked Ursula, prepared with the warmth of humble friendship to advocate her favourite's cause. "For all her high spirits, Miss Jessie has the tenderest heart. And she's rarely affectionate. The other night when she'd ate no dinner, being in her tantrums, I made bold to take her up a bit o' supper, and the woeful little face she turned to me was the master's own when you lost your second, ma'am. A bonnie boy he was!"

"The likeness is not so striking as we fancied at first," Mrs. Storey observed coldly, but not unmoved.

"Maybe not, ma'am. She had been writing to Nan," continued Ursula, "tear-blots were on the paper. And she asked me could I read the letter? 'I want old nurse to be pleased with it,' she says. It was the sweetest letter. A make-believe from end to end, 'tis true—how that she was getting on finely, and was as happy as a bird. And—"

"An artful composition. If Mr. Cuthbert's eyes had not been already opened I should not have hesitated to—"

"Pardon me, ma'am, but he has a spice of your own temper. And it's not to a young lady's detriment that she should remember a faithful servant."

"You forget your place," haughtily.

"Mr. Cuthbert's a dutiful son. But best not to interfere," the privileged maid rejoined with blunt directness. "And time 'll tame her; with patience she'll do us credit yet."

"If, indeed, I were not altogether mistaken, Mr. Cuthbert is disgusted with her, I tell you."

Ursula cocked her smooth grey head knowingly.

"There's a glamour about a pretty face that none of 'em, high or low, is insensible to, ma'am. And the winsome—and where will you find a winsome young lady than Miss Jessie?—the longer they are sickening of 'em, as stands to reason. And some is never sickened. If Mr. Cuthbert follows in his father's steps, who's to say him 'nay'?"

"Have done, Ursula. Since the girl is here, I'll do my duty by her. But if I thought my son would stoop to a mercenary jade—"

"Seems to me, ma'am, saving your presence, that he'd be a fool to open his mind to her, at any rate at present. She'd laugh at him," the provoking Ursula put in. "Mr. Cuthbert's an altered man since she came. But she—"

"Don't talk nonsense," said Mrs. Storey impatiently.

"A bad job if she could never be brought to see him as we see him," the maid finished lugubriously.

And guiltily conscious that she had exhibited a vexatious subject under novel and exasperating conditions, and thereby contributed to her mistress's chagrin, she discreetly withdrew.

"Your mother aggravated me to that degree that I didn't care what I said," Jessie declared, replying to Cuthbert, who in a cousinly sort of way had ventured to remonstrate with her. "One can't run or do anything without being gimleted by a pair of eyes—and such eyes, too! Oh, life at Merewether is a hateful business! I shall die if I remain much longer."

"You grieve me. We speak to you for your good."

"People always say that when they're particularly disagreeable," Jessie scoffed. "You appear to take a positive pleasure in tormenting me. Once you used not to be so unkind, Cuthbert."

"Unkind!" with agitation. "What have I done? Don't spare my feelings."

"Why should I?" aggressively. "You never spare mine."

"If you would endeavour to be more like other girls, and try to please my mother in little things, we might get on so—so much more comfortably. You regret your unlucky speech," glancing at her furtively, "don't you?" asked Cuthbert, with a shade of anxiety in his tones.

"No, I don't!" wilful Jessie answered shortly. "And it was not so dreadful that I need regret it. Under some circumstances it would be almost heroic to marry a rich man. Suppose a millionaire,

not at all loveable, that no woman in her senses could be fond of were to ask me to be his wife, in that case mightn't it be a virtue to marry him, and be good to him?"

"What a girl you are! The American humourist expressed himself in similar terms of the Mormon elders," Cuthbert remarked sarcastically. "Perhaps you're not aware that in this country it is a masculine article of faith that all men are loveable to their wives."

Jessie laughed scornfully.

"You'll affirm next that Mr. Pengelly was married out of love. A fat, blink-eyed, hoarse-voiced monster."

"Mrs. Pengelly's tastes may be peculiar. But that it was a love-match—"

Jessie shook her head dissentingly.

"My father was married for love, if you like. He was a splendid man. There was an immense distance between him and most people. But he was so kind and genial that even the oddest creatures were at ease with him. And Frank is just like him, so unselfish and so clever. He doesn't live for the daily consumption of so much beef and mutton—not he. And when he leaves college he's going in for social reform."

"Awful uphill work before him," Cuthbert said lazily, amused with her earnestness.

"Frank won't mind hard work. What do you think of a League of Truth? I proposed it. In a Christian land it's horrible. But Frank agreed with me that it's as much required as a Temperance League or any other league."

"Did he?" murmured Cuthbert. "It's a grand idea. Only truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, would lead to such rows. Fancy a heap of firebrands scattered broadcast!"

"Now you're laughing. Oh, I do miss Frank! He was so sympathetic and nice. Here you either ridicule everything I say that doesn't conform to your own narrow views, or you misconstrue everything, which is worse," with a quiver in her voice.

"It seems to follow," gently, returning to the starting-point, "that when a girl admits that she's on the look-out for a rich husband, that—"

"You're coarse. Didn't I tell you that I was goaded into it? But now you're about it," resignedly, "rake up everything against me."

"I wish you could be friends. My mother is the best woman in the world, if you know her. You must get to love her in time."

"That shows your ignorance. People can't 'get to love.' They love each other because—they must. And a loveless life," breaking into a sob, "is the dreariest, the wretchedest, the most miserable—"

"Don't cry, dear—pray don't. If you've been wretched so have I. You've looked so sad at times. And longing to comfort you, I've wished I—I had the right."

And not being gifted with Ursula's discernment, and being, besides, unacquainted as yet with the mysterious depths and intricacies of the female heart, Cuthbert there and then disclosed a secret that startled, alarmed, and finally angered Jessie.

"I've loved you from the first—from the hour we met at the station. I'm certain of it. Don't you believe me?" An ominous silence. "Say something, darling," entreatingly. "Would you marry me?"

"Say something!" she repeated, her cheeks flaming. "After what I've said, you're insulting to speak to me so. You've betrayed my confidence. And if I loved you to distraction—and I don't," emphatically, "I wouldn't marry you."

"There is no necessity to get into a rage," he said unsteadily. "I shan't insult you again, Miss Harmer."

"Your mother would be mad. What possessed you? It was so—so silly."

"I incline to that opinion myself," with a grating laugh.

"How could you?" she asked, in a reproachful, injured tone.

"Now I must go to Nan."

"It would lessen the pain of your refusal, Jessie, if you'd let things be as they are," he faltered. "Will you oblige me in this?"

"Since you wish it," irresolutely. "Still, I'd rather not stay."

At the door he halted abruptly.

"I don't think you've been candid with me. I see how it is. A girl likes to be proud of her husband, and you couldn't be proud of me," he said humbly. "I am an ignoramus. But if I had any incentive I'd make up for lost time. I'd read with a vengeance. I'd go at it as I went at that stiff bit of fence dividing—"

Jessie shuddered. "And risked your neck. Please don't, Cuthbert."

"My brains are nothing to boast of, but I have a wonderful memory. With the least encouragement I'd take the shine out of Frank and the lot of them."

A pitying smile.

"You think they've lain fallow too long? Well, brought under proper cultivation, fallow ground produces splendid crops."

Frank had returned to college. Cuthbert cast his books aside, and hoping to undo the work of which it needed not the maid's caustic tongue to assure him none who had contributed had reason to be proud, devoted himself to Jessie. But, Heaven forgive them! for the time being too surely the best part of her was dead. Plodding wearily on, swerving neither to the right nor to the left, she imitated as closely as possible that model of all womanly virtues, Miss Thornhill. And, as the weeks flitted by and the

transformation seemed complete, loving her with the passion of a sluggish nature stirred for once to its depths, and gathering in intensity until fired to fever-point, his misery might well have revenged her martyrdom.

But this state of things could not long continue. A crisis approached. Retired to rest as usual, the household, Cuthbert excepted, were wrapped in slumber, when in the profound stillness that precedes the early morning, a smell of burning, accompanied at intervals by unaccountable hissing sounds, attracted his attention. Rising, he partially dressed, and, directed by the stifling smoke ascending densely from below, bent on investigation went downstairs. A lurid glow, a sullen roar, increasing in volume, discovered that fire of a serious character raged in the basement, and retracing his steps, after rousing the other inmates, he sped through the grounds to the nearest cottages for assistance.

Meanwhile a frightened group, from which, however, the gaunt upright form of Mrs. Storey's maid was absent, had assembled in the hall.

"Where's Ursula?" Jessie gasped, her rapid glance questioning the shrinking servants.

"Ursula?" they repeated stupidly, their tones hushed. Could it be that they had forgotten her, and that she was sleeping on? Even so.

Snatching at cook's heavy shawl, Jessie folded it tightly around her, and escaping from Mrs. Storey's detaining grasp, with swift feet flew past them.

But the fire was not confined to the lower storey, it had broken out in the rooms above. At the stair-head, as if in mockery, a tongue of flame darted out, and, unprepared for the scorching heat, she paused.

Just at that moment Cuthbert returned, a crowd of willing labourers at his heels, and his mother, speechless, clutched his arm, pointing to the slender figure on the landing, its every graceful curve outlined on the fiery background.

"Miss Jessie, Miss Jessie!" the servants screamed. "Come back, come back; you'll be burnt alive!"

But the opportunity she had sighed for had come at last.

"It may not be too late to save her," she thought. And there was no blenching in the dauntless little heart. For an instant only she faced them, and sweet and clear the girlish voice rang out: "Into port greatly!" and, waving her hand, she vanished from view.

Breaking from the men, Cuthbert bounded upstairs; he too disappeared in the blinding smoke. And not to dwell upon the mother's agony, so fearful was the tension of the long-drawn minutes that elapsed until his re-appearance with Jessie a limp fainting burden in his arms, and Ursula, swathed in blankets, unscathed, by his side, that the shout of joy which greeted them was echoed far and wide.

But now, staggering towards them, they saw that Ursula led him, that, scorched and blackened, he was blind.

"Into port greatly!" he murmured with a feeble smile, as they took Jessie from him. And they bore him senseless to the friendly shelter of the first cottage.

Unconscious of all else around him, Ursula would have it that Jessie's presence afforded him relief, that her voice had power to still the piteous moaning that, night or day, scarcely ceased. And when the girl—who was badly burnt, but whose injuries were slight in comparison with his—heard this, she managed to crawl daily to the sick-room.

After weeks of torturing suspense Mrs. Storey's prayers were granted. Dear life was spared, and there was a hope that sight might be restored. But a year and more came and went before Cuthbert, his face haggard and pallid, but otherwise little marred, was able to walk about unattended.

The glorious summer was at its height. Sitting under the trees out of sight of the house, Jessie's hand in his, while a choir of birds sang overhead rejoicingly, he repeated the story, ever new yet old as Eden, and so sure was he of her answer, that he interpreted her shy silence as he wished and she intended. For little Jessie was a woman all at once. She knew now that she loved him, guessed that she must have done so long ago. And though she had learnt that no life is exempt from duties proper to it, no shadow of doubt had she of coming into port greatly. And what less could be expected than that she was proud, happy beyond expression, to be his wife?

"Only at first," as she naively confessed, "it seemed almost too good to be true."

Nor was the past fierce suffering thrown away on Mrs. Storey. Prudence is an admirable quality, but she now cultivated the more active virtues. Charity leavened her life and conversation, and was not dispensed merely at calculated periods.

As to Frank, with a strong head and a determined will, he wrestled with and overcame all obstacles, obtaining eventually the worldly success he craved. But on his occasional flying visits to the

Granite House, rebuilt in accordance with Jessie's tastes, he was heard to lament the early fading of his youthful dreams, "for then was it better with him than now."

And Ursula, standing behind her mistress's chair as of yore, smiled the vengeful smile of the domestic prophet:

"I told 'em there'd be an awakening."

## Gorse Blossoms.

I PUT my fortune to the touch  
That morning long ago in spring,  
When she and I went wand'ring through  
Pale woods, where birds began to sing  
Wee twittering notes, in quavering quests  
For sheltered spots to hold their nests.  
Oh, yellow glowed the golden gorse!  
The scent filled all the clear bright air;  
The growing leaves just peeping forth  
Seemed opening as we watched them there.  
The river washed its silver strand,  
And sang, "See! spring holds out her hand."  
Oh, yellow gorse, you caught her dress!  
I dare not touch her garment's hem,  
Until I stooped, half-awed, half-shamed,  
To loose her twined around your stem.  
Your blossoms whispered sweetest sighs,  
I gazed within my sweetheart's eyes.  
Oh, I was young, and she was fair,  
And, like your radiance, bright and sweet  
Glowed the luxuriance of her hair;  
And o'er the heath her little feet  
Danced, as the daylight, fading slow  
Told us, alas! 'twas time to go.  
I caught her hand and held it fast;  
She turned away, yet let me keep  
Its tender touch, so soft, so fine.  
Dear love, 'tis only when I sleep  
I feel again those fingers' hold,  
I see once more those locks of gold!  
Oh, yellow gorse, oh, yellow gorse!  
She left me in that fair spring-time;  
I could not, dare not pray to keep,  
A love that faded e'er its prime.  
Yet still about your scented place  
Hangs fair remembrance of her face.

## His Own Guest.

(A SERIAL STORY.)

### CHAPTER XXVI.

THE little dinner passed off very pleasantly—at least the earlier part of it did. Lady Meredith had noticed the lack of cordiality existing between Colonel Skooter and the friend of the family—as she now considered Gordon—and with womanly tact had managed to keep them as far apart as the size of her small party would admit of, although to effect this she had to place the American, whom she disliked as much as Gordon himself did, next to herself.

Happily the colonel was not wanting in 'cuteness, and by this time had realised the fact that his compliments to the lady of the house were productive only of hauteur, hence he confined himself to such observations as "that although Britishers bred elegant roast beef, and their women were all there for beauty, yet that they couldn't fix a salad, and that their liquors were nowhere," to all of which Lady Meredith bowed a gracious and smiling acquiescence.

Rubina, who was seated on the other side of Colonel Skooter, was quite contented to be left out of the conversation, assuming, on the strength of the supposititious help she had lent Lady Meredith, an air of genteel lassitude.

When the servants had left the party to their dessert, Lady Meredith seized the opportunity of Edith's asking Mary to go over and spend a day at the cottage, to introduce the subject of Mary's proposed trip to London on the next day.

She was going on a visit of some weeks to the Harkers, explained her ladyship, and they wished her to join them in London, where they were then staying, preparatory to their return to Eastcote Hall.

This announcement made, Lady Meredith glanced surreptitiously and with some anxiety at her son; to her amazement the frowning face she expected to see was all smiles.

"That will be delightful!" Sir Charles exclaimed.



"Polite, upon my word, Sir Charles," commented Edith.

Rubina cast aside her air of lassitude and looked interested. She had already woven a little romance anent the separation of the lovers and their consequent deaths by broken hearts, and had planned a satisfactorily mournful visit to her dressmaker in search of such sable garments as she had not worn since the death of Dr. Morgan. She was so attached to Mary and so admired Charles that, if anything did happen to them, she was not the one to begrudge a few yards of crape or an extra black bonnet.

Lady Meredith was so taken aback by her son's receipt of her news that for the moment she set it down as the result of her maternal warning against an impecunious marriage; but Mary was so pained that she could scarcely keep the tears from welling up into her pretty blue eyes.

Both of the women were speedily undeceived by Sir Charles saying: "I too am going to town to-morrow, and shall be glad to act as Mary's escort."

Lady Meredith almost bounded from the chair.

Had her son announced that his wedding with his cousin was about to take place on the morrow, and that bridesmaids had been invited and wedding-cake ordered, she could not have been more horrified.

"You are going to London to-morrow!" she gasped, doubting for a moment if the whole business were not an arranged affair between the pair.

The doubt did not, however, remain long in her mind, for she knew the truthfulness of Mary's nature, and felt that she could trust her to keep a promise, come what might.

"What is taking you to town so suddenly?" she asked of her son, as soon as she could force herself to speak calmly.

"I have had a telegram from my old schoolfellow, Willie Bourne, who is seriously ill, and wants me to go and cheer him up a bit, poor old chap!"

"It's very inconsiderate of him at such a moment."

"To be seriously ill, mother?"

"Charles, I wish you would be more serious on serious subjects. I mean, of course, his taking you away from your electioneering business at such a critical moment. I suppose he's got some one to look after him."

"Well, mother, you see he lives in chambers, where there are seven other lodgers, I believe, to be cleaned for, cooked for, and looked generally after by a staff of two."

"I do hope, Charles, you are not going to stop in such a crowded hole," observed Lady Meredith.

"And whooping-cough and measles so prevalent in London just now, and both so catching," chimed in Rubina, who, on the strength of the late Dr. Morgan's avocation, thought it her bounden duty to read the Registrar-General's reports, and so keep up a sort of standing acquaintance with the ills to which flesh is heir.

"No, there is no room for me; I shall put up at the Langham, it is close to Bourne's diggings."

"Diggings! What does he dig?" asked Rubina innocently.

With one of her silvery laughs, Edith explained that "diggings" was the short for bachelor lodgings.

Rubina was nettled at the laugh, and bridling up, thanked Providence she had not yet descended to the unladylike depth of studying a slang dictionary.

"Talking of diggings," said Colonel Skooter, turning to Mr. Pennington, who was his other neighbour at table, and lowering his voice, "I've had it on my mind for days past to bring to your notice a splendid investment."

"Better have it on your mind than on your conscience, colonel," observed Mr. Pennington.

Colonel Skooter looked up from the pheasant wing he was engaged upon, to see if he was being chaffed, but the old gentleman's face was as serious as a J.P.'s should be.

"The truth is that in this played-out old country," he continued, "no end of capital is locked up for good investments. You Britishers are so darned afraid of anything but your Three per Cents. In America, when a man has a dollar, he invests it in something that will bring him in a V-piece; over here you wrap it up in the toe of an old stocking for fear of putting your foot in it, and placing it under your pillow at night, go to sleep to your interest. Now I know that you've money, judge, and I know that you have good commercial sense."

"Perhaps the latter has brought me the former, colonel."

"It ought to have brought you double, treble, what it has then," observed Colonel Skooter enthusiastically.

Mr. Pennington bowed his acknowledgment of the compliment, and a queer little amused smile twitched the corners of his mouth.

"I heard yesterday—quite by chance, sir—that you were hankering after Grassmere Farm, which has just been advertised."

"I am sure you are very kind to take so much interest in my affairs."

"Oh, don't mention it. I've taken a kind o' fancy to you," observed the colonel in perfect good faith, "and so I'm going to give you a bit of advice, and say that, were I in your place, I'd chuck the farm plan over."

"Would you, really?"

"Yes; keeping a farm in this bit of a country really means keeping it nowadays—it won't keep you. Now there's the Cortez Mine; you've heard of the Cortez Mine, I suppose?"

No, Mr. Pennington had not heard of it.

"I wonder at that, now. The Cortez Mine, sir, will pay you, sir, not a paltry five or ten per cent."

"No?"

"But five times ten, sir, I guess. It's paying fifty per cent."

"Paying you fifty per cent?"

"Well, everybody up to now."

"You answer for its soundness as an investment?"

"Sound as a nut. You would not find me in it if it wasn't. You see, I'm not going to work it myself, only to let it, so as to bring me in the modest interest of four or five per cent., which you, sir, despise."

But, of course, such a splendid opportunity will be seized upon by those who are of a more speculative turn of mind than I am."

"That is so," acquiesced the colonel, still uncertain whether Mr. Pennington was speaking ironically or in earnest. The doubt was, however, soon solved.

"Colonel," resumed Mr. Pennington, "it's been excessively good of you to take so much trouble for my interest, and in case it should be an advantage to you to part with a few of those shares, let me advise your offering them to—"

"Yes, to whom?" queried the colonel eagerly.

"To Captain Gordon."

There was a pause, and an angry look, such as he had given on more than one previous occasion, passed across the colonel's face.

"Look here, judge," he said, "an American has one advantage over a Britisher—he knows when he's licked. Guess I am. Gordon's been talking to you about me. Don't deny it."

"I haven't the least intention of doing so, colonel."

"Well, I don't bear malice against you, sir, but I'll pay him out as sure as my name's Skooter. Splitting on an old friend!"

The colonel relapsed into sulky silence.

"Curse him! I'll spoil his little game and yours too. You are playing something together; exactly what, I don't know yet, but I shall before I have done," he thought.

Lady Meredith had not heeded the conversation between the colonel and Mr. Pennington. It was enough for her that it had withdrawn the former's attention from herself, and given her an opportunity of mentally reviewing the situation.

Nothing could possibly have been more unfortunate than this sudden summons of her son to London; not only would he depart on the same day as, and probably in the company of, Mary, but, what was worse, the Harkers were staying at the Langham.

Had she only known of this summons a few minutes earlier, it would have mattered less; she could then have arranged with Mary for the postponement of her visit for a few days, and dispatched a telegram with an excuse to Lady Harker, but now she had announced Mary's departure for the next day, as it were, in public.

Gordon, too, had a plan in his head which tended townwards, and Charley's going would make the journey a pleasant one. At least such was his thought for the moment, but after a while the good old adage of two being company and three none occurred to him, and he resolved to leave by a later train.

The ladies made a very dull quartette in the drawing-room waiting for the gentlemen to leave their wine and join them.

Lady Meredith, under cover of a novel, was debating whether she must try, or rather whether she must succeed, in stopping her son's or her niece's departure the next day. Under no circumstances must they stay beneath the same roof without her watchful eye being there to prevent the mischief she most dreaded. As she had noted of late that Charles was not so amenable to her will as formerly, she for the moment saw no way out of the dilemma but that of keeping Mary on some pretence at home. Doubtless Lady Harker would be offended at having her plans upset at the eleventh hour, but to ensure what she considered her son's welfare, Lady Meredith would have sacrificed the friendship of every woman she knew.

Rubina was reposing in a lounge-chair. She had fallen asleep after her early rising, and although she had laid herself out to the best advantage, looked angular and uncomfortable.

Mary was listlessly turning over the leaves of a portfolio in any thing but a happy frame of mind. The little gleam of sunshine which had fallen athwart her path when she heard that Charles was going to town, and to stay at the very hotel as herself, was but a very transient one. It would but increase her misery to have him

near her, she reflected. Fate was too cruel to plan against her the additional torture.

Edith was the only bright one amongst them. For her everything was *couleur de rose*. It was true that Tom (she could not think of him as Captain Gordon, her thoughts carried her back too far for that, and almost from the first she had seen through the *alias*) had declared he would right himself with the world before claiming her as his wife. Well, she had no objection to wait, but should he fail to put forward that claim when she considered a sufficiently long time had elapsed, why then she would claim him as her husband. Her father was with her in the matter, and what cared she for the world's opinion?

She was making no pretence of any more exhaustive or improving employment than that of playing with a magnificent Angora cat which had jumped upon the seat beside her.

Tiring of her occupation, she took the animal in her arms, and depositing it in the lap of the sleeping Rubina, she went over to Mary, and said:

"My goodness, child, don't look so miserable! One would think Lady Meredith had said, 'Get thee to a nunnery' instead of sending you to town. It isn't the season, I know, but London is awfully jolly at the end of October, provided November fogs keep to date. The theatres are all in full swing, and one isn't parboiled in them, and, oh, the boon of the 'Saturday and Monday Pops' not having started, and saving one the necessity of joining the army of Sapphiras, who pretend to understand the *Andante con moto* from Wagner's 'Fifth Symphony,' or to adore the 'Rondo in G minor Concerto' of Mozart."

"But, Edith, you like music?"

"As a pleasure, dear, yes—as a study, no. I like your music, Mary, though," Edith went rattling on, "you never seem to soar above my comprehension. Come play me something now, that old-fashioned 'Réverie' of Rosellin's, or better still, the March from the 'Prophète,' that will reach the ears of the men, and bring back to their minds the fact of our existence."

Anything seemed better to poor Mary than having to talk and make herself agreeable to the woman whom she could look upon in no other light than that of a rival. She rose and went to the piano, but it was no stormy march that her supple fingers evoked from the instrument, only a simple pianoforte arrangement of the well-known "Auld Robin Gray."

There was nothing particularly applicable to her own love-story in that of the Scotch ballad, but somehow the music seemed to touch her heart, and before she had got through half of the piece she burst into tears, got up, and left the room.

Edith was terribly surprised and grieved; she was exceedingly attached to Mary, and fain would have done her best to comfort her. She was about to follow her friend, but Lady Meredith, who had noted the whole proceeding, prevented her.

"Let her be alone a while, Edith," she advised. "Mary has not been quite well for some time, and I have noticed that any attempt at petting her only makes her worse. It is this depression of spirits that determined me to advise her accepting the Harkers' invitation, although," added her wily ladyship, "she seems so poorly to-night that I am really doubting the wisdom of letting her leave home for a few days."

Poor little Mary! she did not seek the refuge of her own room, she feared too much that Edith or Lady Meredith would join her, and she wanted to be alone, where she could finish her cry and then summon back courage to the brave little heart that so plainly told her the idol of her girlish dreams had to be removed from the shrine at which she had worshipped, and placed upon that of another and wealthier devotee; further, that it was her duty to help, if necessary, in its removal. Ah, that was the hardest part of it!

For the first time, perhaps, in her life she regretted her lack of riches; she felt that Sir Charles did care for her, and that it was Edith's fortune which turned the scale in her rival's favour. Oh, why, why was it not in her power to take her husband a dowry that should restore the fortunes of Meredith Court?

Her old garden-shawl was hanging in the hall. She took it down, and wrapping it around her, opened the door, and passed out into the grounds.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN the gardens of Meredith Court had been planned at the time of the building of the mansion, so large a space had been apportioned to them that on the decline of the fortunes of the owners, the cost of keeping them up was found to entail too grave an item of expenditure, hence some half an acre in extent had been allowed to run to waste, and formed one of the most picturesque portions of the estate.

Through a natural fertility of the soil, and its being surrounded by a belt of trees which shut out the rough winds and protected it

from the full severity of winter frosts, the abandoned garden in the spring, summer, and autumn ran riot in a very luxuriance of foliage and wild flowers, and even when the blossoms were dead, and the trees denuded of their leaves, the spot had a certain weird charm about it peculiarly its own.

In one part of the Wilderness, as the place was called, adown some artificially arranged rock-work, a rivulet that had been diverted from the even tenor of its way across a neighbouring field, fell sparkling and dancing into a large shallow marble basin, from whence it was conveyed by pipes, which were still kept free from weeds and *débria*, into the river, which ran past at no great distance.

In this basin lay a stone naiad, life-sized, which had probably formed part of a fountain in the palmy days of Meredith Court.

The face of the figure, which lay gazing upwards, was raised above the level of the body, through the head reclining upon a boulder which also lay in the basin. It was, however, not sufficiently high to prevent the plashing water falling upon the upper portion of the face, and the action had worn the features down to an almost smooth surface. The mouth was, however, beneath the water and remained perfect, the constant ripple giving the appearance as of an eternal smile playing upon it. Lady Meredith had christened it "The Laughing Woman."

By the side of the basin grew a gigantic arbutus, whose glistening green leaves and tassels of white flowers helped, in conjunction with some shrubs of yew, box, and ivy, to form a delightful arbour, as green and fresh to look upon in mid-winter as in the heat of summer.

This was a favourite spot of Mary Ray's, where, even as a child, she had brought and wept out her troubles, thought out her plans, and rejoiced in joys which were not to be shared with others. Hers had not been a companionable life. Lady Meredith was always too occupied with schemes for her son's present and future welfare to trouble much about her niece. Miss Tuttle was kind but thoroughly unsympathetic to a girl of Mary's sensitive nature, and the only companions in whom she thoroughly confided were her cousin Charles and her neighbour Edith.

Now in her great and womanly sorrow, Mary, mechanically almost, sought her old refuge. She wanted to be alone, and were she missed, there was only one person likely to guess at her hiding-place, and that one, with Edith Pennington at his side, was not likely to trouble about her.

It was a delicious evening, and the moon at her full seemed to burnish the glossy leaves of the evergreens, to turn into silvery wands the branches of the trees, and to glistening gems the water-drops which clung to the clusters of rushes growing around the basin.

Mary gazed upon the worn features of the stone figure, and compared it to her own future. Was it not henceforth fallen, shattered, featureless? Must not she go through life with a smile upon her lips that was as mechanical and joyless as that which the water formed about the mouth of the statue; must not her heart be stone and her life cold and dreary?

And was it not the more cruel that all the while she believed—she knew—that happiness lay within her grasp, and that she had only to make the sign to Charles Meredith and he would leave Edith and riches to come to her.

But womanly pride, as well as gratitude and her promise to her aunt, forbade this. The hard thorny path of duty lay as clear before her as the white stones, which marked the pathway through the tangled brushwood and unclipped hedges, lay in the moonlight.

Suddenly she started. A hand was upon her shoulder, and a voice she had loved ever since she could recollect loving anything pronounced her name:

"Mary!"

"Yes, Charles."

She could scarcely believe that it was her voice that replied, so cold, so unemotional it sounded in her ears.

She seemed already turning to stone.

The next moment her lover was by her side, and, taking her hands in his, he looked anxiously down into her face.

"Mary," he said, "you have been crying. What's wrong? Come, confide in me, dear. You know there is nothing in the world I would not do to make you happy."

"I am going to leave Meredith Court to-morrow."

"Yes, for a few days or weeks. Surely that does not trouble you?"

"Perhaps, Charles, it may be for ever; and now that I have the opportunity, let me thank you for all your past kindness. You have indeed been a brother to me."

Gently but firmly she withdrew her hands from his clasp; they were by no means stone, but trembling, burning, human flesh and blood.

"You have been for a long time—and oh, Mary, surely you must know it!—more than a sister to me. Nay, do not put me from you, dear, till I have said in words how deeply, how fervently, I love you."

The manly young voice quivered with emotion as it spoke, and for a moment a delicious sense as of one who in the midst of storm and waves suddenly finds himself in a haven of rest, fell upon the girl.

But her promise to Lady Meredith was brought back vividly to her mind by the next words the son spoke:

"Say, Mary, that you will be my wife, and a daughter in name as you have always been in affection to my mother, who loves me too dearly to grudge me that without which I cannot be happy."

"Yes, if he asks me to marry him, I will refuse him; I too love him—I too will show him that I can sacrifice myself for his sake. I will not drag him down to poverty." That was the promise she had made, and was that promise at the very first test of its sincerity to prove but idle words?

She looked up into his earnest, pleading eyes, trying to keep the tears from her own.

"Spare me, spare yourself. What you ask can bring but misery to us both," she supplicated.

"Misery! Hear me, Mary. I should have confessed this before, but I have waited for better days. If you have courage to cast in your lot with mine, those brighter days have come, and you shall never have cause to repent your sacrifice. My darling, be my wife!"

"No, Charles, it can never be."

The tone of determination in which the reply came struck a chill to the heart of the pleader; still, he would not be shaken from his purpose without an explanation.

"What, Mary! What do you mean?" he cried. "Have I been deceiving myself with the vain hope that you have loved me?"

"Charles, you have always had my love."

"Then at least you bid me hope."

"It is because of that love I am leaving Meredith Court. Charles, we are both poor, and it is necessary that you should marry a rich wife; were I to accept your hand, I should be standing between you and your welfare. How could I do that? It would be a base return to you for all your affection and for the home your mother gave me here."

The hardness—the almost business-like tone in which the tender words were hidden—served its purpose, and for the moment they misled their hearer.

"It is strange," he cried, "that you should have discovered this so recently. Have the attractions of a rich suitor taught you what is good for me? I now do not believe you love me! Ah, I see, you seek for wealth which I cannot offer you; you mean to sell yourself for gold; it may buy you homage or the world's esteem, but it can never buy you happiness."

"You are cruel; you do not know my heart," she said.

"Not know your heart! Is it not like those of all your sex—ready to sacrifice everyone and everything to its vanity? Mary, for the last time I ask you to be my wife."

"You have had my answer."

Her reply came cold and clear as a breath of frosty air.

"Then Heaven forgive you for the part you have played! You women look upon men's hearts as children do upon new toys—pleasant to play with until they break. Yes; Heaven forgive you and help me, Mary!"

And with downcast head the heir of Meredith Court rose and walked away, hoping against hope that above the murmur of the mimic cascade he should hear his name called.

And how the girl longed to utter it; but she felt that now was the hour of her temptation, and she must not relent.

"How bitter were his words!" she thought. "As bitter as my life must be. In years to come he may know me better and think kindly of me, perhaps thank me for the sacrifice. Alas, no! His anger shows his very love, and I—I whom he loves must endure even his contempt."

She could say no more, think no more, but in a passionate fit of weeping, sank back upon the seat from which she had, in the first impulse of his departure, risen with outstretched hands to tell him to remain.

• And the cascade tumbled and foamed merrily into the marble basin, and the eternal smile hovered about the lips of the naiad. What was a girl's heart-broken devotion and a man's destroyed belief in women's faithfulness to them?

"Dance and pass on your way, girl, as we do," cried the waters.

"Let your heart be of stone, like mine," smiled the naiad.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 124.)

## Arnold.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER V.

A MONTH later we were married, and went to Edinburgh for our honeymoon. It seemed very soon, but it was most convenient for me to leave business just then—the third week in September—and there was no reason to wait.

My mother was delighted, though hardly surprised, as I thought she would have been. She told me that she had guessed how it would be before Dickie had been here a week; she knew that I loved her, and, of course, never doubted but that she would return my love. She was a partial mother, and I was her favourite son.

As for Miles, he was consulted by telegraph, though it was a mere form, for we both well knew that if there were any persons in the world who could lay claim to Miles Challenge's true affection, those were his wife's daughter and his brother, and that he could have no reason to disapprove of an arrangement which found the one an effectual protector, and the other an ever-present source of comfort and happiness.

He wired back his prompt consent, according to my urgent request, as Dickie would not be married without her step-father's blessing, but he wrote afterwards that he had been astonished beyond measure, and had not been able to get his accounts right for several days afterwards, for thinking of the astounding news that had reached him from England. It was the last thing he should ever have dreamt of, he said, that his little girl—it was difficult for him to remember that she was not really his own—should marry his brother, whom he had believed to have done with such nonsense as love long ago.

But I could not see anything so surprising, except that Dickie should have returned my love. It would have been a great deal more surprising, I considered, if any man under a hundred years old could have lived a month under the same roof with her, and not have been bewitched. All this I told him in my reply, and he summarily disposed of it in his next by informing me that "there was no fool like an old fool."

But, nevertheless, he was pleased with the marriage, when his amazement would allow of his experiencing any other sentiment.

After receiving his telegram the arrangements were soon completed, and a few days later we stood together in the English church, accompanied only by my mother and one or two of our most intimate friends, and plighted our lifelong troth.

But little change was required in our domestic arrangements. We were still to occupy our commodious flat in S— Street, and of course the dear old mother—her mother now as well as mine—would continue to live with us. I wanted to save my little wife all the care and anxiety that I could. I wanted to keep her bright and unshadowed as when she had first come into my life and had changed it, as if with the touch of a magician's wand, into a golden dream of love.

It was a fine autumn, unusually dry for Scotland. The clear bracing air of Edinburgh did us both good, and she was delighted with the place. I was anxious that she should see every point of interest in the proud, beautiful, historical city, and the weather allowed of daily excursions, not only to the places of note in the town and suburbs, but into the country and to various seaside spots.

We had apartments in Princes Street, and every day Dickie looked at the Castle on the rocks, and dreamt about the scenes that had taken place within it and around. Holyrood made her low-spirited. She sympathised so intensely with poor Mary Stuart coming over from the gay French Court to that dreary, desolate place; her nerves were so intensely strung as she visited each gloomy apartment fraught with such sad memories of the young, beautiful, blighted life, that I resolved never, if possible, to let her see the place again.

I saw how delicately she was constituted, how unfitted for sorrow or strife, and I dreaded anything which should cast a shadow over her perfect peace and happiness. That her early love-affair had not darkened her life for evermore I attributed to the evident fact that her heart had not been really touched.

Those six weeks in Edinburgh were to me a period of almost delirious happiness after so many years of disappointment and lonely sadness. My darling was so sweetly tender and loving; she feared not to show her love for me now that all her doubts were removed; and she was so evidently happy—a palpable fact which formed the chief ingredient in my own happiness. How I had won such love I could not imagine. I was content to wonder and be thankful.

How I looked back upon those six weeks in the dark days that followed!

It was the last week in October, and our stay in Edinburgh was drawing to a close, when one evening I came in alone from the

gathering darkness of the streets, and was about to proceed up to our rooms, where I expected to find Dickie and dinner awaiting me. I had been out on business, to see an agent belonging to our firm, leaving Dickie at home to rest, as we had been out all the morning, and were going to the theatre in the evening. The close and stairs were lighted, and as I came slowly up, I saw that my wife was standing at the foot of the stairs, dressed in her outdoor things, and talking very earnestly to a stranger—or, at least, a stranger to me. She stood facing the stairs, and back to me—I could only see the outline of her form and recognise her garments—but of her companion I had a good view. The gas cast its flicker full upon the face of a young and handsome man, well dressed, and with an air of dash and fashion about him that I seemed dimly to recognise, though I knew I had never seen him before. I paused and stood where I was, trying to guess who he could be; that vague sense of recognition almost overpowering me meanwhile, as though we had met in some previous state of existence.

He was very dark, with a straight-featured, haughty face—though smiling pleasantly enough now as he looked at my wife—a full dark moustache, and fine, well-bred tones that fell distinctly upon my ear.

"Only two years ago!" he was saying. "It seems a century!" "So much sometimes happens in a very short time," replied the voice of my wife, moved in some slight degree from its wonted even sweetness; and was it my fancy, or the freshly-rising evening breeze, as it swept down the close, or did I really hear her sigh as she spoke?

There was a moment's silence. I stood where I had first paused at the entrance, and they had not heard my footsteps among the many others in the street. They did not seem aware of anyone's approach, though his face was turned full towards me; but his eyes were otherwise occupied, and his ears, too, it seemed.

"Ah, Arnold," began my wife again, and as that name passed her lips, I started and stared incredulously at the handsome, imperious face; but, as I looked, I was forced to believe the truth. He answered, feature for feature, to the description she had given me of that former lover of hers—that other "Arnold," of whom I had not thought it worth while to be jealous after she had once promised to be mine. And here he was—he had sought her out at last—just six weeks too late!

I lost the end of her speech—I lost his answer. I was deaf, blind, mad. When my senses came back after that terrible reel of my brain, I turned and went into the street again. There I walked for some time, wrestling with the fierce jealousy that had seized me in its clutches, sometimes bewailing the day on which I met her, sometimes assuring myself that there was no reason to assume that, because she had seen him again, the old love must necessarily be revived. But I remembered bitterly how different I was from him—what a contrast I must present when I returned to her. He, young, handsome, winning, with every grace that might enchain a young girl's fancy. How could I, old-fashioned and ugly, hope to hold my own against him—my place, that only his absence had enabled me to win?

And then I chid myself for the mere thought. How little trust I had in my darling's truth—in her tender love! How small a hope there would be of our future happiness if I were going to let every chance breath disturb it! Yet this seemed hardly chance—but more like a terrible coincidence.

I stayed out about half an hour, to give him time to say his farewell and be gone, for I had no wish to meet him again upon the threshold of our home. When I re-entered the close all was silence and solitude; there was nothing in the quiet gas-lit place to tell that two old lovers had met there not an hour since—met and parted—with an impassable barrier raised between them; it looked a most unromantic spot for such a meeting, though, doubtless, they had found it romantic enough.

The warm welcome and tender, wifely kiss with which I was met dispelled half my doubts and fears, and I thought to myself that after I had heard about the meeting from Dickie's own true lips I should feel, perhaps, even more secure than I had done before, knowing that she had seen her old lover again, and yet could return to me afterwards with such a look and such a kiss.

Dinner had been kept back on my account, and it was on the table almost before I was ready for it, so that there was no opportunity for confidences, and dinner is anything but a confidential meal, to my thinking. I should have expected to hear her news over our dessert, "across the walnuts and the wine," but we were late, and it was hurried over in order not to miss the commencement of the piece at the theatre—one which we had both been very anxious to hear. I say "had been," for neither of us seemed to care about it now. I could see that her thoughts continually strayed, and as for me, it mattered not where I was, what was before my eyes or what in my ears. I saw only a gas-lit close, and standing therein my wife with a man looking into her face. I heard only her low voice as she said, so softly:

"Ah, Arnold!"

"I was disappointed in it," Dickie said to me on our way home.

"I did not care about it," I replied moodily, and she looked up at me in surprise. It was so seldom that she heard me speak thus, for my tones had always softened to her.

We were late home, and a dainty little supper awaited us on our return. I sat down to it gladly and gratefully—not because I was hungry, but because the meal afforded just the opportunity that seemed as if it would never come, and to which I looked forward so eagerly. I should hear all about it now, in the quiet little chat over the chicken and champagne.

She sat down close by my side, and slipped her hand into mine, but she did not eat, though she pressed food upon me.

"I am glad to be home again; I am a little tired," she said, "and I think you are tired, too, are you not, dear?"

"No; why should you think that?" I replied, twisting the rings round upon her fair finger, where the wedding-ring sparkled, its lustre all undimmed as yet.

"I don't know—except that I thought you seemed a little listless."

"There, look what I have done!" I said, in some vexation, as a large pearl dropped out of one of the rings I had been twisting about and rolled upon the floor.

"Oh, never mind. We cannot fail to find it, on account of its size," she answered, and we both got down on the floor to search for it. "I am very glad it has come out now, as it is so unsafe," she continued; "I might easily have lost it without knowing. I shall tell them of it at the shop; I only had it back this afternoon."

It was the ring which I had given her on our engagement, the largest stone of which had dropped out about a week before, and had been left at a jeweller's for repair.

"This afternoon?" I repeated.

I had lit a match to look under the table, and by its flare I saw her delicate face suddenly flush.

She answered a little nervously, though perhaps I should not have noticed it if I had not known what I knew.

"Yes, I went out and fetched it myself. I have had no chance to say a word to you about anything. I was tired of waiting for it, and I couldn't bear to be without it. I did not think you would mind, Arnold?" half deprecatingly, half questioningly.

"Oh no, dear," I replied, trying to speak indifferently, "as long as you didn't get lost; and it was only a little way. You didn't go any farther?"

"No; but I stopped so long looking at the shops that I was out nearly an hour," she said laughingly, "and I saw some ribbon of exactly the blue I wanted, so I went in and got it."

"Here it is," I said, picking up the pearl and rising to my feet.

I had heard now that she had been out—I supposed I was going to hear the rest. It would be a great weight off my mind to hear it, but I did wish that she had not blushed. It made me feel uncomfortable.

"Suppose I had lost it," she chattered on, "it would have been all their fault. I shall scold them, and tell them that they must do their work better than that."

It was already past one o'clock, but I waited for another hour to hear my wife's anticipated confidence, which never came. She spoke no word of whom she had met that afternoon, though I could see her thoughts were distracted. And I, proud, sensitive to a degree, intensely reserved, would have scorned to ask her anything about it, and so the first shadow crept in between us, and dimmed the lustre of our married love.

## CHAPTER VI.

I SAW no more of "Arnold." It galled me sorely now to think how carefully she had preserved from me the knowledge of his surname; and how tamely, how willingly, even, I had submitted to be left in ignorance. I did not for one moment imagine that my wife saw him either. My trust in her, in spite of the bitterness with which I dwelt upon her probable pain and disappointment in meeting her old love too late, was too full and perfect to allow me to think that she could meet him again intentionally. That first meeting of theirs was certainly pure accident, though her silence concerning it proved, in my jealous eyes, how much she had been disturbed by it, since she could not make up her mind to speak of it.

I was heartily glad when, a week later, we turned our faces homewards. Edinburgh had become distasteful to me, since I had seen that handsome face in it; I was always expecting and dreading to meet it again, and I welcomed black, smoky Glasgow with a feeling of intense relief. Here, too, I was not obliged to take holiday whether I would or not; here I could work hard, until I was too tired to muse, and brood, and imagine things. This I said to myself, and determined that I would put away the haunting doubt which had possessed my mind afresh since my wife had withheld from me that which she little thought I already knew.

She, too, was glad to go home, and the mother was wearying for us; and so, altogether, it was a happy reunion. My mother doted

upon Dickie, and Dickie upon her; they were a great deal to one another. I thought that my darling—she was that still—would not miss me so much if I were sometimes a little silent or abstracted. But I was mistaken. She noticed the change in me, slight though it must have been, for she was used to my reserve, and questioned me concerning it.

"Is there anything wrong at the office, Arnold?" she enquired of me one day.

"No," I answered, in some surprise, not at first seeing what she meant.

"Then is it me?" she went on. "Have I offended you in any way? Are you disappointed in me?" she went on, so wistfully that my heart ached to hear her, and I hastened to reassure her.

"You, my dearest! how could that be? What is the matter? or rather, what do you think is the matter?"

"Something is the matter, I feel sure. You are quiet, and you look sad."

"My dear, I warned you before we were married that you were taking an old man—not a young one, who would be lively, and careless, and amusing. Even you cannot make me young again, Dickie."

"Nor do I wish to; I would rather you were as you are," she said with quick warmth. "But," laughing a little doubtfully, "there is another side to the question. Do you not sometimes wish, Arnold, that you had married some one more sensible?"

It was hard to speak at all; but I could answer this last question of hers with a decided negative, which seemed to please her, and she put her arm lovingly round my neck as she stood beside me—a caress which I could not resist, so that we spent the next quarter of an hour as foolishly as we had done many a quarter of an hour before I had seen Arnold in the close at Edinburgh.

But it was not the same; and even that did not last. The shadow was soon to grow deeper and far more black. The new year came in with bitter cold and heavy snow. It did not seem to hurt Dickie; she was a true English blossom, and could stand the buffeting of a cold wind, fragile though she looked. The frost raised her spirits and brought new brightness to her eyes; but, as for me, I felt pinched and old in the severe weather. English-born though I was, there was hot southern blood running in my veins, and, thoroughly injured to tropical heat, and no longer the strong man that I had been, the Scotch winters always tried me. But this year I hardly thought of my physical sufferings, so relieved was I to see that she was evidently not pining—that she seemed perfectly happy in her quiet home with me and my mother, who, though we loved her well enough to do anything for her sake, yet could not make ourselves young, or handsome, or gallant, even to please her.

One afternoon, early in January, I met Arnold on the platform of St. Enoch's railway-station, in the full blue-white glare of the electric light. I was turning the corner by the booking-office when I stumbled against him, or he against me. We both apologised, and I heard his voice again—that warm, pleasant, hated voice! He had little idea of who I was, or would he have spoken so pleasantly? I wondered.

He was looking handsomer than ever—I have always had an eye for beauty, and at that time it added in no inconsiderable measure to my misery. His dark cheek was cleared, not flushed, by the intense cold, and he was wrapped in a long furred great-coat, which, as far as mere cost went, I could have worn perhaps as well as he, but the style of which would ill have suited my slight, bent, insignificant form.

He looked noble, princely; in my jealous, miserable eyes the man above all others to win my Dickie's heart. I remembered how she had said that "there was nothing he could not do, and nothing he did not know," and I acknowledged that he looked like that, from the crown of his dark head to the sole of his well-shaped, well-clad foot. And then she had wept—for him!

How did he come to be here? that was the question I asked myself as I hastened along to keep the marrow from freezing in my bones, while my brain was like a scorching fire. Was it a planned thing? But no—no; I could not believe that yet of my Dickybird—how strange the once familiar pet name sounded upon my lips! How long had he been here? Was it the knowledge of his vicinity that had kept her so bright and happy during the dull winter days? Would it not rather have been a load upon her mind—a never-ceasing torture—to know that he was "so near and yet so far"? Had they met at all, and if so, how often?

These were only a few of the questions with which I vainly tormented myself, seeing that answers to them could be obtained only through her whom I would not ask. Yet, if he had not come to meet her, what strange coincidence had led his footsteps a second time in our direction? Such things happened in novels, but not in real life, I told myself bitterly, forgetting a lesson that I had had occasion to learn over and over again in the ups and downs of my many wanderings, that truth is stranger than fiction.

I went home, and when my Dickie came running out of the room to meet me, I offered her neither word or kiss, and when, astonished and half frightened at my darkened face, she laid her hand gently upon my sleeve, I shook it off, walked into my room, and locked the door. There I stayed, wrapped in gloomy musings, until she came to tell me that dinner was waiting. The new timidity in her manner might have been a reproach to me, but it was not in my then state of mind.

Dinner was little more than a form. Hardly a word was spoken. My gloomy silence and want of appetite seemed infectious, and the dishes were sent away almost untouched. I could not speak naturally; I could not discuss the events of the day as though I had not met Arnold an hour ago, looking so eager and happy, when I was compelled to think that he had come here only in the hope of seeing her again.

She must have told him that we lived in Glasgow, and why should she have done that if she had not expected to see him again? I could not tell that she was to blame, but it looked much like it, and with the innate jealousy of my disposition, nursed under Oriental suns into a yet fiercer heat, burning within my breast, I could not caress my wife—could not call her by loving names—could not even speak kindly to her. A cool, indifferent manner was the utmost forbearance that I could attain to, and to keep up that now became a never-ceasing struggle.

So the days went on, and she, too, changed. She stood upon her dignity, and though she had at first manifested both surprise and alarm at the alteration in me, she now spoke as coolly to me as I did to her. It struck me with a chill sense of discomfort, but I consoled myself with the thought that it was far preferable to having her clinging to me and begging so piteously to know what was the matter. I could not have borne that now.

So there was no more exchange of affection, and the shadow grew darker between us. My mother must have seen that something was wrong, but she asked no question, made no comment. She was reserved, also, to some extent, and moreover had the good sense not to attempt to interfere between husband and wife. At first I thought that she would surely tax me with indifference towards, or forgetfulness of, my newly-won treasure, and I lived in daily dread of what she might say; but as time passed on, and she made no remark, I understood her silence, and blessed her for it. It was the only consolation which she could have afforded me under the circumstances.

The only friends beside the Crichton family who had been present at our wedding lived at Langside. With them, since our marriage, my wife had become very intimate, and the Cross Hill cars forming a ready means of communication, visits were generally interchanged at least as often as once a week. A fortnight after meeting Arnold at the railway-station I saw him wish my wife good-bye, and assist her into the Cross Hill car. I was returning home in a hurry for some important papers that I had left locked up behind me in the morning; and so, while I was supposed to be a couple of miles away, they had met.

My blood reached the boiling point then, but yet I would not speak, or make any sign. It was all I could do to refrain from dashing through the crowd and springing upon him like a panther, but I refrained—as yet. The hour was not yet come. I delayed my vengeance a little longer. But I was sure now, and nothing should turn it aside—of that I was determined.

"I hope you enjoyed your visit?" I remarked to my wife after dinner that evening, speaking in the cold tone which I always used towards her now, but with an added touch of scorn.

"Yes, thanks," she replied in the indifferent voice which, on her part, she had learnt to assume with me. "Did mother tell you I went to Langside then?"

"Oh no," I answered. "That was not necessary. I came home early in the afternoon for those reports I had forgotten, and found you were out. Of course there was no doubt as to where you had gone," sarcastically.

"Do you mind my visiting so often at the Colquhouns?" she asked with a momentary return to her old earnest tone, which touched me until I saw that she had turned pale, and that hardened me afresh. Well might she turn pale!

"Mind? Of course not," I said. "What do you think a small matter like that can signify to me?"

My tone might have stung a saint to fury.

She half turned away, looking inexpressibly pained, and then, appearing to change her mind, she came back to me, laying her hand—oh, how gently, how timidly!—upon my sleeve.

"Arnold," she said, "whatever has come to you? Why did you ever pretend to love me? Did you, or I, think on our wedding-day, hardly four months ago, that you would speak to me like this?"

I neither could or would answer her, and I did not want to look at her false face, so I shook off that fair hand, that not five hours since had been clasped in that of the other—the truly-loved Arnold—and went out, closing the door violently after me.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 132.)



## After Work.

A SUDDEN clamour here and there,  
A hum of voices all around,  
Slow dying down the winding stair,  
And silence follows sound.

Rest! aching eyes, whose idle looks  
On long familiar objects fall,  
On worn stained desks and dingy books,  
In weariness of all.

It chimes at last! the hour that brings  
Brief respite from the day's dull care,  
And thought springs up on perfect wings  
To purer space and air.

As travellers on some wide expanse,  
Some arid waste of desert calm,  
Pause where the sparkling fountains glance  
Beneath the sheltering palm,

So we, when comes the close of day,  
To weary heart and wearier mind,  
May leave the dull, laborious way,  
The thankless tasks behind.

May seek once more the verdant plains,  
May roam by silent streams along,  
Through that fair realm where Fancy reigns,  
Where bloom the flowers of Song!

## Wanted, an Income.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### PRELUDE.

OSWALD CARBURY knew that he was committing what nine sane men out of every ten would consider a piece of egregious folly. His own notions of worldly wisdom sternly rebuked him. But how was he to help it? Alice Graham's soft blue-grey eyes were meeting his in a glance of shy appeal, the tremulous accents of her voice were echoing in his ears like music. Her dainty figure was by his side, her hand in his strong grasp, and the pair were alone in a careless London crowd. How could any young man, with a heart more susceptible than the nether millstone, fail to be tender and self-oblivious?

"I am afraid, Mr. Carbury, that I have taken a wrong turning, and have missed my way. How ridiculous of me!"

"Not at all, Miss Graham; that, I fancy, must be a pretty frequent inconvenience of life in a great city. Perhaps you will permit me to go back with you. It is not very far to Eildon Road, if you proceed direct. You have no calls to make, I presume?"

"No; I have just been executing a few commissions for Mrs. Eccles, and am returning. But it is giving you too much trouble. I do not think I can consent."

"Indeed, you must, please," he said; "I want to have a chat with you, released from the presence of Mrs. Eccles."

"And of her daughter Margaret?"

"And of her daughter Margaret."

And with the echoing of those words Oswald forgot his prospects, the difference in position—everything; except only that Alice Graham was with him, and that fate had put into his hands the chance of an avowal.

"Alice," he went on, in a voice low and deep, and vibrating with intense emotion; "Alice, will you give me the right—the privilege—to walk by your side through life? It is a singular place, perhaps, in which to ask you this, and you may think me abrupt also. But you know that my opportunities of private conference are very, very limited. You have won my heart. You have it in your power—you and no other girl on earth—to make me either very happy or very miserable. Which must it be?"

"There will be—trouble—to you," she murmured.

"As if I cared for the chances of that! I am old enough at five-and-twenty both to know my own mind and to fight my own battles. Certainly I am big enough to do the latter," and a harassed laugh escaped him.

The beams of a faint smile shone in Alice's eyes also, she ventured a shy upward glance of admiration and of trust. Her lover was a stalwart, manly fellow, and looked able to defy successfully any onset of evil fortune. Is not victory usually to the sanguine and the brave?

"But it will be my fault if I say yes," she replied; "and—and—and you might reproach me afterwards. That would be terrible!"

No earnest resolute suitor was likely to be held at bay by such a line of argument, assuredly not Oswald Carbury.

"I scarcely think that you have any real fears on that score, Alice," he said; "may we not, at least, leave it for the future to decide?"

The question of this morning is, to me, infinitely more important. Can you care for me sufficiently to promise to be my wife?"

He could imprison her unresisting fingers without cavil now. They had reached the corner of Eildon Road, and must quickly part.

"Yes, Oswald," she answered. A moment later, with burning cheeks, and fluttering, doubting, triumphant heart, she had escaped.

Oswald turned away, and reviewed on his homeward path both his past life and his present position. At the age of fifteen he had been formally adopted by the one rich man of his family. It was tacitly agreed that the lad's will should in every matter, grave or trivial, be subordinated to Luke Carbury's. And up to this date no serious breach had occurred. Now one appeared inevitable. Oswald was certain his uncle would not approve of his engagement to Alice Graham. He was to marry Miss Eccles.

They must be patient and wait. That Alice would be true, he was as sure as that the sun was shining behind these February clouds. He abandoned himself to the successful lover's dreams of bliss. Most of us have had similar ones. To most of us the building of castles in the air is a pleasant if not a profitable occupation.

### CHAPTER I.

IN the days of his vigour Luke Carbury had been rather over than under the medium height. But the years had bent and, to all outward seeming, grievously contracted him, as they had likewise shrivelled his skin, and furrowed his brow, and hardened his heart, and increased his riches. He was now a thin, decrepit, morose old miser. He resided in Dorrington Crescent, not half a mile from Eildon Road and the home of Margaret Eccles. But he had an office in the City, and still called himself a broker and commission agent. His legitimate business was at this date trifling, both in its bulk and its value. He had deliberately allowed it to drift from him. But in loans to needy clients, to young merchants, or to hard-pressed speculators, he did much. Every man on 'Change knew that in Luke Carbury's dingy room it was possible, by the offer of fair security and high interest, to obtain advances of many thousands at almost momentary notice. Every man knew also that no mercy would be shown him should he in any sense prove a defaulter.

Luke had neither clerk nor confidant. Oswald was the nearest approach to both, and Oswald was invariably spoken of as "my nephew," and invariably snubbed if he asked any undue question.

"Time enough for you to seize the reins when I resign them," Luke would say.

The old man took no holidays beyond those which law and custom indicated, and at these he was suspected of inwardly chafing, even as he yielded. Every ordinary working morning, for close upon forty years, had found him in his office at precisely the same hour. He was as good as a clock to the porter beneath. In a very real sense, money-making had come to be Luke Carbury's meat and drink.

The day was damp and foggy. A thick yellow vapour, to which even the hackneyed comparison of pea-soup was inadequate, had swept down upon the groaning metropolis. All but the most absolutely necessary street business was perforce suspended. Gas was blazing in thousands of workshops and counting-houses. The telegraph-boy was a phantom even at the office-window. The few drivers of crawling cabs hailed each other in speech grimly humorous, or savagely irate, or philosophically resigned, as was their varying mood.

"Only Blitterwick is likely to call to-day, I suppose," said Luke Carbury testily. "It will be awkward for him if he fails. The excuse of weather won't be accepted in lieu of redemption. Beastly climate, though! Might almost carve this fog like a Cheshire cheese, and a little of it's a deal more satisfying, too."

He chuckled sardonically at this sudden inspiration of wit, and shifted in his seat.

Oswald had fancied his uncle absorbed for a good half-hour, at any rate, in his *Gazette*, and at his own distant desk was carefully sealing up a private packet. This unexpected utterance and change of attitude discomposed him. He stumbled in his reply.

"Yes, it's miserable. Blitterwick may very likely stay away," he said.

"I remarked, on the contrary, that he is bound to come. I fully expect him," the autocrat answered.

Oswald's confusion and heightened colour were visible even to Luke's failing eyesight, and the observer was not slow to link these traits with the occupation of the young man's fingers. A calendar immediately before him gave the date as the 13th of February. He shuffled suspiciously to his feet and crossed the room.

"Packing up a valentine for Miss Maggie—eh?" he queried.

Oswald felt that a dangerous crisis was at hand. Why had he not been more cautious? Had his luck, so huge and undeserved in the opinion of a large army of needy relatives, turned against him?

"No—not exactly," he gasped.

Luke Carbury did not hesitate to put on his glasses and scan the scarcely dry direction for himself.

"Alice Graham," he read aloud with slow peculiar emphasis. "That is the companion Mrs. Eccles has employed for some months, I believe?"

"For nearly a year," Oswald stammered.

"And pray what may be your relations with this," he gave a dry short cough, "young lady?"

The intentional insult in the delay sent the hot blood back into Oswald's cheeks, from which, in the first shock of discovery, it had fled. Courage came to him. He would assert the right of his manhood to a free choice.

"She has promised one day to be my wife, uncle," he answered.

It was the turn of the older actor in the drama to grow pale now, or rather yellow, as if an attack of jaundice were impending.

"Your wife—she has promised—brave words, my lad!" he hissed; "but I may have something to say to that. No doubt you would prefer to keep me in the dark. But you see I am just a trifle inquisitive. What of Miss Margaret Eccles?"

"She is a nice girl. But I could never have loved her, as—as I can and do love Alice."

"Love—pshaw! Poetic rubbish! I gave you credit for infinitely more sense, or you wouldn't have been here so long, I can tell you."

"I am sorry if you are disappointed, uncle. I rather feared it would be so, and so did Alice. She is a splendid girl; I am sure if you knew her you would like her. I could not help deciding as I have decided."

He was speaking very quietly, but very firmly, and his glance met the other's sneer without quailing.

Luke Carbury almost screamed in the fury of his resentment.

"She shall never marry you—the impudent hussy! or if she does, she'll speedily repent it, for her husband will need to advertise, 'Wanted, an Income,'" he quavered. "Do you imagine I am going to allow you to make ducks and drakes of my money in any madcap fashion you please? If you do think it, you never were more mistaken in your life. I'll leave every penny to an hospital first."

"That must be as you choose, uncle," Oswald replied bravely. His own temper was rising also, though as yet he had managed to keep a politic curb upon it. He took up his packet, and prepared for an excursion into the fog.

Oswald inherited the family obstinacy.

The aged broker's mood changed. By a mighty effort he temporarily dissembled his anger, and tried what coaxing and an appeal to the standard of common-sense would do. So much as in these later days he could care for any human being he cared for Oswald. Long association had involuntarily drawn forth tendrils of affection even from his cankered heart. If to his pride and imperious self-will there was the shadow of an alternative, he had no desire to sever the last acknowledged bond between himself and his kind. But he would not be thwarted with impunity. He was resolute on that point.

"Don't be a fool, lad," he said huskily; "I've given you harsh measure, no doubt, now and then; but don't let us quarrel over any girl beneath the sun. I don't believe there is one worth it—not even Margaret Eccles. Just you sit down again, and let us talk the affair calmly over. We haven't much risk of interruption."

It was difficult to refuse the invitation; the post could wait an hour or two yet. And it was not so easy for Oswald to defend his position against this more insidious form of attack. Passion is such a convenient buttress for weak argument.

"You see this Miss Graham is poor and practically a nobody. I do not wish to offend your susceptibilities, but perhaps you will admit that that is true? Her present occupation proves it, I fancy."

"She is a mine of wealth in herself."

The lines of the hard mouth curved for a second with bitter satire, but no outburst came.

"And you are looked upon—with reason, if you are wise—as my heir?"

He paused, and the listener felt bound to fill the blank.

"I suppose so, sir."

"Then has it never struck you that Miss Graham—" he nearly stumbled over the name—"may not be greatly blamed in the world if she tries a game of fortune-hunting. She has everything to gain by success and nothing to lose by failure. But I would prefer that my nephew should not be the victim."

The adroit suggestion that Alice was seeking what society termed "a good establishment," that money rather than love had influenced her consent to his proposals, for a moment weighed upon the young man's heart like lead. Was it possible that even maidenly innocence and beauty had set up a golden idol! The dismay and earnest meditation pictured upon his countenance raised Luke Carbury's hopes. Skilful diplomacy once again seemed likely to pay.

But the cloud passed. Oswald recollected how invariably Alice had elected to remain in the background in Mrs. Eccles's drawing-room, how quiet and reserved she had always been, the difficulty he had had in beating down the barriers of respectful distance. And the warning she had given him on the occasion of his actual suit came anew to his ears. There was no suspicion of subterfuge in it; and scarcely was it the language of a feminine schemer in sight of her goal. Alice was pure and loyal, frank as the day-dawn, and worthy of any sacrifice of position or prospects.

"I am certain you misjudge her, sir," he answered. "There has been no plan on either side of our negotiations; I would disclaim such a meanness, and Alice too."

This was an unexpected raid into the enemy's country. It dissipated the dream of easy conquest, and aroused fresh wrath. It impeached, by implication, Luke Carbury's designs on the brewer's fortune; though of Margaret Eccles Oswald had entertained no thought at the moment of his speech.

"A lawful plan is both proper and prudent," said the old man haughtily; "you may have one opinion as to the matter, and I quite another. But the question lies in a nutshell. I consider that you have acted already very foolishly indeed. If this comes to the knowledge of Miss Eccles much prejudice may be done you. However, there is still a chance of repentance. If you will promise to drop this folly, I will do what I can to formally back up a more sensible suit. You may be comfortably settled in a few months, and have a future before you that dozens of better men will envy. If you refuse, you must just 'gang your own gait,' as the Scotch say."

It was a lengthy utterance and a formidable one.

Oswald knew from his uncle's slowness of enunciation, and from the emphasis laid upon the final sentence, that it was an ultimatum to which he had listened. Alice Graham and poverty; Margaret Eccles and wealth. That was the choice set before him. He paled, and for a second the temptation to be dishonourable obtained a hearing. But only for a second.

"It is impossible that I should obey you, uncle, greatly as I should like to," he answered; "any worldly ease must be dearly bought at the sacrifice you suggest. I cannot agree."

Luke Carbury's passion at length over-mastered him. To be balked thus was maddening. His thin, hawk-like face grew livid, his hands worked convulsively. He was not a pleasant object to look upon in this abandonment of wrath.

"Dolt! Fool! Then be a pauper and marry your pauper wife!" he hissed.

At this juncture it was a decided relief to Oswald to hear Mr. Blitterwick announced. The nephew seized the opportunity to escape.

That afternoon Luke Carbury lingered in his City office for at least half an hour beyond his usual time of retirement. The porter fancied that he must be afraid to face the fog. In reality he was absorbed in thought and quite oblivious to the advance of evening.

At intervals he broke into soliloquy.

"I'll not be defied for nothing, not I," he murmured; "and if he thinks I shall ever come round he's mistaken. But I'm sorry—sorry. He's been with me ten years, and I've got to like him. What a blockhead his father will think him! I was very different in my young days, though I had my dreams too. Janet Shairp was a pretty girl—worth a thousand of this cunning gannet, or whatever she may call herself, I'll warrant. Yet I gave Janet up because I could make money faster without being hampered. 'Get a family, get cares,' 'tis a true word all the world over. Still—I wonder what became of Janet? Some Scotch clerk's wife, very likely. I'd like to see her—but I never shall. Maybe she's dead. I shall be lonely now, without the boy—he'll have to go. I can cling to the gold—that is faithful, fortunately! Blitterwick's was a fine stroke of business!"

## CHAPTER II.

It was a year and a day later. In the interval much had necessarily happened to the hero and the heroine of our story. To put the most momentous event in the foreground, they had committed what Luke Carbury styled, when he heard of it, "the abominable folly" of getting married. They were living now in a tiny box-like cottage on the outskirts of Bradford. Oswald had obtained an appointment as clerk and cashier in a large manufactory there.

The breach between his uncle and himself had become an open and an awkward fact in a very few days after the conversation that has been chronicled. The broker had no notion of relenting, and Oswald as little of suing for grace by surrender. At Oswald's home, a quiet Kentish vicarage, not over-abundantly favoured with tithes, the news caused terrible consternation. After the perils of an exuberant boyhood had been safely surmounted, it was thought that a very level, prosperous path lay before the fortunate son. If he insisted upon destroying his chances with his own hands, it was

not likely that he would obtain much sympathy there, and tangible assistance was totally out of the question.

The disappointed clergyman came up to London, to learn particulars and exercise his influence. It was in vain. Oswald treated his parent with due respect, but was immovable. The brother was bitterly satirical, and professed to be glad to escape the burden of an idle scapegrace dependent.

"I'll have no more nephews, or nieces either, about my house," he said. "My kinsmen never did anything for me, and I'm not called upon to waste the fruit of hard work and pinching upon them."

The insolence of his manner was perhaps aggravated by the unmentioned circumstance that already he had fervent epistles in his desk from three out of the five other Carbury brothers. In some occult way they had received intelligence of the rupture, and they were sure that their own lads, of whom an assortment was at the broker's disposal, would be infinitely wiser and more obedient.

That there should be no possibility of mistake concerning his meaning, he continued :

"I'll leave my savings to a total stranger, or else to charitable purposes," he growled. "You needn't trouble to call here again, unless it's just for the pleasure of an interview, Brother Henry."

Brother Henry smiled weakly and wistfully, but exhibited no outward resentment. He was a meek man, and his cloth forbade quarrelling. But, in his gentle way, he tried the recipe of coals of fire. "We shall at any time be pleased to welcome you at Chorlton Bank, Luke," he said.

The other wished him good-bye with a cynical shrug of the shoulders, and no syllable of thanks.

Oswald was tossed upon his own resources, and found these scanty in the extreme. His uncle's sneer rankled in his breast with its near approach to realisation. If any good had been likely to come of it he might with literal truth have advertised, "Wanted, an Income."

It is always a pitiful predicament when Fortune of a sudden deserts her *protégé*. The gentleman, brought face to face with the rough winds of adversity, with no training, and no adequate armour of self-denial, in one sense is of all creatures the most miserable. Unused to work, and ashamed to beg, he is a waif upon the tide of ruthless circumstance. His hopes are high-pitched and illusionary, his expedients are vain, his sensitiveness is intense.

It was not quite as bad as all this with Oswald Carbury. But the cup of bitterness was the same, although he escaped the dregs. He had no capital; he had no special fitness for any commercial or professional post; he had expensive habits.

First, he thought of obtaining a tutor's place. But his classics had grown sadly rusty, and his stock of patience was small. The educational fancy was quickly exploded. Iron-gates of patronage shut out the Civil Service. There was left trade. And after a weary search he was engaged by Messrs. Hotchkin and Croft.

Alice Graham in her turn had suffered persecution. A complaint had been lodged against her to which Mrs. Eccles, if not her daughter, lent credence. She received a quarter's notice, and was exceedingly uncomfortable during the term.

At the end of those wretched months she yielded to her lover's solicitations, and became his wife.

"We have suffered much for each other, let us henceforth live and struggle together," Oswald had pleaded. How could she resist, if wisdom did advise delay? Oswald vowed that with Alice by his side he should have tenfold more nerve and energy for his battle. So they were very quietly married, on a soft June morning, and neither as yet regretted the bargain.

But the horizon was still sombre. The setting up of a household by two inexperienced young people is a severe test of management and caution. With the thrifty Scottish custom Alice had saved a few pounds yearly out of her earnings in Eildon Street. But these melted like snow before the sun. Oswald's income was small, and so much cheap labour was in the market that he feared to ask an advance, although he was sure that his services gave satisfaction.

The wolf was not actually at the door of their modest home; but to strained ears his distant howl was unpleasantly distinct.

It was evening, and Oswald's daily task was over. He had changed his boots and his coat, and while tea was preparing stood at the recessed window. He appeared to be watching the few passers-by, but in reality was moodily trying to pierce the veil of the future. A biting north-east wind was causing people in the street to wrap themselves more tightly in coats and cloaks, and to shiver withal. The influence of the weather seemed to have penetrated into Oswald Carbury's soul. He was in unison with its bitterest humour.

"I shouldn't wonder, Oswald, if we had a snowstorm before morning; the clouds are coming up very thickly. When the wind sinks the fall may commence," said his wife, as she uncovered the steaming urn.

He neither changed his attitude, nor made any reply. This was singular, and gave the little woman a sharp pang of dismay. Some-

thing must surely be amiss. She left the table and came to his side. The gloom on her husband's face was manifest.

"Is it anything fresh—anything worse, dear?" she queried.

"Not that I am aware of," he answered; "it is the familiar difficulty from which, I suppose, at least three-quarters of the world chronically suffers—the difficulty of making both ends meet. We are not alone in our trouble, if that is any consolation."

Oswald's tone was that of a pessimist, if his words were the words of intended solace. A shimmer of repressed tears was in Alice's eyes.

"It is a hard struggle, I know," she said, "and it may be harder yet, when—"

He understood her meaning, though no conclusion came to her sentence.

"That is what I fear," he replied. "If God gives us a family how are we to rear them? It is a problem. But let us not cross bridges until we come to them—the proverb is a wise one. Away with sadness and up with the toast."

His assumed jauntiness was a failure. His voice travelled back into its old groove of doubt and despondency.

"If only Uncle Luke had had an atom of humanity in his composition," he added.

"Say rather if you had married Miss Eccles, Oswald."

"Never. Do not imagine that for one moment, Alice; I would sooner face any trials than lose you. But Uncle Luke might have put a legacy of a thousand or so for me in his will, if only for the sake of old times."

"How do you know that he has not?"

"Very well. We should have heard of it by this time if it had occurred; no such luck!"

"Poor old man! He went off very suddenly at last. His must have been a lonely life."

"Exceedingly so. But he seldom felt it, I fancy. Gold was his idol."

"I wonder was he ever—in love?"

"Can't say. I heard him mumbling some strange stuff to himself when he was unwell once. There seemed to be a girl in the yarn, and he appeared to have given her up for the sake of his money-making. But there was no coherence about it, and that is a slight clue to build upon."

"Very; and you've not heard yet to whom his property has been left?"

"No; I haven't troubled to enquire. It's nothing to me. I expect some infirmary or blind asylum, or deaf and dumb institution, is the better for his screwing and scraping."

"And able to do more good in consequence."

"Pleasant alleviating thought for our misery," then, as if ashamed of his gloomy satire, Oswald turned, put his arm round his wife's waist, and kissed her.

"Now let us draw down the blind, light the gas, and be comfortable in defiance of care," he said.

But as he proceeded to carry the first part of his recommendation into effect, his attention was arrested by a familiar rap at the door.

"A valentine, perhaps," suggested Alice mirthfully; "it is the 14th of February, you know."

"If so it is for you, madam," he replied a minute later, and he gravely handed a letter across the table.

Alice took it and turned it over and over with puzzled surprise. It was directed in a round, clerly hand to Mrs. Alice Carbury. There could be no doubt about that. Who was the correspondent? She had few communications of any kind; and about the exterior of this one there was something mysteriously firm and formal. The postmark was London, and supplied no explanation.

"What can it be, Oswald?" she asked.

"Open it and see. That is the surest way to discover."

She obeyed the hint. And, as she read, a wild, luminous glow suffused her countenance. Her hands shook so much with her excitement that she could scarcely pass the sheet to Oswald.

"How strange!" she gasped.

It was some time before either of them could fully arrive at a comprehension of this last turn of Fortune's wheel. When they did there was scarcely any limit to the exuberance of their joy.

The epistle was a curt one, from a firm of City solicitors.

"DEAR MADAM,

"By the terms of the late Mr. Luke Carbury's will the great bulk of his estate passes to Miss Janet Shairp, some time of Glasgow; or, in the event of her decease, to any child or children of the said Janet Shairp, or to her heir-at-law. As the result of careful enquiry we find that you are, apparently, the said nearest-of-kin, and, therefore, Mr. Carbury's heir, we shall be glad to hear from you with reference to the proof of your claim.

"We have the honour to remain, dear madam,

"Obediently yours,  
Digitized by Google  
"FULLER AND FITCH."

"Miss Janet Shairst was——?"

"That was my mother's maiden-name. Mother died when I was three years old."

"Then she must have been my uncle's lost love; and, to be revenged on me he left his money unwittingly to my wife! Poor old Uncle Luke! Hoist after all with his own petard."

## The Editor's Note Book.

THE question of the housing of the poor in London is assuming such proportions that it may be hoped that something will speedily be done in the matter; but, at the same time, it is very desirable that the attention of the public should not be diverted to false issues, or to any points which are not absolutely to the purpose.

AN example of the sort of mistake I mean is to be found in the cartoon in last week's *Punch*, which, although excellent in intention and drawn with all Mr. Tenniel's dramatic power, deals nevertheless with the question almost entirely from a sentimental and altogether unpractical point of view.

IT is, for example, useless and misleading to dwell on the fact that owners of small house-property charge high rents for their wretched shanties, or that they evict non-paying tenants. So long as the supply of lodgings for the very poor is less than the demand, so long prices must be high, and it is impossible to suppose that we shall ever come, or that it is desirable that we ever should come, to the point of providing an immense system of outdoor-relief in the shape of rent-free lodging.

THESE things are as far outside the range of possible politics as are the pitiable facts that a vast number of the poorest class have, like the unhappy creatures in Mr. Tenniel's cartoon, a great many more children than they can ever hope to provide for, and can barely keep body and soul together on the starvation wages which are paid to match-box makers and the like.

THERE is this much truth in political economy, at all events. But it would be undoubtedly possible to do for the lodgers in small private houses what Lord Shaftesbury's Act did for the occupants of common lodging-houses in the way of provision of cleanliness, light, water, and drainage, while competition by the State or by the municipality would be an effectual check on the exactions of the present race of small proprietors.

ONE of the terrible facts about these poor people is that there are too many of them, and how that difficulty is to be got over is really the most serious problem which thoughtful consideration of the case presents to us. Increased and improved house accommodation it is possible, and even comparatively easy, to provide, but what permanent improvement can be hoped for when a hundred workers have to share among them wages that could only fairly support fifty? To this pass has an energetic and inventive civilisation brought us. The very improvements in the way of sanitation which make people's lives easier, and consequently longer, complicate the question by rapidly increasing the population, while the work by which most of them have to live increases slowly, if at all.

SOME day, no doubt, a statesman will arise, capable of throwing aside the traditions, the prejudices, and the trammels of party, and of dealing with the difficulty as something which, for the credit of a Christian country, must be settled. But I am afraid that if I live to see him I shall have to live to be a very old man indeed.

IN the meantime, it is to be hoped that while the condition of the very poor is made a burning question, the condition of the class immediately above them will not be overlooked. These are the people who, although poor and hard-worked enough, have still some time and inclination for amusement, and who are thoroughly grateful for any brightness which can be thrown upon their not very cheerful lives. On behalf of these, the People's Entertainment Society has been doing good work for the last five years, and Lord Folkestone, its chairman, is amply justified in asking for further public support for the good work. Subscriptions and offers of personal assistance may be sent to him at 8, Ennismore Gardens, S.W.

I HAVE received from a gentleman signing himself "Railton," after the fashion of the Town Clerk of London and members of the House of Peers, a book published at the Salvation Army Book Stores and containing last year's balance sheets of the Salvation Army, audited by a firm of chartered accountants. These gentlemen certify that General and Mrs. Booth do not draw any money for their own personal income, but omit to state whether they have any share, for services rendered, of the very considerable amounts which are charged for salaries in the various departments.

AFTER all there is no particular reason why Mr. Booth should not be paid for his work, as is the case with ministers of all other denominations, and I am perfectly willing to believe that all the members of the Booth family earn and deserve any moneys which they may be paid from the military chest of the Salvation Army. But I still think with the editor of *Truth* that the publication of a plain and simple statement of all such amounts would be useful in dispelling a good deal of prejudice, and in silencing the possibly unfair innuendoes of many scoundrels.

THE Peterborough Cathedral Restoration Committee would appear to have more faith than is usual in public bodies and individuals in this degenerate age. Their architect has discovered that the defects in the foundation of the great tower are even more serious than was at first supposed, and recommends a series of additional works at a cost of some five thousand pounds in addition to the fifty-five thousand to which the Committee already stands committed. The Committee has decided to incur this responsibility, although the total amount of subscriptions raised or promised has not by a long way reached one-third of the total amount required. The end justifies the means, I suppose, and it would therefore be rude to suggest that the Committee appears to be running into debt in rather a dashing and reckless manner.

MR. JUSTICE HAWKINS is so thorough a man of the world as well as so shrewd a judge, that it is a little difficult to understand some remarks which he is reported to have made in the course of a perjury case at the Manchester Assizes. The prisoner—who was convicted and sentenced to six months imprisonment—had committed his act of perjury in a case in the Bolton County Court, and had subsequently fallen into a neat and ingenious trap devised by the prosecutor and a friend, which brought him before Mr. Justice Hawkins.

His lordship, however, did not approve of the trick, although it undoubtedly furthered the ends of justice, and declared that "the matter would have been better investigated by the Bolton detectives than by amateur policemen, and certainly with as much fairness, and probably more." As conviction and sentence followed, the trap could not have been an unfair one, and why the prosecutor should not have done what he honestly could to help his own case, I cannot see.

IT must be obvious to everybody that the practice of wearing spectacles or eye-glasses is very largely on the increase, and many doctors assure us that the over-working of children in Board schools is sure still further to multiply the number of cases of defective sight. In this connection it is curious to read the report of an inquest on the body of John Plumley, carpenter and joiner, who drowned himself the other day at Rotherhithe. Poor Plumley had been obliged to take to spectacles in consequence of failing sight, and had been unable to obtain work in consequence, having been informed by a firm to whom he applied, that they did not employ men who could not do their work without the aid of glasses. Thereupon he retired from the struggle altogether, leaving habitual spectacle-wearers, like myself, with a general impression that he had not been very fairly treated.

AS the case of the Central News Agency against the proprietors of *Judy* is, while I write, undecided, it would be manifestly improper to express any opinion as to its probable issue. But I think that any member of the public has a perfect right to say that, when a Canadian telegram of thirty words is worked up at the office of the agency in London into an indefinite number of lines, the fact should be openly and candidly stated. If this is not done, the public is led to believe that the telegram was absolutely sent from the other side in the exact shape in which it is published, an inference which is in no sense in accordance with the truth.

THE accounts which reach us from America of Mr. Irving's first appearances are not a little uncertain and contradictory, but there can be no reasonable doubt that he has by no means taken the New York public by storm. I am inclined to think that the exaggerated puffery and blowing of trumpets which accompanied his departure from this country and heralded his arrival in America, have quite as much to do with this disappointing result as any effect which has been produced by Mr. Irving's own merits or demerits as an actor.

AND it must be confessed that Mr. Irving himself has said a good many things which were so obviously intended to tickle the national vanity as to do a good deal more harm than good.

ARTISTIC and fashionable society in New York knows quite well what goes on in London, and when Mr. Irving told the Lotus Club that Miss Mary Anderson is a reigning favourite and Edwin Booth a household word in London, he was exaggerating in a way which could deceive nobody, and which was calculated to do his own cause infinite harm with the shrewd and sensitive people of the United States.

I MAY be pardoned for again alluding to the book of my father's letters to which I referred last week. After those paragraphs had gone to press, I received a letter from a gentleman who had assisted the late Mr. Ouvry in the arrangement of his library and collection of autographs, which makes it plain that that gentleman never contemplated the publication of the letters, and that the whole responsibility in the matter rests with his executors, who have certainly shown more business 'cuteness than discretion and delicacy.

## Cookery.

### DISHES FOR PLAIN DINNERS.

#### FIRST DAY.

Savoury Batter Pudding.  
 Fillet of Beef Potatoes à la Maître d'Hôtel.  
 Stewed Carrots.  
 Baked Apple Pudding.

#### SAVOURY BATTER PUDDING.

Mix a quarter of a pound of fine Scotch oatmeal in half a pint of cold water, add to it a pint and a half of boiling milk, stir over the fire for ten minutes. Then mix in a quarter of a pound of sifted bread-crumbs, two ounces of suet finely shred, an onion finely minced, two teaspoonfuls each of marjoram and sage, half a teaspoonful of salt, a pinch of pepper, and two eggs well beaten. Rub a little lard or dripping over a Yorkshire pudding tin, into which put the pudding, and bake in a moderate oven for three-quarters of an hour. Serve with gravy, or butter-sauce flavoured with catsup.

#### FILLET OF BEEF.

There are several ways in which the undercut of the sirloin can be cooked. That in which it would go farthest as a family dish is as follows: Put one ounce of dripping into a stewpan, let it get hot, then turn the fillet about in it until brown on all sides. When this is done, put into the stewpan two onions fried a nice brown, two sprigs of thyme, half a teaspoonful of salt, the same quantity of pepper, and a gill of boiling water. Cover the stewpan closely and let the contents simmer gently for an hour, then strain off the gravy, leaving the fillet in the stewpan to keep hot. Take the fat off the gravy, which boil up and thicken with a tablespoonful of flour mixed in half a pint of water. Stir over the fire until thick, when season to taste, and add a few drops of browning. Pour this gravy into the saucepan over the fillet, let it simmer very gently for a quarter of an hour, turning the meat about occasionally.

#### POTATOES À LA MAÎTRE D'HÔTEL.

Half boil the potatoes in salted water; this done, cut them in slices the round way, about an inch and a half thick, and put them into a sauce made of a small tablespoonful of flour mixed smoothly in half a pint of water, slightly salted. This quantity of sauce will be enough for a pound of potatoes, which simmer very slowly in it for twenty minutes, when some will be mashed and some pieces left whole. A small pat of butter may be added, and a few minutes before serving the potatoes throw in a teaspoonful of finely minced parsley.

#### STEWED CARROTS.

When young, carrots need only to be thoroughly washed and cleaned with a brush. When older, after being so treated, if not perfectly clean, they must be slightly scraped, but on no account should carrots ever be peeled. Boil young carrots whole; those which are larger in quarters or eighths; young carrots take about an hour to boil, those which are older from an hour and a half to two hours. It is impossible to give the exact time for cooking carrots—like all other roots they vary in quality, and it is difficult to boil either those which are stale or of an inferior kind. After the carrots are trimmed, properly cleaned, and if necessary divided, throw them into boiling water, well salted, and let them continue steadily boiling until done. Drain the carrots, cut them into pieces about an inch long, and put them into a sauce made of flour and water, seasoned with salt and pepper, the thickness of ordinary melted butter, and let them simmer for ten minutes. Then throw in a few minced capers, previously scalded, and having added a small piece of butter, serve, with fried bread, in a tureen.

#### BAKED APPLE PUDDING.

The recipes for both baked and boiled apple-pudding will be found in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 131.

#### SECOND DAY.

Dumplings with Gravy.  
 Roasted Sirloin. Browned Potatoes.  
 Greens.  
 Batter Pudding with Fruit Sauce.

#### DUMPLINGS WITH GRAVY.

Shred very finely a quarter of a pound of beef-suet, mix it with half a pound of flour and a gill of cold water into a smooth paste. Pepper and salt may be used, a small quantity of minced parsley also, and some people relish a little grated cheese.

The great point to observe, if it is desired to make these dumplings popular, is to have them light, free from lumps of fat, and delicate both in flavour and appearance. Roll pieces of the paste into balls about the size of a chestnut, and drop them one by one into a saucepan of boiling water, slightly salted. Let them boil rapidly for twelve to fifteen minutes, take out of the saucepan with a skimmer, put them in a tureen or vegetable-dish, and pour over them a pint of gravy, which may be made quickly and cheaply with a tin of Nelson's Extract of Meat, costing fourpence. Parsley-sauce, for those who like it, makes a nice change.

### ROASTED SIRLOIN.

There is a great difference of opinion as to the best method of roasting, and many people consider that meat is never fit to eat unless roasted before an open range. This we think to be rather a matter of prejudice than of fact, and it is certain that the old-fashioned open range is troublesome to manage, and consumes a great quantity of fuel.

A large and bright fire must be ready when the meat is put down; and the great art of roasting well by this method is to maintain the fire thus during the whole process, small pieces of coal being added from time to time to keep it up.

It is always a good plan to use a hastener, which must be bright, so as to radiate the heat, and to let it stand before the fire to get hot before the joint is put down. If possible, some dripping should be made hot in the pan, so that the basting may commence early.

As the heat of the fire will be greater at the bottom than at the top, the thickest part of the meat must be downwards. The hook having been passed through the thin end of the joint, it is placed on the jack, or failing this, is attached to a ball of worsted, and put as near the fire as possible. The object of thus applying a great degree of heat to the meat is, by the rapid action of it to form a sort of skin which will prevent the gravy running out. In about ten minutes draw the meat about a foot from the fire, and baste with the hot dripping every ten minutes.

The old rule of a quarter of an hour to a pound of beef or mutton is a good one. If the fire is brisk, a hastener used, and the meat of fine quality, an hour and forty minutes will be sufficient to roast a leg of mutton weighing eight pounds, and an hour and a half a joint of beef of that weight. When the joint begins to give out little jets of steam, it is a sign that the meat is nearly done.

When the meat comes in from the butcher carefully examine it, especially in summer, lest flies have attacked it, and always wipe it well with a clean, wet cloth. If there is the slightest degree of staleness use a little vinegar in the water. Before putting the meat to the fire, rub it well over with salt, a little pepper, and flour. The salt improves the flavour of the meat, and does not, as some people suppose, cause the gravy to run out. When meat has been frozen, it will, after being gently thawed, take less time than given above.

As to roasting in a closed range, when the oven is not properly ventilated air cannot circulate round the joint, and it acquires a disagreeable and unwholesome flavour. The principle on which the ovens of Flavel's Patent Kitcheners are ventilated, is the correct one.

The greatest care must be taken to keep the roasting-oven clean. If fat is allowed to remain from day to day in the oven, it burns, and impregnates the meat with a most unpleasant and unwholesome odour.

The dripping-pan should be double, and the under one must contain water. The meat should be placed on a stand like a gridiron, bone side uppermost. If it is not possible to roast the meat rapidly for a short time, as in the case of an open fire, put it into a kettle of boiling water, and boil it rapidly for five minutes. Dry in a cloth on taking out of the kettle, have hot fat in the dripping-pan, baste, and roast by the usual scale.

Experience has shown that in a good gas-oven, cooking of all sorts, and especially roasting, can be most successfully done. Two faults are common in roasting by gas—the meat either is sodden so that one can hardly tell if it is roasted or stewed, or it is dried up and even burned on the outside. Sometimes the fault can be referred to the stove being of inferior action, but more frequently to a want of knowing how to regulate the gas. Some stoves cook rapidly, and unless the gas is kept low, things must be spoiled. Sometimes the supply of gas is insufficient, and in this case nothing can be properly done. The points, therefore, to study, are how to regulate the heat, and to understand the precise action of the particular stove with which we have to work.

Gas-stoves lined with a non-conducting substance (Leoni's patent) have the advantage of retaining and radiating the heat, and cooking done by them cannot be surpassed. In stoves of this maker it is not necessary to baste meat whilst roasting. It is a good plan to put hot fat over such things as poultry, game, and small joints of meat before suspending them in the oven. Cooking should go on rapidly at first, as by other methods of roasting, the heat being checked in about ten minutes.

The gravy for roast beef should be clear; the old-fashioned plan of making it in the pan after the joint is roasted is objectionable. Not only is there a risk of having greasy gravy, but unless it is expeditiously made, the meat, meanwhile, gets cold. The water in which vegetables have been boiled, though meat stock is to be preferred, with the addition of a little of the deposit from beneath dripping, is excellent for joints. In no case should either gravy or water be poured over a joint. Many cooks use only the latter, with a little salt, and thus sodden the meat. Although it is not desirable to make gravy in the pan, the dripping must be carefully saved. After pouring the contents of the pan into a basin, rinse it out with a little hot water, and add it to the dripping; thus you prepare one day a valuable gravy for the next dinner.

#### BROWNED POTATOES.

Prepare the potatoes in the usual way, and boil or steam them for a quarter of an hour, if of average size; if small, somewhat less time.



Drain the potatoes, put them in a baking-dish with some dripping, bake them in a quick oven, basting occasionally, for forty minutes, or until they are perfectly brown. They must, when done, be dry and free from fat. If there is no pudding in the dripping-pan, the potatoes can be browned under the meat, and indeed are better than when baked. Potatoes for browning should always be parboiled, as if baked raw the outer crust is indigestible.

#### GREENS, CABBAGES, ETC.

The first thing to do is thoroughly to wash the greens in order to get out all insects; throw them into plenty of water with the chill off, but do not put salt, as this kills the insects and prevents them coming out. Use several waters, taking care that all sand and earth are removed, and that the vegetable is perfectly cleansed. The pot in which green vegetables are to be boiled must be scrupulously clean, if it is not so the colour of them will be spoiled, and the smell of them whilst cooking be most disagreeable. The water should have salt, in the proportion of one ounce to two quarts. When it boils throw in the greens, press them down, cover the saucepan with its lid until on the point of boiling, then take it off, and carefully remove the scum, keeping the saucepan uncovered until the greens are done. We particularly desire to press upon cooks the fact that if these simple directions are observed there is no need to use soda in order to preserve the colour. Soda, indeed, destroys both the flavour and value of green vegetables, because it draws their fine properties into the water. The time green vegetables take to cook depends upon their age and quality, and it varies from ten to thirty minutes.

#### BATTER PUDDING.

The great secret of making a light batter-pudding lies in mixing the flour very thoroughly with water before adding the milk, and in well beating the yolks and whites of the eggs separately. Mix half a pound of fine flour with a gill of cold water, adding by degrees, so as to keep the batter smooth and free from lumps, a pint of new milk. Stir in the yolks of two eggs, a pinch of salt, and when ready to boil the pudding, the whites beaten to a strong froth. Grease a basin thoroughly, pour the batter into it, cover with a cloth, and steam or boil the pudding, not covering it with water, for an hour and a quarter.

When convenient, plain copper moulds, such as are used for Charlotte Russe, are best for batter-puddings. When the pudding is done, take off the cloth, let it stand a few minutes; run round the edge with a knife; it will then turn out without difficulty.

Sauce may be made by stirring jam into plain butter-sauce, or apples may be stewed and used in the same way. Prune-sauce goes well with batter-pudding, and may be made like the above, or the fruit can be simply stewed with sugar and lemon-juice, so as to have plenty of syrup.

### About Eyes.

THE eye shows character. The eyes of great warriors have almost always been grey, their brows lowering like thunderclouds. Inventors have large eyes, very full. Philosophers, the most illustrious, have large and deep-set eyes. The poets all have large, full eyes; and musicians' eyes are large and lustrous. Buffon considers that the most beautiful eyes are the black and blue. We think we have seen black and blue eyes that were far from beautiful. Byron says the gazelle will weep at the sound of music. The gazelle's eyes have been called the most beautiful in the world. Mary Queen of Scots had liquid grey eyes. Dark eyes show power, light eyes gentleness, and grey eyes sweetness. There is great magnetic power in the eyes of several of the lower animals. The lion's, the tiger's, and the serpent's eyes are all magnetic. It is well known the serpent will charm birds that are flying above it, until in great circles they will sweep down to the destruction that awaits them. A friend of the writer, a doctor, was one day walking in the fields, when he saw an adder lying on a rock. He drew near to examine it, and presently looked at its eyes. He was attracted by their great beauty, and involuntarily stepped forward two or three steps. Beautiful light flowed from them and seemed to bathe the very coils of the serpent. Gradually he drew close, until just as he was almost within the reptile's reach, he fell, feeling, as he said afterwards, as though he had been struck by a stone. When he became conscious his head was in a friend's lap. His first words were: "Who struck me?" "No one struck you, doctor. I saw you were charmed by the snake, and I struck it with a stone." He had struck the snake, and the doctor had felt the blow.

### A Story of Gortschakoff.

WHEN the Russian Nihilist Hartmann's extradition was refused by France, the Czar Alexander II. became very much incensed, and ordered M. de Giers to forward an angry protest to the French Government. General Gortschakoff, then very old and ill, caused himself to be carried to the Winter Palace, and after a long and stormy interview

with the Czar, succeeded in correcting the arrogant tone of the imperial note. M. de Jomini was entrusted with the getting up of a new one, but the German ambassador managed to impress on the Czar's mind the notion that it was too conciliatory in terms. So Alexander II. wrote on the margin, with his own hand, some observations destructive of all the friendly spirit of the diplomatic instrument. Gortschakoff could not stand it any longer. "Tell the Czar," he said to his staff-officer, "that I cannot put my name at the foot of an historical document that will be harmful to a country I served devotedly for more than sixty years. I am now too weak to fight against my master's will, yet strong enough to be able to send in my resignation." "Tell Gortschakoff," Alexander replied, "that he will die, as he has lived, in the skin of the most stubborn being; and be it done as he wishes!"

## Home-Made Christmas Boxes.

#### PART II.

PRESENTS may be articles for personal use, or they may be for domestic purposes, for the good of the household generally. These divisions may be subdivided, and under both heads be looked at as useful or as ornamental.

LADIES have so many wants, or imagine that they have, that no difficulty is ever experienced in designing offerings for them. The really embarrassing question for Christmas is what to give a gentleman. Slippers and smoking-caps are always in favour, and since embroidery was revived, cigarette-cases worked on leather generally accompany the caps; but the making-up of a case, to be so convenient as to be acceptable, presents an insuperable difficulty to an amateur. To send the work to a manufacturer to be completed is to incur expense, the limit of which it is impossible to calculate beforehand.

WHITE silk evening-ties are one of the most acceptable presents to prepare for young gentlemen. Satin is only worn by a few exquisites, and it is a most unmanageable material. Surah is better, and Indian silk can be recommended. The ties must be cut the long way of the silk, so that a piece of thirty-two inches long will make several, according to the width of the material. As the ties are to be washed, the sides require hemming with a silk thread. The finish of the end is a difficulty, as in cutting to a point two short cross-cut hems present themselves. Fold over the silk at the ends before cutting, and press with a warm iron, marking the lines the hems will take. Cut the surplus away and hem at once, being careful not to stretch the hem. The folding of the tie can be done by copying the width of a shop-made one, and pressing the folds with an iron.

A HANDKERCHIEF-CASE answers for either lady or gentleman. A square of silk, satin, or plush, measuring more, but not less than thirteen inches. A lining cut the same size, sewed at three sides and turned inside out, the fourth side being sewed with a slip stitch. The edge may be finished by a lace border, a silk cord, or fringe. Dry perfume is shaken in before closing the last side, violet, orris-root, patchouli, etc., are favourite powders. At present terebene, which has a pleasant woody smell, being made from the pinewood, is the reigning favourite in dressing-rooms. Three corners of the square are brought to meet in the centre, and passed about half an inch over each other, tacked, and a button sewed on. The fourth makes a flap to close the case, and the loop for the button is worked on it. As gentlemen's handkerchiefs are larger than ladies', their size must be particularly remembered when cutting the square.

WASTE-PAPER baskets are such a drawing-room necessity, especially in summer, that their decoration has become an artistic question. The lining may be of sateen, silk, cashmere, satin—in fact, to have a pretty colour is more important than a rich material. A fringe of coloured wool round the top gives the basket an air of elegance. Remains of crewels or Berlin wool can be made into little tassels, mingling the various colours, so that even a few threads left over from a piece of embroidery can be turned to account and worked in.

THE decorated bellows is now a household feature, and, whether much used or not, a pair looks pretty hanging beside the fireplace. Since the fashion of applying home ornaments arose the supply of undecorated bellows to be had cheap is abundant. With plain wooden sides they can be bought for about a shilling each. The simplest ornament is to paint a little flower or a few leaves on each side. To stain the wood a darker colour before beginning to paint is sometimes preferred. Others paint the groundwork with a uniform colour, generally a neutral tint as best showing the brighter shades of the flowers. Covering the sides of the bellows with plush, silk, silk sheeting, or velvet upon which embroidery has been wrought, is the highest class of ornament, but few amateurs are able to accomplish the covering neatly for themselves, which is a great drawback for those who have no skilful workman near at hand.

THE ordinary wooden milking-stool, which can be procured at any country fair or market, is found to be a charming footstool when

stained and decorated, and lines of red, yellow, with gold—Judson's gold paint answers very well—glorify the milking-stool almost out of all recognition. Wooden pails, lined and painted, are so well known at bazaars that all our readers must be already familiar with them. American flour-tubs, having lids, make the best work-boxes, but require to be lined.

A WATERPROOF-SACHEL is one of the most acceptable offerings to a lady in this our very changeable climate. The tidy little cases in which the lighter cloaks are folded up when sold are most useful and compact, if there be abundance of time at disposal either to take the cloak out or put it in again. But very neat folding being absolutely essential, it follows that the case must be often thrown aside, and the cloak taken out, and carried in a strap or hanging loose. Even leather has its inconvenience, especially if the gloves be dainty, for a lady finds the strap and its buckle not all that could be desired. The satchel resembles a muff in which no interlining is used. It is not the plain muff of our grandmothers, but the ornamental modern trifle which is cased and has a frill at each end. Into the casings elastic is run which confines the cloak, the latter being folded and run through, appearing at each end. Strings of ribbon or silk-cord are sewed on by which to carry the satchel. A small pocket for handkerchief or railway-ticket can be inserted at the seam which closes up the case. The materials used are from the richest silk to the cheapest chintz. The lady who, like John Gilpin's spouse, is on pleasure bent, yet has a frugal mind, can carry her cloak in a satchel and leave it in the entrance-hall when she makes a morning-call; or she may even carry it in her hand to a drawing-room meeting, when velvet or satin has been pressed into her service.

DESCENDING through a scale of velveteen, serge, cashmere, etc., lowly chintz may be reached—a fragment rescued from a lawn-tennis costume and turned out as a beautiful addition to the dress itself. Three-quarters of a yard of material suffices. Sew it up into cylindrical form. Fold in at the two ends enough to make a frill at each, leaving about twelve inches in the centre. Sew to the inner edges of the frills twelve inches wide of lining for the centre. Run two narrow casings at each side of the middle, and put elastic in to draw in the frills, instead of casing with thread only. Strings are a matter of taste, but a few bows of ribbon, jet ornaments, some lace, or at Christmas-time a spray of holly, give a waterproof-satchel a gay appearance.

ECONOMICAL ruffles and lace collars have already been described. A higher-class ruff for the neck, costing more money, is known by a variety of names, the "Marie Stuart," the "Raleigh," or the "Medici." It is made in the form of a ruching, quilled in double box-quills, and a pearl bead sewed at each point where the lace is brought together. Less than three yards of lace will not admit of being quilled double, cut in two lengths of a yard and a half each. Run the lace together at the edges, quill in the centre, meet the top of each pleat in the middle, and sew on a pearl bead. Single quills may be tacked in the same way, but are rather formal and severe in character.

A YARD of material is required for a tennis-apron, and, if the material be narrow, two breadths will be absolutely essential, the tennis-apron being always made of ample proportions. Pockets for the balls are made either by turning up a piece of the material, ornamenting it, and sewing it down, or by laying on round, diamond-shaped, or square pockets at the centre or sides. The apron is gathered to a band, which requires to be substantial since it became the fashion to have a hook sewed at the left side for hanging the racket on.

BAZAAR aprons are more airy creations, and useful at every season. Bandanna handkerchiefs have had their day, and now look loud and vulgar. White muslin, with lace borders and knots of coloured ribbons on the pockets and at the bib-corners, are always fresh and pleasant to the eye. They have, also, one valuable advantage of making a half-worn dress look many degrees better, while the strong-coloured handkerchiefs often disfigure dresses.

No mention has been made of old-familiar Christmas-boxes, such as cushions, chair-backs, book-markers, screens, needle-cases, or, as they used to be called, "housewives." Neither have pincushions been even alluded to, for all these are so well known that the difficulty is not so much to remember them as to emancipate one's mind from subjection to the stereotyped forms, and courageously try to produce something newer and more in accordance with modern ideas.

## A Conscientious Jury.

AT a little backwoods settlement in Vancouver's Island, an Indian had been seen stealing potatoes from a farm, belonging to Mr. Sproat, the local justice, one day, and in order to frighten this Indian, the man in charge, who was a Western backwoodsman, fired his gun vaguely in the direction of the potato field. To his astonishment he found that he had shot the native dead. An inquest had of course to be held. The woodsmen did not look upon a slain Indian as a very

great affair, and several came to Mr. Sproat and said: "You are not going to trouble Henry about this, are you, sir?" Mr. Sproat, being not only the man's master, but also a magistrate, had to reply that however much he felt for the man's misfortune, he must let the law take its course. But where was a surgeon to be found to make the post-mortem examination? A careworn-looking man stepped off a pile of lumber where he was working, and said he was a surgeon. This statement being naturally received with some hesitation, he produced from an old army chest his commission, his degree, and ample proof of not only having been a medical man, but of once having been a staff-surgeon. He performed the post-mortem, and soon produced a shot from the lung and proved that the Indian had died from gunshot wounds in the chest. Other evidence was forthcoming, one of the witnesses testifying that the prisoner had said: "Jack, I've shot an Indian."

The "judge" laid down the law to the jury, which was composed of twelve of the most intelligent of the men, and they were sent into another room to consider their verdict. It was nearly half an hour before they returned. The foreman then said: "We find that the Indian was worried by a dog?" "A what?" the judge exclaimed. "Worried by a dog, sir," said another jurymen, thinking that the foreman had not spoken plainly. Assuming a proper expression of magisterial gravity, his worship pointed out to the jury the incompatibility of their verdict with the evidence, and again went over the points of the case, and calling their particular attention to the medical evidence, and to the production by the doctor of the shot found in the body of the Indian, he again dismissed them to their room, begging them to come back with a verdict reasonably connected with the facts. They remained away longer than before. When they at last returned, the judge drew a paper towards him to record their finding. "Now, men, what do you say?" Their decisive answer was: "We say he was killed by falling over a cliff." The judge shuffled his papers together, and told the jury they might go to their work, and he would return a verdict for them himself. For a full mile in every direction from where the dead body was found, the country was as level as a table.

This jury was not so conscientious as another in the same part of the world, composed of the friends of some people accused of stealing pork: "We find the defendants Not Guilty; but we believe they hooked the pork."

## Household Gardening.

WE last week referred to the seasonable practice of making alterations in gardens, suggested that these are not necessarily and invariably improvements, enforced the importance of thought and caution in dealing with trees, and endeavoured to derive a lesson from Nature in furnishing attractively those parts of a garden that are not unfrequently disappointing. Let what was said be well considered by all who are interested, so that the whole matter may be fully comprehended, and we will, in due time, return to the subject of garden improvement. In the meantime some matters of more immediate importance must have attention.

### FLOWER-BEDS IN WINTER.

Summer flowers are over now, and the plants are dead or dying. At once clear them away, as decay is obnoxious. Empty beds neatly dug, and all clean around them, whether grass or gravel, are cheerful in comparison with shapeless masses of dismal occupants which have run their course and done their duty above ground; their right place now is below it, and they will do their duty there not less effectively, in enriching the land.

### THE DISPOSAL OF RUBBISH.

In small gardens where every part is fully exposed to view it is often a source of perplexity to know what to do with the leaves, weeds, and decaying plants that are so unattractive. There is no obscure corner in which they can be stowed, and therefore a rubbish-heap cannot be formed without being more or less unsightly.

There are only two ways in which garden refuse can be disposed of, and yet utilised—namely, by burying and burning; bury, therefore, all that is of a soft, succulent nature that will decay in a few months, and burn, when dry, all that is of a hard, woody character, and not amenable to ready decomposition.

As an example of what we have referred to as "soft" plants, we will take a bed of Geraniums.

The way to dispose of the plants under the circumstances indicated, is to place them at the least nine inches below the surface of the soil.

If the bed be very long, take out the soil across one end, forming a trench eighteen inches deep and the same in width, and wheel the soil to the other end of the bed, but not placing it on it; in fact if there is not more than a barrow full it may remain in the barrow.

In the trench place a layer of the old dead or dying Geraniums, chopping them up with the spade and treading them down closely. Now form another trench exactly of the same size as the first, and place the soil on the plants, making it level, then place in more plants, and so continue trenching and burying the refuse until the other end of the bed is reached; the soil first taken out will fill the last trench, and we have a

bed thoroughly dug, with a layer of vegetation below that will steadily decay, and give to the soil what was taken out of it by the preceding crop.

By this practice the soil in the bed will be necessarily raised higher than before, but if it is made level, and the edges neatly smoothed with a clean spade, the bed will look better rather than worse for the change. The soil will, however, gradually settle, yet will be increased in richness and in bulk by the matter that has been added.

All kinds of plants and flowers that can be readily chopped up with the spade may be treated as directed with undoubted advantage to the soil and the appearance of the garden.

Verbenas, Petunias, Heliotropes, Marigolds, Stocks, Asters, Nasturtiums, and nearly all annuals may be thus disposed of when there is no convenient place for a rubbish-heap in which the plants can decay before they are used as manure, and even then it is a question if the first-named practice is not the best.

Hard refuse which will not decay readily consists of the trimmings of hedges, the prunings of Roses or fruit trees, and the woody stems of such plants as Phloxes and Sunflowers. All such matter should be burnt on a favourable occasion, when the weather is calm and the material dry; the resulting ash is of great manurial value, being admirable for scattering over seeds when they are sown, and for mixing with soil for potting purposes.

#### GARDEN ANEMONES.

Mention was made last week of these beautiful flowers as flourishing even under trees. They will do so, but the finer varieties deserve the best positions that can be afforded them; and no hardy flowers in cultivation produce a more beautiful effect than do these when grown in masses.

There are, perhaps, some flower-loving readers who are not acquainted with these handsome flowers. In Carters' "Vade Mecum," a group may be seen illustrated, and if the reader imagines the colours to be crimson, scarlet, purple, glossy and rich, also nearly white varieties with almost black discs, some conception will be formed of the beauty of these Anemones. Yet the tubers of this fine Empress variety may be purchased for a shilling a dozen, or six shillings a hundred.

The present is the time for planting. Make the soil light and free by digging it with a fork, adding gritty matter of any kind, such as road-sweepings, if the land is heavy.

When the surface is made quite level, draw drills five inches apart and two inches deep, and scatter in them some sand to the depth of a quarter of an inch, on which place the tubers two or three inches apart, just covering them with sand, then level in the soil and the work is done.

It is very essential that the tubers be placed right side upwards, and this is not determinable at a glance; still, if they are closely examined, an incipient crown may be seen from which growth will issue. Let attention be paid to this point and all will be well.

If clumps are required in borders rather than masses in beds, plant from six to a dozen tubers as above described, disposing them two inches apart, inserting a label or neat peg with each clump to mark its position.

If a layer of cocoa-nut fibre refuse be spread on the surface of the soil in which the tubers are planted, the beds and borders will have a neater appearance, and the Anemone roots will be the safer by the protection afforded them.

#### THE GLORY OF THE SNOW.

This is a pretty and expressive name for one of the most charming of hardy bulbous plants that has ever been introduced to British gardens.

Its botanical name is *Chionodoxa Lucilie*, and the plant will be new to the majority of readers of these notes. It is a comparatively fresh arrival in this country, yet it has been here long enough to become a general favourite with florists; and it is now, moreover, so plentiful that the price of bulbs is no longer prohibitive.

The popular name, Glory of the Snow, refers to the hardness of the plant and the beauty of its flowers, as like Snowdrops, they are often seen pushing their way through the snow; but while the Snowdrops are white, the flowers of the *Chionodoxa* are of the most charming cerulean blue imaginable.

The plants only grow a few inches high, their flower-spikes being seldom more than six inches long, and the single star-shaped blooms, an inch in diameter, when seen in masses are invariably admired.

The bulbs may be planted precisely as recommended for Anemones, and they are sure to grow and flower freely.

They are also admirably adapted for planting on grass, such as near the margins of lawns, as if they had crept from the border, and, if naturalised in such places, they appear, if possible, additionally attractive, while the grass keeps the flowers clean, displaying them to the best advantage.

During the past few years, either by accident or design, bulbs of *Scillas* have been substituted for those of the plant under notice, but there is no difficulty now in obtaining the true Glory of the Snow from vendors of repute, and no one can err by planting them.

They may also be grown and flowered in pots, but, like Snowdrops, must always be kept cool and have abundance of light and air, heat and a close atmosphere being fatal to their progress; a cold frame, therefore, affords all the protection they need, but they are best planted in beds, borders, or lawns.

#### SNOWDROPS.

Bulbs of these ever-welcome flowers may still be planted, wherever they may be required to flower. But there must be no delay, and on the first fine day that occurs the work should be completed. They may be inserted exactly as advised above, only put closer together; indeed, for producing the best effect, Snowdrops cannot be planted too thickly. Associated with the *Chionodoxa* or *Scilla Amœna*, no combination can be more pleasing. There are double and single varieties of the Snowdrop, and although the flowers of the former are larger and more massive, they are not quite so pure nor so elegant as the smaller single form with its gracefully-nodding blooms.

## Correspondence.

#### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

#### QUESTION.

BERTIE L. will be obliged if a correspondent can give him the words of a poem commencing, "Life is like a pack of cards."

#### ANSWERS.

A. G.—You will find all information as to painting on satin and glass in articles on those subjects in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, Nos. 32, 39, and 106. Your handwriting is good.

C. A. H. S.—Many thanks for the anecdote of your brown spaniel. We will use it, with pleasure, as soon as opportunity offers.

DIETITIAN.—By way of further answer to your question, we quote from the pages of the *Lancet* a sound opinion on the form of diet you are anxious to adopt: "Wheatmeal, oatmeal, and lentils are eminently nutritious foods, but it would not be advantageous to feed on them alone. Their drawbacks consist in the excess of insoluble residue they contain, and the amount of fat required to be taken with them in order to bring them up to the standard of a "mixed" diet. Besides this, there are many who are unable to digest large quantities of them. Vegetarians are persons with whom this form of diet agrees, but physicians see in the course of their practice many who have done themselves injury by making the attempt. Unfortunately these cases are not reported, whilst the successful ones are, so that the public has no means of founding a true basis of opinion in the matter."

E. G. W.—Blackberries should be preserved in the same way as other small fruit, that is, boiled for half an hour before the sugar is added. This done, boiling should continue until the preserve will set. Brandy is an unnecessary addition, and, as you have found from experience, will not help to keep jam which has not been well made. If fermentation has commenced, you must consider the jam lost; but if it is merely mouldy, take off the top from each pot, and reboil the whole for an hour. A little more sugar may, perhaps, be desirable.

F. ALEXANDER.—We are glad to have your reminder, and the subject of your letter shall have attention in an early issue. There is no doubt whatever that the grubs that you describe are the larvæ of a species of the Crane Fly (*Tipula*), commonly known as the Daddy Long Legs. We have your former letter and note you have an entomological son; you, therefore, must leave him to determine the species; but it is, in all probability, *Tipula oberacca*.

INTERESTED.—There is a popular tradition that Deacon Brodie invented our present instrument of execution, and was the first to suffer by it for robbing the Excise Office at Edinburgh.

LEGEND.—The old-world story is told in an essay by Benjamin Franklin, entitled, "The Art of Procuring Pleasant Dreams." The author says: "It is recorded of Methusalem, who, being the longest liver, may be supposed to have best preserved his health, that he slept always in the open air; for, when he had lived five hundred years, an angel said to him: 'Arise, Methusalem, and build thee an house, for thou shalt live yet five hundred years longer.' But Methusalem answered and said: 'If I am to live but five hundred years longer, it is not worth while to build me an house; I will sleep in the air as I have been used to do.'"

LETTER.—Sitting round the fire, while chestnuts are roasting, is not a bad occupation. You can tell the children stories, or read aloud to them meanwhile. If they are older than mere children, it is no use our suggesting what they are to do, as we do not know them.

MARIE LOUISE.—Such employment is most difficult to procure. We are sorry that we cannot help you.

O. B. B.—The version you enquire for of the Christmas Carol, which is still popular in the Midland Counties, is as follows :

As I sat on a sunny bank  
On Christmas Day, in the morning,  
I saw three ships come sailing by,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.  
And who do you think were in those ships  
But Joseph and his fair lady ;  
He did whistle and she did sing,  
And all the bells on earth did ring,  
For joy, our Saviour he was born,  
On Christmas Day in the morning.

SEARCH-WARRANT.—As you are so out of the way of books, we copy for you the poem you want. It is by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and is entitled, "A Woman's Shortcomings."

She has laughed as softly as if she sighed,  
She has counted six, and over,  
Of a purse well filled, and a heart well tried—  
Oh, each a worthy lover !  
They "give her time"; for her soul must slip  
Where the world has set the grooving ;  
She will lie to none with her fair red lip,  
But love seeks truer loving.

She trembles her fan in a sweetness dumb,  
As her thoughts were beyond recalling,  
With a glance for one, and a glance for some,  
From her eyelids rising and falling ;  
Speaks common words with a blushing air,  
Hears bold words, unrepenting ;  
But her silence says, what she never will swear,  
And love seeks better loving.

Go, lady, lean to the night-guitar,  
And drop a smile to the bringer,  
Then smile as sweetly, when he is far,  
At the voice of an in-door singer.  
Bask tenderly beneath tender eyes ;  
Glance lightly, on their removing ;  
And join new vows to old perjuries—  
But dare not call it loving.

Unless you can think, when the song is done,  
No other is soft in the rhythm ;  
Unless you can feel, when left by one,  
That all men else go with him ;  
Unless you can know, when unpraised by his breath,  
That your beauty itself wants proving ;  
Unless you can swear, "For life, for death !"—  
Oh, fear to call it loving !

Unless you can muse in a crowd all day,  
On the absent face that fixed you ;  
Unless you can love, as the angels may,  
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you ;  
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast,  
Through behaving and unbehaving ;  
Unless you can die when the dream is past—  
Oh, never call it loving !

SPECULATION.—There are two classes of gas-meters, the wet and the dry. The wet meter is composed of an outer box, about three-fifths filled with water. Within this is a revolving four-chambered drum, each chamber being capable of containing a definite quantity of gas which is admitted through a pipe in the centre of the meter, and, owing to the arrangement of the partitions of the chambers, causes the drum to maintain a constant revolution. This sets in motion a train of wheels, carrying the hands over the dials, which mark the quantity of gas consumed. The dry meter consists of two or three chambers each divided by a flexible partition or diaphragm, by the motion of which the capacity on one side is diminished, while that on the other is increased. By means of slide-valves, like those of a steam-engine, worked by the movement of the diaphragms, the gas to be measured passes alternately in and out of each space. The contractions and expansions set in motion the clockwork, which marks the rate of consumption. The diaphragms in all the chambers are so connected that they move in concert.

T. M.—Remuneration is given.

T. T. (Glasgow).—"Management of the Poultry Yard," by James Long, 1s., L. Upcott Gill, and "Profitable and Ornamental Poultry," H. Piper, 1s., Groombridge and Sons, are useful and trustworthy books. "Tegetmeier's Poultry Book" is a handsome volume, with numerous coloured illustrations, 1s. 1s., Routledge.

WHAT'S IN A NAME.—Double Christian-names, if used at all, were rare in England until quite late in the eighteenth century.

XXX.—1. "The Green Bag Inquiry" took its name from a green bag, full of documents relating to alleged seditions, which was laid before Parliament by Lord Sidmouth, February, 1817. Secret committees presented their reports, 19th February ; and Bills were brought in on the 21st to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and prohibit the seditious meetings which were then frequent. 2. "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace;" speech of George Washington to both Houses of Congress, January 8, 1790. The Latin original runs, "Si vis pacem para bellum."

## Puzzles for Prizes.

### RULES.

1. Answers should be written on one side of the paper only, and should be posted so as to reach the office, 24, Great New Street, Fetter Lane, E.C., by the first delivery on the Tuesday after date of publication. Envelopes must be addressed, "The Puzzle Editor," and each answer must bear the nom de plume of the writer legibly written on the top of the first sheet.

2. A First Prize of TEN SHILLINGS and a Second Prize of FIVE SHILLINGS will be awarded each week to the best and second-best answers respectively to the two Puzzles set. The Puzzle Editor reserves, however, the right of withholding either the First or Second Prize, or both, if, in his opinion, the answers received should not come up to the required standard of merit.

3. No winner of a First Prize will be eligible for another Prize during the same

quarter. A winner of a Second Prize will be eligible for another Second Prize in the same quarter, but not for a First Prize.

4. Every Prize-winner must consent to send his or her name and address for publication.

5. The Puzzle Editor's decision is to be taken as final.

## PUZZLES.

### 1. Five Metagrams.

As most of our readers are aware, a Metagram is a Logograph, in which the initial is changed again and again, so as to produce a series of words of divers meanings. The following is an example :

Of letters four I am composed,  
A man of wisdom great ;  
And sometimes also I am used  
A kind of plant to state.

But now, if you will change my head,  
Part of a book am I ;  
And likewise an attendant young  
In me you will deary.

Change once again, and then you will  
A furious passion see ;  
And I sincerely hope, my friends,  
You'll ne'er get into me.

Another change will plainly show  
I am remuneration,  
Earned by all grades of working men  
Throughout the British nation.

Renew my head once more, and then  
A prison I appear,  
From which sweet sounds oft issue forth,  
That pleasant are to hear.

Answer—Sage, page, rage, wage, cage.

The first task will be to compose Five Metagrams, either in poetry or prose. The answers must be distinctly written.

### 2. An Historical Mental Picture.

A city was held by a small garrison, and was in imminent danger of yielding to its besiegers unless speedily relieved. A brilliant scheme of relief was planned and carried out. Three thousand picked men were assembled, and headed by a veteran officer, marched during the night through ten miles of sea, the average depth being four or five feet, while the tide rose at least ten feet, and the bottom was muddy and treacherous, and traversed by three deep channels. The leader plunged gallantly into the waves, followed by his army, each man carrying on his head a sack containing biscuit and powder. The water was never lower than the breast, often higher than the shoulder, yet that adventurous band pursued their midnight march for five hours, sometimes swimming for their lives, and before the day had dawned set foot on dry land, and triumphantly accomplished their project of relief.

When did this incident take place, who was the leader, and what was the town?

### Puzzles in No. 131.

The Answers to these Puzzles being so few in number that there was practically no competition, no Prizes will be awarded this week.

The Winner of Second Prize in No. 127, was Miss Annie Faldo Neal, 179, Hornsey Road, Holloway ("Maiblume").

The answer to the Diagonal Puzzle is as follows :

B	O	R	D	E	R	E	R
B	E	W	I	L	D	E	R
G	R	A	N	T	H	A	M
C	R	O	U	C	H	E	R
V	E	S	T	M	E	N	T
F	R	E	T	W	O	R	K
E	L	O	Q	U	E	N	T
F	I	L	A	M	E	N	T

Beaumont—Fletcher.

OUT OF THE RUNNING.—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize : No. 120.—1st Prize, "Dranssem" ; 2nd Prize, "Alice." No. 121.—1st Prize, "Achilles" ; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 122.—1st Prize, "Midnight Oil" ; 2nd Prize, "Stella." No. 123.—1st Prize, "Zyx" ; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 124.—1st Prize, "Ferdinando" ; 2nd Prize, "Ambrosia." No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frensham," "Ryland," "Maiblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood" ; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan" ; 2nd Prize, "Maiblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile" ; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May." No. 130.—1st Prize, "The Arabs" ; 2nd Prize, "Alice."

Answers have been received from—Abracadabra, Emma Jane, J. Dark, L. C. L., Lex, Richmond.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—ESPERANCE—Your name would have been printed as a Prize-Winner if you had gained a Prize. Many others besides yourself were successful in solving the Logograms, but the Birthday Verses were also taken into consideration in awarding the Prizes. K.—Both Puzzles are considered in awarding Prizes.

## Odds and Ends.

**KING CHARLES II.** asked Stillingfleet how it was that he always read his sermons before him, when he was informed that he always preached without book elsewhere. He replied that the awe of so noble an audience, when he saw nothing that was not greatly superior to him, but chiefly the seeing before him so great and wise a Prince, made him afraid to trust himself, with which answer the king was well contented. "But, pray," asked Stillingfleet, "will your majesty give me leave to ask a question too? Why do you read your speeches when you have none of the same reasons?" "Why truly, doctor," said the king, "your question is a very pertinent one, and so will be my answer. I have asked them so often for money, and for so much, that I am ashamed to look them in the face."

**SCENE:** Circuit Court in a Highland county-town. Young country-woman under examination. Advocate: "Now, my good girl, you say you were near the spot when the prisoner at the bar committed the act. Was any one with you at the time?" Witness: "Yiss, yiss, my lort, my sweetheart was with me." Advocate: "Courting, I suppose. Is he here? We want corroborative evidence." Witness: "Yiss, my lort; shust outside." Judge: "We had better call him into court." Witness: "No, no, my lort—goodness, no! I can hardly get him to court me when we're alone, and I'm sure he won't court me afore you all."

SOME merchants went to an Eastern sovereign, and exhibited for sale some fine horses. The king bought them, and, moreover, entrusted the merchants with a lac of rupees to purchase more horses for him. The king being one day in a sportive humour, ordered the vizier to make out a list of all the fools in his dominions. He did so, and put his majesty's name at the head of them. The king asked him why he did so; he replied: "Because you entrusted a lac of rupees to men you don't know, and who will never come back." "Aye, but suppose they should come back?" "Then I shall erase your name and insert theirs."

**KING HENRY VIII.** designing to send a nobleman on an embassy to Francis I. at a very dangerous juncture, he begged to be excused, saying such a threatening message to so hot a prince as Francis I. might cost him his life. "Fear not," said Henry VIII. "If the French king should take away your life, I would revenge you by taking off the heads of as many Frenchmen as are in my power." "But of all these heads," replied the nobleman, "there may not be one would fit my shoulders."

THE members of our staff are very fond of boasting of their prowess at cricket. A match was commenced on Thursday, and on the evening of that day our hero went to the wickets, but before he had received a ball stumps were drawn for the day. All Friday it rained, and there was no play. On Saturday morning he was clean bowled by the first ball he received, and now he boasts that it took an All England Eleven three days to get him out.

It is said that a foreign artist, although long amongst us, used occasionally to make funny mistakes in his English when excited. On one occasion, finding he had been driven for some distance in a wrong direction, and being anxious to know where he was, he astonished the coachman by putting his head out of the window, and shouting indignantly, "Who am I?"

A PERSON, who dined in company with Dr. Johnson, endeavoured to make his court to him by laughing immoderately at everything he said. The doctor bore it for some time with philosophical indifference; but the impertinent "Ha, ha, ha!" becoming intolerable, "Pray, sir," said the doctor, "I hope I have not said anything that you can comprehend."

**JOHN**, reading to his wife from a newspaper: "There is not a single woman in the House of Correction." There, you see, don't you, what wicked creatures wives are! Every woman in that gaol is married." "It is curious," she said; "but don't you think, John dear, that some of them go there for relief?"

A FRENCHMAN, being taken prisoner by the Algerines, was asked what he could do as a slave. He replied that he had been used to a sedentary employment. "Well, then," said the pirates, who were not used to employments of that nature, "we will mount you in feathers, and set you to hatch chickens."

THE *New York Journal* says: "The Princess Louise has sent seven water-colours to the Boston exhibition. One of them represents a blue cow grazing in a lavender meadow, through which a purple brook, filled with pink fish, purls along under a green sky, in which a terra-cotta sun flames gorgeously."

**PROFESSOR YOUNG** says: "Take a railroad from the earth to the sun, with a train running forty miles an hour, without stopping, and it would take about two hundred and sixty-five years to make the journey." He estimates the fare, at a penny a mile, to be £372,000. These figures kill the project.

**VOLTAIRE**, having lampooned a nobleman, was, one night on his way home, intercepted by him and beaten for his licentious wit. On which he applied to the Duke of Orleans, then Regent, and begged him to do him justice. "Sir," replied the Regent, smiling, "it has been done already."

A WOMAN hunted two hours for a needle she had dropped on the floor, and then her husband came in, and had hardly taken his boots off before he could tell where it was. Queer how men can do things that women can't.

A VERY thin audience attending the third representation of a new comedy, the author observed to a friend that he thought it must be owing to the war. "No," said his friend, "I think it is owing to the piece."

A GENTLEMAN observed to Mr. Erskine, who was a great punster, that "punning was the worst kind of wit." "It is so," answered he, "and therefore the foundation of all wit."

**BANNISTER**, passing a house which had been almost consumed by fire, enquired whose it was; being told a hatter's, "Oh," said he, "then the loss was felt."

A BISHOP, congratulating a poor parson, said he lived in a very fine air. "Yes," replied he, "I should think it so, if I could live upon it as well as in it."

ADDRESSING an Edinburgh audience recently, Mr. Toole said that he met an old friend who congratulated him upon the business he was doing, and expressed the hope that the actor was careful. "I replied, I was the most careful man in Edinburgh, or elsewhere. Thirty years ago, when I first played the 'Artful Dodger,' I had a pair of trousers given me by my friend Wyndham. Those same trousers I wear to-morrow night in 'The Artful Dodger.' Can any one be more careful than keeping a pair of trousers for thirty years?" Mr. Toole evidently appreciated the fact that he was addressing a Scotch assembly.

A GIRL in one of the public schools applied to her teacher for leave to be absent half a day on the plea that they had company at home. The teacher referred her to the printed list of reasons that the school committee think sufficient to justify absence, and asked her if her case came under any of them. She naively replied that it might come under the head of "domestic affliction."

**MRS. BARBAULD**, being on a visit to the University of Oxford, was shown over one of the colleges by a stupid young nobleman who acted as cicerone. It was observed by a person who knew both parties, how very unfortunate she was in her conductor. "Not at all," said a gentleman present. "Minerva, you know, was always attended by an owl!"

A LADY, travelling in a railway-carriage, was much annoyed by a cockney companion continually embellishing his conversation with "This 'ere" and "That 'air." A few minutes afterwards she quietly requested him to close the window, remarking, "This ear is affected by that air."

WHEN Dr. Zimmermann was at the court of Berlin, Frederick II. asked him one day in conversation, how many he had killed in the course of his practice. "That is an arduous task," replied the doctor; "but I think I may venture to say not half so many as your majesty."

A GENTLEMAN, who was dining with another, found the meat excellent, and asked who was the butcher? "His name is Addison." "Addison," echoed the guest. "Pray, is he any relation to the poet?" "In all probability he is, for he is seldom without his steel (Steele) by his side."

A YOUNG officer, not over fond of fighting, waited on his colonel on the eve of a battle to ask leave of absence to visit his father and mother, both of whom were very ill. "Yes," said the colonel; "honour your father and mother that your days may be long."

"Do you think," asked a college student of a professor of theology, "that the lion and lamb have ever yet lain down together?" "I don't know," answered the professor, "but if they have, I have no doubt the lamb was missing from that date."

"WHY aren't the organ-grinders numbered in this country, the same as they are in other countries?" indignantly asked a gentleman just returned from abroad. "Because they are numberless," replied one who had never been from home.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 135.]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## A Quiet Life.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"ROBERT, I must not go." There was the dignity of a noble resolution in Hannah Martin's face and figure as she said those words. She stood in a meadow, a few feet from the garden-gate, and the crimson glory of sunset was all around. Her lover was near her, tall and strong, looking at her with a little wonder in his loving admiration, she was so beautiful, with the soft radiance lighting up her sad face and earnest eyes.

"Surely you cannot forsake me now, Hannah—now, when you are fairer and dearer than ever. I have been patient, it is more than two months since the ship started in which we were to have sailed. I must not let this next one go without me. I am doing nothing here, wasting time and money. Give in, my girl, and let us be married on Sunday, and then you shall stay with your mother until Wednesday, when we must go to London. I will not claim you until the very last moment."

"I am very sorry to grieve you, but I must not go. Poor mother will never walk again, and you know she has no one but me in all the world."

"And I have no one like you in all the world!" he exclaimed impetuously.

She put her hand upon his arm and said very gently:

"Dear Robert, you have relatives and friends, and health and strength, and you are so young, and you have all your life before you, and can forget what has passed between us, and, in a little time, begin to love again."

"Never, never!" he cried passionately.

"At least you must be free to do so. You are no longer engaged to me, for my promise is broken. I cannot be your wife. I must stay with mother, who is poor, and lonely, and helpless."

"We can send her money in the future. Come with me; think how I have hoped for you, longed for you, waited for you; think of all the plans we have made and the bright times we have been looking forward to, and come."

"How I wish I could! But poor mother needs more than money—love, and careful nursing, and company, and I only can give her these. Oh, Robert! I have sought long and hard for a way out of this trouble, but there is not one. We must part."

"You sacrifice me to your mother?" he cried angrily.

"I cannot help it, you are the lesser sacrifice. If you lose much, she would lose everything if I left her. Dear Robert, you will grow reconciled, there will be so much to occupy you and distract your thoughts in your new home; this is my comfort."

"It should be your sorrow, for every new thing will make me think of you and what we should have said and done together. Hannah, you must come, you dare not desert me now; we are almost married, the banns have been long published, surely I have some right, some power over you; surely my great love will constrain you to keep true to me—to come with me?"

"I cannot," she said gently.

"Then you cannot love me," he said vehemently; "you never loved me or you would not throw away my love as if it was a pebble picked up by the roadside because it was pretty. You never loved me—you fooled me, you made pretence!"

"Never!" and then there was a ring of passion in her low tones.

"You must have done so," he continued; "you do not love me; those who love cleave to each other and will not be put asunder, and you say go—go, and be happy. Hannah, if you persist in your refusal to be my wife, and my wretchedness drives me to evil courses, my sins will be on your head."

"I must bear them," she answered gently, "but I have faith in your goodness, Robert."

"You wreck my happiness, you blast my life, yet you keep calm and serene," with scorn in his voice.

"I try, Robert, for your sake. I wish our parting to be as kindly as possible, that we may have pleasant memories of each other, and we must part though our hearts should break."

"You make the law and I am forced to obey. Cruel, heartless woman, I go!" and he strode away.

She stood watching him as he marched away with head erect, so young, so strong, and handsome, and a terrible bitterness filled her heart, that this parting in anger should be the end of her love and

bright hopes. As she gazed at him with sight dimmed by gathering tears, he turned, and, rushing back to her, folded her in his arms, and, kissing her passionately, said, "Though I go, I shall love you for ever," and turned away swiftly. And she, startled and trembling, again watched him until he was lost to her sight amongst the trees. She felt great tenderness and compassion for his suffering, and a desperate longing that it might be possible that her love should so enfold him as to be a shield and protection against the sorrows and troubles of life. That he might be happy was the cry of her soul. In that supreme moment she had no thought of herself.

The sunset glow had faded; the cloudy sky was grey and cold, and when the gentle repetition of her own name, Hannah, had recalled her mind to the actual present, she found that it was raining. She gave one lingering glance into the darkness towards the spot where Robert had passed away from her, then, with a deep sigh, turned from the lonely view and entered the garden. She went up the path near the wall, and soon she stood close to it, and, putting her hand over, touched a boy's head.

"Your curls are wet, Willie. I am so sorry."

"Never mind," he replied. "I was afraid you might forget it was raining."

"I did. Thank you for calling me, Willie;" and stooping, she kissed the upturned face.

"Oh, Hannah, do not cry!" he said imploringly, as a tear fell on his cheek.

"It will save my heart from breaking," she murmured. "Perhaps Willie, it was only a rain-drop. Run in quick, my pet. Good-night."

"Good-night, dear, dear Hannah," replied the boy in his sweet loving voice, and ran quickly indoors.

Hannah entered her quaint little kitchen, and busied herself there until all trace of tears or rain had disappeared from her face and apparel. Then she took in the cup of gruel to her mother, and while she was drinking it, turned the big easy-chair into a bed for herself, that she might be at hand to minister to her mother in the night.

As Hannah came to her to take away the cup, the invalid said:

"You have seen Robert?"

"Yes, mother."

"And he is eager to take you away. You must not try him too much, dear; he has been patient. Something must be done with me. I will consult the vicar."

"Mother, dear mother, I shall never leave you. Robert and I have parted for good;" and the girl bent over her mother, kissing her fervently.

"My darling, this must not be."

"It is done, mother. It would not be right that I should leave you."

"Your father's words, 'it would not be right,' decided everything with him; but it must not be. You renounce too much. Wait—consider."

"It is too late. Robert is gone; and take comfort, dear mother, that I am following my father's teaching. To me it seems clear that it would not be right for me to go, so I stay. Oh, do not look at me with such anguish in your eyes, or you will break my heart. If you will be pleased to have me with you, to cheer and help you bear your great trouble, I shall forget in time, and we shall be as happy as in the past—almost."

"My darling, Heaven bless you!" and the mother hid her face in her daughter's bosom, that the great sorrow in it should not trouble her. Presently she said:

"I am thankful to have you with me, and, to show my gratitude, will try to be brave and happy, but it is natural that I should regret that your life should be ruined for me."

"I have no faith in ruined lives; mine is not ruined, will not be ruined, because I stay here in England with you instead of going with a husband to Australia. I mean to be useful and to do well for myself and for others; and, mother dear, think how young I am, and how many good things may happen to me. And do not let us make our disappointments more bitter by unavailing regrets. I know you are greatly disappointed; you were fond of Robert;" and she arranged her mother's little shawl with tender caressing hand.

"I am fond of him."

"We both loved him dearly; but that is in the past now, and we will try and forget him. He is quite gone from us."

"Quite?"

"Yes, quite. I believe that he has passed out of our lives for ever." Even as she honestly said these words she remembered his passionate declaration that he should love her for ever; and a thrill of delight passed over her at the thought that, if he loved her, he would be constrained to seek her, and they might meet again. But her intimate knowledge of his character helped her to a more sober judgment in the matter, and she recognised that he was at last convinced that she would not leave her mother, so would probably try to

forget her, and to throw off the affection that had become a pain and a burden to him. As she lay sleepless that miserable night, she prayed that he might be able to do so quickly; and her mind was so full of compassion for him, starting alone on his long journey, missing her doubly when any event happened that they had talked over and expected to enjoy together, and finally settling, a solitary bachelor, in the little home he had hoped to share with her, that she had no thought for the sorrows of herself and her mother.

Mrs. Martin, when the light was out, and her child could not see her tears, wept very bitterly for the downfall of all her hopes. She would rather have died than have deprived her daughter of a good husband and a happy future. She resented a little not having been told of Hannah's intention to give up her lover until the deed had been done, and all remonstrance was of no avail. She felt it hard to have sacrifices made for her against her will. She believed that she would have been happier in a workhouse with Hannah comfortably married than she should be with all her careful tenderness and loving solicitude, sorrowing that she had ruined her prospects. Then there was poverty before them, and a competency for her girls is always the dearest wish of a mother's heart. Hannah married would be in comfortable circumstances, Hannah single would be little better than a sempstress, and would have to toil, and give painful consideration to ways and means all her days. The poor woman was grateful to her child, and she tried to be submissive to the will of Heaven; but she found it terribly bitter to know that she had had no voice in the ordering of her own destiny. Good had been forced upon her, but it was not the good that she had desired, and it weighed upon her as a darkness that could not be lifted, and her soul was crushed and desolate.

#### CHAPTER II.

MRS. MARTIN was a widow with a very small certain income. She and her daughter supported themselves by needlework. She was educated and gentle-mannered, and had been half maid, half companion to the squire's wife, who was still her best friend. A few months previously she had injured her spine in slipping off a little rustic bridge of one plank, and would never be able to walk again, or to do anything but lie upon her back, and, at the best, occupy herself with light needlework. Then for weeks the women sorrowed, and the man waited, and at last the end was come to the hopes, and wishes, and glad anticipations of years. The lovers had parted.

The day after the parting the women were very sad and ill at ease. Mrs. Martin was sore at heart and a little angered that Hannah should have destroyed all her chances in life without consulting her, and the girl felt that her mother was dissatisfied with her, and it seemed to her very hard that she should have put aside her happiness and yet get no thanks for doing so. She believed she had done well, but when we bring sorrow upon ourselves in doing right, we need the sympathy of our friends, and a little kindly admiration of our merit to reconcile ourselves to the position. And Hannah was very unhappy and very lonely, for a constraint had come between mother and child and they said little to each other, and that little with reserve and uncertainty, each fearing that the simplest expression might touch or aggravate the trouble of the other. The open free confidence of heart with heart that had sustained them in past trouble was gone, and each sorrowed separately in silence. For many days this sad state lasted, but as the mother watched the deepening sadness in her child's face, and the daughter noticed the furtive tears and the wistful eyes of her mother, the little sense of injury and division in the minds of each died out, and their great love drew them into each other's arms, and, as they wept, they resolved to grieve openly together, henceforth. And as a sorrow shared is robbed of half its bitterness, they became more composed and hopeful, and gave thought to the ordering of their future life.

More employment was needed, and Mrs. Gidding, the present squire's mother, got the owner of a baby-linen shop in the neighbouring town to give them constant work, and Mrs. Martin lay stitching through the long hours of daylight. Her room had two windows, and across one of them her bed was placed, so that she could have good light for her sewing, and look out at the little front garden, the narrow lane, and the hedge and trees on the other side. There were but few passers-by, but it made a change for her even to see a smock-frocked labourer, and after a time all who passed that way looked out for the little white face at the window, and greeted it with a smile. Hannah sat at the other window working, and in the chamber were gathered all the widow's choicest possessions, the curiosities she had brought from foreign parts, presents, and in the corner-cupboard was some old choice china that had come to her from her grandmother—little handless cups, with saucers, and a punch-bowl, many of them greatly broken, but so deftly mended that no damage was visible except on near inspection. There was always a great nosegay on the table, for Mr. Martin had filled her garden with choice flowers. The window-sills were full of sturdy geraniums. The chamber was large

and square and low, and people sometimes came in and said how pleasant and quaint it was; and Mrs. Martin knew it was very comfortable and recalled her great pride in it when she was a young wife; but as years passed and she lay in it always, year after year, seeing ever the same four walls and gazing out at the same garden-hedge and trees, it seemed to her a prison from which death could bring the only release.

Hannah told herself always, as she told her mother, that Robert and herself had parted for ever, yet deep down in her heart was a feeble spark of hope that refused to be extinguished by her reason, that she would hear from him again, that he would make some effort to move her from her resolution. The year passed and she had no news of him; his family ceased, from the time of his quitting England, to hold any communication with her. Robert and she were virtually dead to each other, yet it was with a thrill of disappointment that she heard, a month or two later, that he was married.

Willie Stone, the little boy who had spoken to her the night of her bitter trouble, was more intimate with her than anybody else. He had won his way to her heart by his gentle affectionateness and his kindly helpfulness, her attention having first been attracted to him by the fact that he was motherless. He was thoughtful and discreet beyond his years—old-fashioned, people called him. She found that he had a quicker comprehension of her feelings and wishes than anybody else, and an ever-ready intelligent sympathy for all her trouble.

He had heard talk in the village of how she would bear herself when she knew that her old love had consoled himself with another woman, and he resolved to tell, that she might not be taken at a disadvantage. As he helped her water the flowers one evening, he said:

"Robert is settled at last, Hannah; he was married last month. It is true; father made sure of it, or I should not tell you."

He went on vigorously watering, never lifting his eyes to her, but they filled with tears as he heard one little gasping sob. Presently she came close to him and said softly:

"I hope he will be happy; and, Willie, you were a dear good boy to tell me, and I thank you very much."

"And you will not mind much?"

"I will not mind at all," she said bravely. "All is really over now, and with mother and you I shall be very happy. You shall be my little brother, and I will do everything I can for you Willie."

"I am so glad, sister," and the sweet child-voice lingered lovingly on the last word. The two were fast friends thenceforth, and Willie's sayings and doings, and general well-being, made the chief interest of Hannah's life. She watched over him and loved him as if he were indeed her brother, and he filled the void in her heart left by the departure of Robert.

The years went by; the days were full of occupation; there was always the need to work that they might live. The weeks passed with such persistent monotony that, save for the changing of the seasons, the two might have believed themselves always in the self-same week.

Then the settled dullness was broken by an event. Mrs. Gidding died. The squire had been summoned from abroad to her bedside, and arrived in time to soothe her last hours, and have the invalid and her daughter recommended to his care.

Mrs. Martin and Hannah grieved much for the loss of their old friend; there was nobody left to them now but Willie. They were restless, and their constant working was rendered more difficult by the tears that would fall for the departed, and for a time they rebelled against their hard lot, and told each other that they were sorely stricken women. But soon they regained their fortitude, took courage, and led again the dull, sad life with calmness and gentle dignity.

The new squire came to see them, mindful of his mother's behest, and because the invalid had often been kind to him in his boyhood. He remembered pretty little Hannah, too; but he was a grave and learned man, who took little interest in girls or women. Mrs. Martin's face brightened at his approach, and she would forget her pain while he talked. And Hannah listened with delight to his account of the strange places and peoples he had seen, for he had been an explorer, and ventured into unknown lands.

He took to coming often. Their gentle manners pleased him, and he was flattered by their earnest attention to his discourse. He liked to see the lighting up of the delicate face and the smile in the widow's eyes, and thought her welcome the most gracious he had ever received. She believed that he visited her simply because she was the friend of his mother, and he had found out that he could cheer and amuse her, and for the time put from her all sorrowful remembrance. He gave little attention to Hannah, but was conscious that she made him an attentive auditor.

Mrs. Martin looked at her daughter as she sat with her delicate face bent over her work, taking no part in the conversation. She

noticed the softness of her brown hair, the beauty of her rounded throat, the elegance of her figure, and, above all, her refined expression and dignity of mien; and she told herself that Hannah was fit to occupy any position, and she hoped that the suffering, bravely borne, that had produced these last attributes, might yet meet ample compensation. And from that moment she began to have a waking dream of great happiness for her child.

The grave squire continued his visits, brought views for them to look at, books for them to read, and by degrees Hannah began to take some part in the conversation. It was not from shyness she had held aloof, but simply because no call had been made upon her to speak.

Mrs. Martin watched the squire, and was well pleased, and at last one day, when Hannah was giving him some spirited answer, she saw him roused, in sudden surprise, to a full consciousness of her rare beauty; and afterwards his glance would constantly stray to the bent head with gentle eyes so patiently cast upon her work. The mother observed, with a little tremor, that Hannah did not feel the glance, but surely she could not be unresponsive to the regard of such a man when it should become patent to her, and it pleased her to know that her child required as long, and as respectful wooing, as a maiden of high degree.

But as time passed, and she saw the squire's love deepen, she wished that her child was not so cold, yet she feared to say a word, and comforted herself with the belief that when the declaration came her heart would open to the generous affection, and give it fitting welcome and response.

At last the hoped-for, watched-for moment came. The squire and herself were alone. He said:

"I think you have understood my hopes, and that I have your good wishes."

"You have my best wishes. Heaven bless you both!"

"May I go through to the garden? Perhaps I shall find her there."

"Go, and send Willie to me."

Willie came, and the mother's heart was a prey to a terrible anxiety. Should this great blessing come to her child and fill their lives with enduring joy, or would it slip from her because she would not just put out her hand to grasp it, and their sadness be deeper than before?

Willie spoke a few words, trying to soothe her, for her eager longing for a certainty of happiness brought the sweat upon her brow and made her face haggard.

"I do hope she will have him," whispered Willie.

"You know?" said Mrs. Martin, a little surprised.

"I think everybody knows but Hannah," said the boy.

"He would make her so happy," said the mother.

Then the old woman and the boy waited, almost breathless, listening for a sound that should give them an assurance of the good news they longed for.

Shortly, although the time had seemed wearily long to the watchers, a man's step was heard in the little passage, and the squire entered the room. He went straight to Mrs. Martin, and said softly:

"She cannot love me, but do not grieve or blame her. She cannot help it," and, stooping, he kissed her tenderly, and observing the speechless misery in her face, said again: "Do not grieve, my dear old friend, and rest assured that I shall watch over her from a distance. She shall never want for help or protection while I live."

The sad eyes thanked him eloquently.

"She is one of those that can love but once, we must not blame her," and pressing cordially the cold hand he left her.

Then the poor woman did battle with her disappointment, trying to repress all signs of it that she might not wound her daughter; she made no complaint, she uttered no reproach, but the despairing grief in her face told Hannah all she felt, and made her very miserable.

They were just drifting back into their old ways of dull monotony when a surprise came to them in the shape of a lawyer's letter, saying that the late Mrs. Gidding had left Hannah a small annuity for life. It would not relieve her of the necessity of earning money, but it would make the doing so comparatively easy, as so much less would be required.

Mrs. Martin rejoiced exceedingly, and insisted that the yearly income should not be touched, but should accumulate for Hannah's benefit. She was so eager and anxious about this that the girl was obliged to consent, although the doing so cost them both many privations.

But to stint oneself and go without things for an object is very different to being forced to do so by necessity, and now that there was a possibility of providing for her daughter's future, Mrs. Martin became cheerful, and began to get over her great disappointment.

More years passed on, all alike; for the women did always much

the same work, and Mrs. Martin lay always in the same corner, and Hannah performed the same monotonous duties. But the years were full of industry, and kindness, and gentle piety, and mother and child had a strong affection and respect for each other, and were happy in a sad subdued fashion, save for an occasional fit of melancholy when their minds went back to the joyful past, or speculated on what might have been but for Mrs. Martin's accident.

The squire went abroad after his rejection by Hannah, but brought a wife home a few years later. Then one little fellow after another stopped his pony at the cottage-gate to show himself to the face at the window, and be admired by the invalid, until there were five strong lads at the Hall, and two little girls.

Then one summer evening, as Mrs. Martin and Hannah were looking out of window, the latch of the garden-gate was lifted, and a figure walked up the path, which startled them by its great resemblance to the Robert Cleave who had left them twenty years before.

Hannah rose to open the door with a curious feeling that the years had rolled back and that she would again be face to face with her lover. Mrs. Martin heard herself asked for, and then Hannah came in with the stranger, saying: "Mother, this is Robert's son."

"My father bade me seek you out when I came to these parts," the young fellow said cheerily; "he was anxious to hear that you were doing well, he has often told us what good friends you were to him when he was a lad."

"Yes, we knew him well," said the mother, and Hannah busied herself setting out refreshment for the young man, giving many a kindly glance at the lad, and taking pride in his stature and comeliness because he was Robert's son.

He chatted pleasantly, giving them freely full information about his family and their prospects. Everything had gone well with his father, who was so well-to-do as to be considered rich; he had many children, and was looked up to by everybody; his eldest girl was well married and the next engaged. The second Robert made a hearty supper and then he talked on until the gloaming was past and the room illuminated only by the pale light of the moon. Even then Hannah did not rise to get a candle, but hung spellbound on the words that told of the success and brave endeavour of the man she had loved. She felt the boy's pride in his father and she shared it, and rejoiced that time had amply justified her girl-choice of a husband.

Robert told them that his last relative had left the neighbourhood and that he must be on his way early on the morrow, and yet he lingered. Then Hannah became yet more gentle to him and spoke specially of himself and his views, and he told her of a sweet girl who was very dear to him, and of his hope to make a start on his own account in a year. He promised to write to her as soon as he was married, and afterwards to let her have news of him once a year. Then the newly-made friends parted with regret, and Hannah stood in the moonlight watching him pass from her sight as she had once watched his father. Then shutting the door gently she came to her mother and said:

"He has done thoroughly well without me, so I have nothing to regret;" the deep thankfulness in her voice revealing that she had sometimes feared it might have been otherwise.

The years went on. Willie had married a delicate girl, and now had delicate children, so Hannah and her mother had to give constant thought to his concerns. This was good for them. And they had great sympathy for all sore hearts, and occupied their minds with the troubles and pleasures of others so effectually that they forgot their own sad lot, and were thoroughly happy and cheerful.

Mrs. Martin's face grew plump and bright in this glad time, and Hannah developed into a very handsome elderly woman. They still lived in the same thrifty manner, the mother exulting that a little fortune was being stored up for her daughter. They worked hard, but the days were no longer so horribly monotonous. They had more varied sources of interest, and there were Willie's children to visit and amuse them, and their hearts were filled with content.

Mother and child seemed to find more pleasure in each other's society, and to love each other more as the years passed on, and made the one old and the other very old. And Death came to a serenely happy home when he summoned Mrs. Martin.

She died blessing her daughter, and bade her not to mourn overmuch.

Hannah was deeply desolate, but she saw that there was work for her to do. Willie was prosperous, and all his children in good health. They no longer needed her solicitude. But sad news had come to her from the other side of the world. Robert's wife was dead, all his sisters married, and there was no one to take care of his young family. He had written several times to Hannah, telling her of his great distress.

She resolved to go to him and offer him her services. She had now an income sufficient for her maintenance, so need take nothing from him but gratitude.

She went, and was received with open arms. Calmly she took the management of his household, and did all things well and fittingly. The children quickly loved her, and as it was necessary they should have a friendly name for her, she was called Aunt Hannah.

And as Aunt Hannah the lover of her youth met her with cordial greetings and warm thanks for looking after his grandchildren, and no recollection of long-ago troubled for either of them the pleasantness of the interview. Nothing in the stout, bold, prosperous colonist reminded Hannah of the Robert she had once expected to marry, and he had quite forgotten that one episode of his adventurous and eventful life.

## First.

HIGH swells his soul, who, after war's alarms,  
Stands conqueror, where his flag in triumph flies;  
Keen is the joy that lights the lover's eyes,  
When his fair bird comes fluttering to his arms.

Pure is the gladness of the mother's heart,  
Bending above her first-born's rosy sleep;  
Full is the measure that the pulses keep,  
When the world's plaudits crown the royal art.

But highest, purest, fullest, is the joy  
That thrills, in silence, in her happy breast,  
Who sees and knows her best-beloved is best,  
Her worship firm, her gold without alloy.

## His Own Guest.

(A SERIAL STORY.)

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

SIR CHARLES MEREDITH would have preferred, on his return to the house, after his rejection by Mary, to retire to his own room, but he had been bred in the old school of courtesy, and felt it incumbent upon him to join his guests.

As well as he could he disguised his agitation, and went straight to the drawing-room, where, however, he found his mother alone.

Rubina, escorted by her maid and a lantern, which latter, considering that the moon made everything almost as bright as day, she apparently had had brought as a sort of weapon of defence rather than as a light to guide her on her way, had some time since taken her departure; Edith was upstairs putting on her things; and the gentlemen had gone to the smoking-room for a final cigar.

Sir Charles, with a sigh of relief at finding that he might, for the moment at least, put aside his feigned tranquility, threw himself into a chair. Lady Meredith at once saw that something had occurred of moment.

"Why, Charles, what is the matter? How serious you look!" she said.

"I have enough to make me so; everything seems conspiring against me," the young man replied doggedly.

"Charles," remonstrated his mother, "do not talk so. You, the head of an old family, the bearer of an honoured name and title! Why, half the world envies you."

"Do they? I almost hate my honoured name, my titled poverty, for they cause me to play a double part. Mine is a false position—I must act as if I were rich, when I ought to grudge every penny that I spend—"

"Why suffer all this, my boy, when there is a remedy close at hand?" Lady Meredith interrupted him by saying.

"I know whom you mean, of course—Edith Pennington; but she does not care for me an atom."

"How can you tell?"

"By intuition."

"Do not trust to that, it is a dangerous guide. Try her as you promised. At least, when you have asked and been refused by Mary."

He winced at the thrust.

"I have asked Mary, mother," he said, "and have been refused."

"My poor boy! I knew it would be so. But you must not give way to despair. There are plenty of girls as attractive as Mary is."

"Yes, mother, too many. They are all alike. Upon my soul, I have a mind to gratify your wishes and propose to Edith Pennington at once. Whether she accepts or rejects me depends upon her particular form of vanity. If she is ambitious for a title she will accept me."

"But," interrupted Lady Meredith, "if it is the man only she cares for?"

"Then she will reject me. I will put her to the test. Mother, make some excuse for sending her to this very room to-night—now; then keep the coast clear and leave us to ourselves."

Lady Meredith comprehended the state of mind her son was in, and, hastening to profit by it, left the room and told Edith that Charles wished to speak to her.

A few minutes later, and Edith and Sir Charles had the drawing-room to themselves.

"Miss Pennington, I have something of importance to say to you," said the latter, plunging in *medias res*, so as to avoid an awkward preamble.

"And, judging from your grave face, something very unpleasant too. Have I been misbehaving myself?"

"Far from it; conducting yourself so much to my liking, that I want you to become Lady Meredith."

"You are really too good, Sir Charles," replied Edith with a sarcastic smile and a sweeping curtsy. "Am I to take this as a proposal—a serious proposal?"

"Such is my meaning."

"This is Lady Meredith's doing; I will make her suffer for it, and her son, too, for being such a tool in her hands," thought Edith, who of course did not know of Mary Ray's rejection of Sir Charles.

"And do you really mean to say you love me?" she asked of her suitor.

Charles paused a moment, and then replied:

"Miss Pennington, I will be candid with you. I have loved another."

"Mary," said Edith to herself.

"I own I am weak enough to love her still. She has scorned my love because I am poor. I now turn to you."

"As the heiress, or the woman?" queried Edith somewhat scornfully.

"As both. I could not marry a rich woman I did not respect; I cannot marry a woman I love because I am poor. Edith, can an old name, an old title, tempt you to accept me?"

"Tempt me, Sir Charles? On my word, you speak as if you wished me to do something wrong. May I ask you why you have selected me for this honour?"

"I am afraid I must seem in a ridiculous position."

"At least we are in sympathy in that, for have you not put me in one as well? I don't know what cause I have given you for saying what you have; the evident agitation from which you are suffering must be to some extent your excuse, but I must tell you that you have indeed surprised me."

At that moment the door was quietly opened by Lady Meredith, who held the hand of Mary Ray in hers.

She had met, or rather waylaid the girl on her return from the deserted pleasure, and with the intention of clinching matters—or, as she put it to her conscience, of being cruel to be kind, resolved that Mary should see with her own eyes her son's proposal for the hand of the heiress.

Charles did not notice their entry; Edith, only that of Lady Meredith.

"And," continued Miss Pennington, seeing her opportunity, "I only regret there is no one present to hear my declaration that I will never marry except to become Lady Meredith."

With a cry of anguish, Mary broke from her aunt and ran to her own room, where, locking the door, she threw herself beside the bed, and burying her face in the clothes, burst into an agony of tears.

Charles had heard the cry, and pushing past his mother, hurried in pursuit of the flying girl.

"Bless you, my darling!" whispered a voice, whose owner had taken possession of Edith's hand, and, unperceived by Lady Meredith, was kissing it.

Gordon had entered by the conservatory, and had also been a spectator of Sir Charles's proposal for the hand of Edith Pennington.

### CHAPTER XXIX.

THERE was no need for Lady Meredith to invent an excuse for the postponement of Mary's visit to town. The morning that should have seen her departure found her so ill from the excitement of the previous day, that a telegram was sent to Lady Harker to the effect that Miss Ray was too unwell to quit her room.

Sir Charles, unaware of her illness, left for town by an early train, Gordon travelling up with him.

Their journey was a dull one. Sir Charles was out of spirits, and Gordon, tiring of monosyllabic replies to commonplace remarks, preferred to give himself up to rosy dreams of the future, in which be sure Edith was the central figure, to keeping up an uninteresting conversation.

Two or three business matters called the elder man to town, the principal one being to write from thence a letter to his stepmother in his real name of Meredith, saying that he had put his claim to be recognised as the master of Meredith Court into the hands of his solicitors.

His object in so doing was to drive Lady Meredith, who would not dare mention the matter to Charles, and who had already been refused the co-operation of Mr. Pennington, to confide in him. He could then, under his *alias* of Gordon, discover how far she believed her stepson guilty of the crime she imputed to him, and perhaps hint that it might be advisable for her to help the claimant to prove his innocence, on the understanding that he wanted his good name and not the estate restored.

On the same day the American also paid a visit to the metropolis.

He had perused the newspaper which it will be remembered he carried off from Meredith Court, and his quick eye had fallen upon Messrs. Ridge's advertisement. It at once set him thinking, and he carefully a second time went through it.

"If T. M., who left England and went to New York by the Corrie Roy, in 187—, where he passed under the name of Smith, and was subsequently heard of at Mexico, will communicate with Messrs. W. and F. Ridge, 217, Broadway, New York, he will hear of something to his advantage."

Gordon had been in Mexico, and was known there as Smith. Could he have had another *alias*, the initials of which were T. M. ? and if so, what did the initials stand for ?

Thus reflected the colonel. Suddenly, as by an inspiration, the marble tablet, "Sacred to the Memory of Thomas Meredith," seemed to appear before his eyes. Thomas Meredith had died at sea and about the time when, from what he had heard the man himself say, Smith must have been crossing from England to America.

At first this connection between Gordon, Smith, and Meredith did not particularly impress the thinker, but the more he reflected on the matter, the closer the three names seemed to dovetail and form a whole that represented the rightful heir of Meredith Court.

But Tom Meredith had died at sea. Had he ?

Colonel Skooter made enquiries and could find no stronger corroboration of the fact than that Lady Meredith had said so, and that there was the epitaph in the church.

Proof strong enough for the Meredith Court servants and village tradesfolk, but not convincing enough for Colonel Skooter.

He wired to the agents mentioned in the advertisement:

"Thomas Meredith is staying at Farehurst ; let him have particulars of the matter you refer to, addressed to him under his present *alias* of Colonel Skooter, The Laurels, Farehurst."

It was a bold stroke, but when done the colonel returned to the country with the satisfactory consciousness of having done his best to turn something that did not apparently concern him to probably his own advantage.

He had drawn his bow and shot at a venture ; if the shot told, and Thomas Meredith was not dead but the man advertised for, then he had brought down a family skeleton, and one which it would cost the family something to bury ; if the T. M. wanted was not the man he suspected, Messrs. Ridge would consider that someone was playing a hoax on the strength of the advertisement, and take no more notice of the matter.

The colonel's reason for going to town to dispatch the message was obvious. Had he sent it from the Farehurst station, where both the Merediths and himself were well-known, the discreetest of station-masters might have been tempted to blurt it out.

With the intention of keeping an eye upon the good people at the Court, Colonel Skooter, the morning after his return, made a call upon Lady Meredith and learned that the young men were back sooner than had been anticipated, Sir Charles's invalid friend having been ordered at once to the South of France, and Gordon of course being anxious to see how his plot would work and glad again to be near Edith.

This speedy return of her son had considerably disconcerted the mistress of the house, who could not decently again propose Mary's immediate departure, especially as Edith had come over to stay for a few days and cheer her friend.

Lady Meredith had not had a pleasant morning of it. Wishing to keep matters in the way she considered they should go, she had been talking to the young lady whom she had elected to be her daughter-in-law, upon the question of her marriage, and Edith had been, to say the least of it, disappointing.

Her ladyship had brought the subject round by commenting upon the low spirits and pallor of Mary.

"Poor child !" she had said, "I am very sorry for her."

"So am I," Edith had replied.

"But it is necessary," went on Lady Meredith with an air and tone of conviction. "Edith dear, I can't tell you how pleased I was when I heard you accept my son. He will make you a good husband."

"Yes," assented Edith, "he is a great deal too good for me."

"Oh no, my dear, do not say that," contradicted the mother condescendingly.

"I ought to know best. I am so selfish and fond of my own way."

"All these little things will disappear in time."

"Will they ? Ah, how nice it will be to become Lady Meredith. Didn't you find it so ?"

The question evidently annoyed her ladyship.

"Really I forget," she answered coldly.

"And then to be presented at Court, to read the next morning, 'Lady Meredith, upon her marriage, by the Dowager Lady Meredith.'"

"And this is the reason you have accepted Charles ?" asked the foreshadowed dowager.

"Well, not entirely, perhaps. I suppose the family diamonds go to the reigning Queen. Are there many family diamonds ? It's so nice to be able to talk to you about it all ; I can't ask Charles yet, you see, and—"

"Really, Miss Pennington," said Lady Meredith, her temper getting the upper hand of her prudence, "I should advise you not to. Do you not care for him ?"

"Does he care for me ?"

"Of course he does, or he would not have—"

"Honoured me by asking me to become Lady Meredith," broke in Edith. "But you have not told me about the diamonds. Am I wrong in showing curiosity respecting them ?"

"It is not always wise to show one feels so much pleasure in possessing such vanities."

"I wonder when I become the Dowager Lady Meredith whether I shall feel regret in parting with them. Well, perhaps you are right, we should not let people know our true characters."

Lady Meredith had by this time lost all control over herself.

"If you have just been revealing yours, it is a pity you did not determine to conceal it all your life," she replied.

After all, there was something Lady Meredith cared for, even more than for her son's welfare, and that was the son's mother's dignity. She rose and left the room.

"Ha, ha ! I have made her quite angry," thought Edith ; "and now to tell the joke to Mary, who has been particularly dull in seeing it up to now."

Mary was playing a dreamy nocturne of Schubert's as Edith stood beside her, and leaning over kissed her on the forehead.

"Mary," she said, "there is something I wish to say to you—something to explain."

"Do not trouble to explain anything, you cannot alter facts. Oh, Edith, why have you deceived me, and broken your word ? You promised me you would never accept Charles."

"I shall never marry him."

"Edith, what do you mean ?"

"I cannot tell you yet, dear, wait a little longer ; believe me, all will come right in time. Mary, will you trust me ? Remember we are friends—old friends ; what is friendship without faith ?"

"You promise me that you won't marry him ?"

"Marry him ! Do you think I am going to throw myself away on a misanthropic young—"

"Edith, you sha'n't call him names."

"Never mind, Mary, what I say ; he's quite suitable for your fancy, I think, and quite unsuitable for mine, I am sure. You shall have him for all I care. Now can you trust me ? Hush ! here comes your admirer, Colonel Skooter."

"How do you know ?"

"By the creaking of his boots, and the pricking of my thumbs."

Edith had scarce time to assume a demure demeanour when the subject of her remark entered the room.

"All by yourselves, girls, I see," he observed.

"Are you nobody, colonel ?" asked Edith maliciously.

"Hope you don't mind my being here ?" said that gentleman, casting an appealing glance at Mary.

"It doesn't make the slightest difference." Mary's looks quite corroborated her words.

"That's real kind of you to say so," observed the colonel, interpreting her speech in a flattering manner which only thorough self-conceit could have done.

"How did they treat you in the matter of dinners whilst you were in town ?" asked Edith, knowing the colonel's weakness in that line.

"Oh, uncommonly well. I fixed up at a place where the meals was real good and frequent. Didn't come up to our New York feeding, though. Miss Pennington, you should taste our canvas-backed ducks."

"Should I ?"



"Really Colonel Skooter finds every thing American so much better than English that I wonder he stops over here," said Mary.

"Jealous of the attractions of America—good sign that," thought the colonel. "It's a change, you see," he replied. "It don't do to eat partridges for ever. But there is one sort of goods you have in England superior to our sample, and that's the women."

"Now that's very gallant of you, colonel," said Edith. "Tell me, in what respect are they superior?"

"Well, they are more quiet and modest than our girls."

"Yes," observed Mary, "the men don't monopolise those qualities in England."

"And you came here to see the Englishwomen, of course?" suggested Edith.

"The fact is, miss, I want a wife."

"Don't let him say anything more. I know what's coming," whispered Mary to Edith, but of which whisper Edith took no notice, but went on drawing him out.

"Do you. What kind of a wife?"

"I want a smart little girl who will look well at the head of my table—one worthy to become Mrs. Colonel Skooter."

"Ah, colonel, like all men you crave for the impossible!" This was Edith's little sarcastic speech.

The colonel took it literally. "Perhaps so," he said.

"Have you any one in view?"

"Yes, I have."

"Have you asked her yet?" Edith was assuming an air of bashfulness now. She had so placed herself as to intercept the admiring glances which the colonel was trying to convey to Mary.

"No," said the colonel, "but I am going to."

"Perhaps she might refuse you," said Mary.

"Absurd, Mary!" broke in Edith. "How could any one refuse Colonel Skooter?"

"By telling him so," was the prosaic reply.

"The young lady I have my eyes upon isn't a hundred miles away now, I guess."

"Oh, colonel!" cried Edith, appropriating the reference to herself.

"And if she says yes, the wedding, bride-cake, bridesmaids, and all the fixings shall be ready in a week."

"Oh, colonel, that will be too soon." Edith again was the speaker.

"Why?"

"I deeply appreciate the delicate way in which you have made your offer, but I could not leave my father so soon. Now, Mary, it's your turn."

The latter part of the sentence was in an aside.

"No, colonel, do leave me my friend a little longer," pleaded Mary, who, in spite of her trouble, could not but be amused at the comicality of the colonel's position.

"What the mischief—what—Ah, here's Sir Charles coming!" exclaimed the colonel, who began to have a dim notion that Edith was "getting at him," and was not altogether sorry, therefore, for the interruption.

Edith seized the opportunity of his attention being attracted by the new comer, to whisper into Mary's ear:

"Mary dear, I don't think the colonel will trouble you much more, but you may just as well finish him off at once. Now I want to be alone with Sir Charles for a few minutes—nay, dear, don't be jealous, believe me there is no cause, and if you were to go into the conservatory, it's just possible Colonel Skooter might follow you. You trust me now, don't you?"

The hands of the two girls met in a cordial clasp, and perfect faith in her friend came back to Mary's heart. Mary took up a book, and sauntered into the adjoining conservatory.

"Miss Ray!"

As Edith had foreseen, the colonel had followed Mary.

"Yes, colonel."

"Or Mary, if I may call you so."

"Decidedly you may not."

"I'm afraid there has been a mistake."

"I am sure there has."

"Let me explain."

"No; you would make a greater one, I am certain."

"But, my dear Miss Ray—"

"You mustn't call me your dear Miss Ray, or Edith will be jealous."

"But it is you I want to be my wife."

"Is it the custom in America for gentlemen to propose to two ladies within the hour?"

"But, I assure you, I had no intention—"

"Then why propose? Well, never mind, let us forget all about it, and now let me propose to you."

"Ah!"

"Yes, propose that we change the conversation."

And Mary showed by her manner that, necessity arising, she could be as dignified as Edith, or as Lady Meredith herself.

During this *titte-à-tite* between Mary and the colonel, one had been going on between Sir Charles and Edith.

"Well, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance," said the lady, noting the melancholy expression on the face of Mary's lover, "you do not seem so overjoyed at finding me alone as I could have hoped—I may say could have expected. Come, you may sit beside me and I will see what can be done to cheer you."

"May I? Thanks," said Sir Charles, seating himself at the extreme end of the sofa from Edith.

"Are you quite comfortable?" asked Edith, moving closer to him.

"I? Oh yes."

"I am glad of that, as I want to ask you a favour. Charles, dear Charles, will you grant it to me?"

"You have a right to demand it."

"I want to see my lover at my feet. You see it's only recently that I have had one, and I have a right to expect he will go through the orthodox phases of sweetheating, have I not?"

"But," said Sir Charles, looking with no amiable expression at the stool which the young lady had pushed with her foot in front of her, and then glancing at the half-open door of the conservatory, "there is someone in there."

"Oh, never mind them; you are engaged. Come, sir, do as I tell you."

It really seemed to Sir Charles more undignified to wrangle about such an absurdity than to do it, so he chose what he considered the lesser evil and seated himself on the footstool.

"Really, Charles," rebuked Edith, "you look more as if you were sitting on a stool of repentance than on what an ardent lover's imagination should turn into a bank of rose-leaves. But tell me, sir, what have you been doing all the morning that I have seen nothing of you?"

"Talking over some business matters with Mr. Pennington."

"Business, of course—the usual excuse. Where is papa?"

"I left him with Colonel Gordon."

"Papa seems very fond of his society."

"I think papa is not the only one of your family who has felt the influence of his attractions."

"Capital! You're jealous, I declare; just as a lover ought to be. It's the more refreshing as it's the first lover's speech you've made. Come, what do you say to a stroll on the terrace? It's a lovely day, and the open air may inspire you further still."

"As you will," said Charles, rising, and only too glad to get up from what he considered a ridiculous position.

"Or shall I send Mary to you to act as my deputy? Perhaps then you will be able to exhibit a little more enthusiasm."

"I understand your taunt, Miss Pennington."

"Edith, if you please," she said, interrupting him.

"And," he continued, heedless of her suggestion, "it would be as well, I think, if we both tried to forget the past."

"Am I to be bound to this heartless woman for life? To have known Edith Pennington all these years, and not to have discovered her real character until I have bound myself to her, is too cruel," thought the young man.

"Come, come, Sir Charles, I did not bargain for your running through the whole gamut of love-making in a single morning, sir. At least you might have put off our first lovers' quarrel for a few days. It was all your fault. I'm sure I tried to be pleasant," said Edith, adding mentally, "I think we're quits now, Master Charles."

At this moment the appearance of Lady Meredith put an end to a conversation that was amusing to only one of the persons concerned in the dialogue. They were soon after joined by Mary and the colonel. Lady Meredith, by the approbative smile upon her face, showed that things were working as she had wished and planned. Her son in *titte-à-tite* with Edith, and Mary alone with Colonel Skooter in the conservatory. What could be more satisfactory?

The servants brought in afternoon-tea, and Lady Meredith sent one of them to inform Mr. Gordon and Mr. Pennington, who were in the library, that they were to come and join them.

"Well, what news, you two conspirators?" asked her ladyship, who was brimming over with courteous good-humour, as the two men entered the drawing-room.

"Everything seems going on well," replied Gordon. "We are simply irresistible. You see we have been fighting this battle with all the advantages of a coalition. Sir Charles is a Tory, but should his sentiments not agree with those of the particular free and independent voter we have in hand at any moment, Mr. Pennington comes to the rescue with his opinion as a Liberal-Conservative; if that doesn't do, I take up the parable as a Liberal pure and simple, for this occasion only; if we all fail, we fall back on Colonel Skooter, who is a radically democratic revolutionist. So we hope to persuade the entire constituency, should Dolby persist in standing,

that it is their duty as free, enlightened, and all the rest of it voters, to plump for Sir Charles."

"I'm sure after that burst of eloquence Mr. Gordon must want some tea," said Lady Meredith, handing him a cup with her sweetest of smiles.

Gordon, after taking his tea from Lady Meredith, retreated with it to the sofa where Edith was seated; Sir Charles having left his supposed fiancée and joined his mother at the tea-table.

"Upon my word, Mr. Gordon," said Edith, *sotto voce*, "if Lady Meredith were not your mother-in-law, you might have effected an alliance, and entered into your rights unopposed."

"Nay, there would still have been an obstacle."

"Indeed, what?"

"Cannot you guess?"

"I am not good at guessing."

"And yet the obstacle is close at hand."

"To whom?"

"To me," said Sir Charles, taking Edith's hand, unperceived by anyone but themselves, and giving it a lover-like squeeze. "You can guess now?"

"You seem in high spirits since your return."

"Do I? I suppose it's because I've made up my mind to bring matters to a crisis, and confront my stepmother. Whilst in town I wrote her that I, 'Tom Meredith,' had put the matter in my lawyer's hands, and intended coming to Meredith Court to claim my rights. Given the opportunity, I fancy she will confide the whole business to me as Gordon."

"She seems on the best of terms with you."

"Does she not? See, she is coming to join us. Will you, Edith, after a minute or two of conversation, contrive to leave us alone? What are you smiling at?"

"Only at a coincidence. A few minutes ago, I made a request to poor Mary to leave me alone with Sir Charles. You should have seen the face she made over it! I don't believe she has so thoroughly distorted her pretty features since her jam and powder days."

"And are you going to similarly distort yours?"

"What, make a wry face about leaving for a few minutes a fish so thoroughly hooked as you are? Upon my word, sir, you are too conceited."

Nevertheless, on leaving her lover and Lady Meredith together, Edith made a little grimace behind that lady's back which Gordon thought delightful.

More serious work than love-making, however, lay before him, and Lady Meredith's first words, when Edith was out of earshot, led him to hope that his stepmother was feeling her way to see how far she might confide to him her present trouble.

"You cannot think, Mr. Gordon," she said, "what a relief it is to my mind to think that Charles's return seems so sure. It is to you we owe in great measure our favourable position. You could not have taken more interest in the affair if Charles had been your brother. To think we should have found such a friend in—pardon my calling you so—a comparative stranger."

"A comparative stranger, but a positive friend, I hope. Lady Meredith, can I not in some more important matter prove myself worthy of the title of friend? May not I claim a friend's privilege, and ask your confidence? Excuse me, but I believe you have a much greater anxiety on your mind than the election."

Lady Meredith started and looked at Gordon with some surprise; after a moment's pause she said:

"You are right, but I hesitate to tell you."

"Why?"

"It is connected with an old family secret."

"Anything to do with Sir Charles's elder brother, who—"

"What! do you know? Who has told you?" said Lady Meredith, repressing with difficulty her agitation.

"You see my canvassing work has taken me a good deal among your villagers, who, in this dull place, having no new excitement to occupy their minds, are not likely to forget when there has been a scandal, be it ever so old, or be they ever so ignorant of its details."

"You are right, and I ought not to be surprised at your having heard that something unpleasant happened to cause my unhappy stepson's departure, ending, poor fellow, in his death. It was a sad business altogether."

"Very sad," assented Gordon.

"The rumour of it somehow reached the ears of an adventurer, who, seeking to take advantage of his knowledge, had the impudence to write, stating that he was no other than the Thomas Meredith who had been reported dead."

"A statement which you refuted?"

"Of course; but I have again heard from the villain, who threatens to place the matter in a lawyer's hands."

"But the writing? Of course you know Mr. Thomas Meredith's?"

"There is a resemblance between his and this impostor's. Probably the fellow got hold of some letter or document of my late stepson's. You know that similitude in writing often puzzles the cleverest experts."

"That is true, but if you have any handwriting of Mr. Thomas Meredith's—by the way, if he were living he would be Sir Thomas Meredith, would he not?—I should like to see and compare it with that of the man you deem an impostor."

"Deem! Who is one. Yes, I have several papers, drawn and signed by the unfortunate young man, and if this evening, Mr. Gordon, you will come into my private sitting-room, you shall see them. Candidly, though, I do not think the comparing them with those I have recently received will help us. I am sure they are not in the same hand. Excuse me now; it is time I dressed for dinner."

"What news?" asked Edith, as a few moments later she and Gordon passed each other on the staircase.

"I hardly know yet," he said; "but within the next few hours I shall probably hold in my hand the document which has gone nigh to shatter my past prospects, and upon which all the brightness of my future depends."

"Not all, dear," said Edith, who was standing a stair lower than he was, looking up with a bright smile into his face. "No, come what will, not all. Promise me you will not let it do that."

"I accept the sacrifice," he replied, bending down and kissing her.

At that moment Lady Meredith was debating whether she should so far trust her new friend and apparent ally as to tell him the story of the alteration of the cheque, and by placing it in his hands and giving him ocular proof of her stepson's lack of principle, enlist him on her side, even should that stepson arise as one from the grave to claim what her boy was enjoying.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 124.)

## A Word of Comfort.

THE shadows of the autumn gather slowly round and o'er us,

The wind goes sighing sadly down the avenue of pines,

The western sky glows redly through the barren boughs before us,

And flings their swaying shadows down in long fantastic lines.

Athwart the river, dull and grey, a single sunbeam glitters,

Where once a thousand golden shafts flashed downwards far and nigh;

Within the woodland, bleak and bare, a single songbird twitters,

Where once a thousand carols rose in gladness to the sky.

The scene without, our hearts within, alike are sad and cheerless;

A sorrow born of parting casts a shadow o'er our lives,

And all the happy dreams and hopes we cherished, frank and fearless,

By adverse fates are swept away, till one alone survives—

A single sunbeam, when the day is darkening, dull and dreary;

A single strain of music, when all else is hushed and dumb;

A voice that whispers ever, "Though the winter may be weary,

Be patient, working, waiting, and the happy spring shall come.

"Be brave, dear heart, for, as we speak, the darker hours are fleeting,

And smaller grows the space between with each recurring chime,

And bitter though the parting now, yet sweet will be the meeting.

No need to count the moments then, nor watch the flight of time.

Let life and love, let troth and trust, outlast the stormy weather;

Again the woods shall verdant be, again the birds shall sing,

And you and I, in faith and hope, will link our fate together,

Forgetting winter's sadness in the sunny smile of spring."

## Arnold.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER VII.

I HAD not wanted more proof, but more was given me. I had remained at home all one morning, intending to go down to the office immediately after luncheon, while my wife was about to proceed on one of her visits to Langside. We left the house together, there being no excuse for going separately, and as it was not a yard out of my way, I could not but see her safely into the car.

I suppose I loved her even at that time, though my mad passion of jealousy had made me unconscious of any feeling but burning hatred towards her, and him, and all the world; and I chose a nice place for her in the corner with a lady on her left hand, where she would be safe from the many annoyances and unpleasantnesses of public conveyances.

I turned away after seeing her settled, without a parting look or word, such as we should have exchanged but how short a time

ago! and was turning into Buchanan Street, when, just as I had done a month before at St. Enoch's Station, I ran full tilt against Arnold! He was looking bright and eager, and was coming along with such an impetus that the violence of a collision nearly lost both of us our footing. Again we apologised. I saw that he recognised me, for he smiled in some surprise, and would have said more, but for the fierce scowl with which I returned his regards. If I had had a pistol in my pocket I must have shot him then like a dog!

He passed on, but unknown to him I turned and watched him as, conspicuous amid the common crowd, he ran out eagerly into the road. I understood then the reason of his haste. He had just lost a car! Then a meeting had been arranged on pretence of a visit to Langside! Oh, how my false wife must have congratulated herself on his failure to appear on this occasion when I had accompanied her! And she had seemed so calm and unconcerned! It was no longer a shadow that stood between us, but a reality—a fearful, terrible reality!

I stood still, and followed his movements with vengeful eyes. Glasgow abounds in trams; there was a line of cars, five in number, running slowly along the line one after another; the one in which Dickie was had gone on, and was beyond pursuit. He gave up the idea, if he had really entertained it, and began to look out for the next, examining each eagerly and hurriedly as it rolled by.

I looked at the printed names as eagerly as he did. It all depended upon that, in my mind. If he took a Cross Hill car I would follow him and wreak vengeance without mercy—the righteous vengeance of a wronged husband—upon his head; if he took another I would try to believe his appearance at that moment accidental, and would wait for further proof before I acted.

I thought myself very merciful and reasonable as I stood on the kerb with the crowd. My lips were dry and burning, my eyes strained to agony, my teeth and hands clenched. The people near looked at me curiously; I was vaguely conscious of their wondering glances, but I heeded them not. All my attention was concentrated upon the young, tall, handsome man who stood out in the road heedless, in his anxiety, of the danger from the throngs of carriages and carts which were continually passing.

He stood close by the rails. The first car turned to the left, down Buchanan Street, rounding the corner where I stood. The next was for Jamaica Street, and would turn off to the right a few blocks farther on; he let that pass also. The third was another Buchanan Street car.

The fourth had "Cross Hill" painted on the front in rather small but very distinct black letters. I had read it long before it came near, and watched it and him in breathless suspense. It came on, its speed accelerating as those in front cleared off, the fifth and last close behind. He looked up at it—the Cross Hill car—seeming to study the names printed in a row upon it, and then leaped on to its platform—or rather attempted to do so, for he seemed to miss the step or to lose his balance. Whatever it was, he fell, and lay with his head on the line, under the very hoofs, as it seemed, of the horses of the advancing car, which was coming on now at a brisk trot, and was quite unable to stop at a moment's notice. The driver did all he could; the horses strove with all their power to obey; but the rolling weight behind them could not be stayed, it forced them onwards like a monster demanding sacrifice.

It took but a moment for all this to happen, and but a moment for me to think a thousand thoughts, change my mind a dozen times over, and make as many resolutions. In that second of time, when eternity was so near my enemy, whom I hated with such deadly hate, I was seized with a sudden impulse of mercy. I saw things in another light. I saw how admirable and loveable this man must be in the eyes of a woman—though I had always seen that. I saw how cruel was the accident, or rather, the deliberate malice, that had separated them—how untoward the circumstances their meeting after it was too late; and I could excuse her, in her youth and disappointment, of the imprudence she had committed in allowing him to see her again. She loved him, doubtless, as he loved her, and could they help that? Whether they could or not, whether they ought or not, did not matter to me—I did not trouble myself with the rights and wrongs of the question; one idea had seized my whirling brain—to get rid of my miserable life, which surely was the heaviest burden that ever man carried, and in losing it to save him—for her.

After all, through it all, I loved her—I knew it then—with all the absorbed and passionate love of my nature. If by one prompt action I could rid her of myself and give her her loved one again I would do it and be thankful. She would always remember me kindly then—she would never forget that I ended my life in giving her back her beloved from the very clutches of death.

So with the mingled idea of saving life and destroying it, I plunged through the concourse of carts, and carriages, and people, seized upon that prostrate dark head that lay still, as if stunned, in such imminent danger, heard the shouts of the crowd and felt a

sharp blow upon my forehead, and then, falling back, thought that I died.

I did not know how long a time had elapsed when I opened my eyes and found myself lying in bed in my room at home. I was quite alone; no anxious watcher hung over my pillow, listening for my first faint breath as I returned to consciousness. Even my mother had deserted me.

My first sensation was one of intense surprise at finding myself still in the land of the living; my next, keen disappointment that I had not died. I had meant to die. I had meant to commit that great crime of suicide as surely as I had meant to save the life of another; and I had not hoped to palliate the one act by the other. But I had felt that in no world could I meet and endure more misery than had fallen to my lot in this one, and so I had recked little of the hereafter.

Nor did I think now of what I had escaped as my eyes wandered hopelessly about the room, resting upon the familiar articles of furniture and some little knick-knacks of Dickie's. Where was she? Where was he? Had they left me carelessly to live or die alone? or did they think me already dead? But no, there was no cold winding-sheet, no formal arrangement of the room; it was rather untidy, indeed, and looked as though some hurry or agitation of the domestic atmosphere had disturbed its wonted tasteful orderliness. A bright red fire, too, burnt cheerily in the grate, with fresh coals on the top evidently just put on, while I lay in a warm nest of blankets and down quilts. It must be a bitterly cold day, for I could see, through one half-open Venetian blind, the frozen snow clinging round the window-panes through which the chilly wintry sunshine entered and lay in a barred patch upon the carpet; but in my cosy room the atmosphere was that of summer. No, they knew I was not dead, and yet they had left me thus.

Well, what did it matter? I tried to reason with myself. I did not wish her to come crying and pretending to rejoice over me when I knew that her heart belonged to him. And then another thought struck me: perhaps I had not succeeded in one purpose any more than in the other; perhaps he was mortally injured, and she had gone to take his dying farewell; perhaps he was already dead, and she was looking her last upon him.

The uncertainty about everything and everybody became unbearable. I turned restlessly upon my pillows, wishing that my mother would come, or old Janet, or anybody, and in so doing I became aware that my head was bound up. I remembered the blow upon my forehead then, and wondered to feel so well as I did; and then, while my hand was wandering over the bandages, I suddenly became conscious of a voice speaking in the next room—his voice, that deep pleasant voice, which was as the sound of my doom in my ears!

I thought my wound must have affected my brain; at first I could not, would not, believe that he could be here, in my house. She could not have brought him here; he could not have come! But after listening intently I knew that I had made no mistake; it was that voice and no other—softer and more subdued than I had before heard it—but his. He had come here to see if I was dead yet, had he? Oh, how the fierce blood leaped in my veins at the thought! And they were talking together while I lay here helpless—for all they knew, dying. I knew that he was holding a conversation with somebody, for sometimes his tones were questioning, and sometimes consoling and reassuring, with long pauses between. I could not hear a sound of any other voice, therefore, I argued, his companion must be a woman; I should have heard the deep tones of a man. Had the knowledge of it all reached my mother, and had it killed her, that she did not come to her son in his need?

The room in which they were, the next one to mine, was a sort of little study, or "den," much used by me, where I kept my papers and many of my books, and where I smoked my pipe often, until lately, in the sweet company of my Dickybird. A second door opened into it from my room, so that it could be reached from thence without going out into the lobby. Of late it had been a place of refuge from the sight of the sweet changing face upon which I could not bear to look, from the soft voice that was never raised now in joyous song, yet whose lowest tones jarred unbearably upon my overstrung nerves. How dared she bring him to that room—that room of fond and sacred memories to me at any rate—how could she, even if she dared? Oh, how she must be changed from the sweet ingenuous girl—almost child—who had been placed in my charge but nine months since! But now he should have no mercy at my hands; I would show that I was yet able to take my just and terrible revenge!

And with that dread thought I essayed to rise from my bed. My head swam, but I managed to get across the room to the water-bottle, and after drinking a little I felt better. I longed for some wine or spirits to steady my shaking hand, but to call for that would be to frustrate the purpose upon which all my powers of mind and

body had suddenly become intent. With great difficulty, and fingers trembling from weakness and excitement, I dressed myself in the clothes that I found on a chair near the bed—the same, evidently, which had been taken off me I could not tell how long since. I made as little noise as possible, for fear of disturbing the two so intent upon each other in the next room. Only the coat was missing, and looking round for it, I saw it, thrown hastily into a corner of the room, and stained with blood. His blood or mine? I wondered as I surveyed it. But he had evidently escaped without serious injury.

I did not dare stoop to pick it up, lest I should bring on the swimming in my head again. I took instead the old velvet shooting-coat that I was in the habit of wearing about the house, and then I unlocked my private drawer, and took from a case a tiny shining pistol that had many a time saved my life during my ramblings in far countries, examined it to see that it was loaded, and then concealing it, together with the hand that held it, in the side-pocket of my coat, I advanced towards the door of communication between the two rooms. The fierce and vindictive jealousy of an Oriental possessed my soul in that moment—the deadliest, most murderous hatred that a human being, not actually a demon, could feel. I have already said that a warmer strain was mingled with my English blood, and the passions that beset me were far fiercer than those which belong to our cool northern isle—the fiery tides that coursed through my veins were nourished in warmer Eastern climes; their heat and fury nerved my weak hand as I stepped forward, cursing the day which gave me my wife.

I opened the door and walked straight into the room, my gait unflinching now. As I expected, he stood there—that other Arnold—upon the rug in front of the fireplace. He held a woman in his arms; she was crying softly with her head upon his breast, and he was in the act of caressing and consoling her. But that woman was not my wife. That bright golden hair did not belong to my wife—no, nor the strikingly beautiful face and blue eyes that were turned quickly to my view upon my entrance. The young handsome woman, exquisitely dressed—I heard afterwards that she was Scotch, but she had a great deal more the appearance of a Frenchwoman—who faced me in astonishment and alarm, uttering a little scream, and then ran towards me, was a perfect stranger to me.

"Oh, Mr. Challenge," she cried, appearing to know me well enough, though I did not know her, "however did you come here? Do go back, you will hurt yourself."

I stood still and stared at her. I had withdrawn my hand from my pocket to be ready for aim, and amid all my bewilderment I was intensely conscious of that little, shining, deadly thing in my grasp.

He came forward then, and I saw him glance at it, half-concealed, in my hand.

"Do allow me to help you back to your room, Mr. Challenge?" he said in his hearty yet refined tones. "You have received a wound on your head, and will become feverish if you take cold."

"Who is that lady?" I demanded of him briefly.

"My wife, who will bear you everlasting gratitude that this day has not found her a widow."

His wife! Such a thing had not entered into my calculations.

"And you?"

"Arnold de Rosny, who will never be able to thank you enough for having preserved him to all whom he loves."

"All whom you love?" I repeated slowly after him.

"Yes, only two, my wife and baby girl, but they are all the world to me. Mr. Challenge, I am your friend and servant for life, if you will allow me. Your noble rescue of me at the imminent risk of your own life has called forth admiration from all who witnessed it, but of our feelings"—here he cast a tender glance at the woman by his side, a glance that softened indescribably the whole haughty cast of his face—"I cannot adequately speak."

I saw that there was some mistake, though yet I knew not where; I saw that I had been wrong in my suspicions, though the truth was yet hidden from me. I grasped the tiny pistol firmer in my hand, striving to cover every inch of its shining barrel, striving to keep them from guessing what mean ignoble thoughts I had had of my wife, and how I had intended to revenge myself, though all the while I knew that he, at any rate, had seen it already.

"Let me help you back to your room," he began again anxiously.

I perceived that he thought the blow I had received had temporarily affected my brain; and I think now that perhaps it really had. The wound was bleeding afresh—my movement had brought it on—and the blood kept dropping down upon my eyes and blinding me, and I kept wiping it away with my other hand. I must have been a ghastly sight.

"Not till he has received a wife's sincere and heartfelt thanks for her husband's life!" cried the lady impetuously and rather hysterically.

"Darling, do be calm. You will excite him and do him harm. Speak to him another time," remonstrated De Rosny.

Just as he approached me and took my arm, the hand of which I still clutched that terrible deadly thing of which I was now so miserably ashamed, the door opened, and my mother entered, half-supporting my Dickie, who, looking so pallid and ill that her appearance struck me with horror, put out her hands towards me.

"Arnold!" she exclaimed, "Arnold!"

And I could not think that her call was for him—that other Arnold. Her look, loving, anguished, startled, was for me; her hands were stretched towards me. In the new light that had dawned upon me I seemed to see things as they were, not as my distorted imagination represented them to be.

But I was not worthy to touch those hands stretched out to me—those dear hands which had performed so many little acts of loving service for me, which had caressed me in happier days, and pleaded dumbly with me in these latter ones of distrust and misery, and which I had repulsed so cruelly! No! I went over to her and knelt at her feet, and prostrated my head to the hem of her gown. Could I ever make sufficient atonement?

And there at her feet, the world faded away, and again I thought that death had come to me.

## CHAPTER VIII.

UPON my recovery I heard one part of the story from my mother and the rest from my wife.

I had been brought home in a cab, senseless, by a strange gentleman whose life I had saved from under the horses' feet—so my mother told me, while Dickie lay sleeping on the sofa, worn out with her late watching and nursing—and had remained in that state all night, and until nine o'clock on the following morning. The stranger, Mr. de Rosny, had been very anxious about me, and would have stayed to watch if they would have allowed it, but they preferred to sit up themselves, Dickie having been immediately sent for from Langside. He had come early the next morning, accompanied by his wife, to see me, if possible, and had been hastily shown into the little room, one of whose doors opened on that in which I lay, still unconscious.

The fatigue of watching, together with the sudden shock and the suspense that followed, had become too much for Dickie, who had fainted away at last as she stood by my bed, and it was just when my mother and old Janet had left me for a moment to carry her away into the former's room that I roused up. It was some time before she recovered. They feared, from her appearance, that she was going to be very ill. When my mother left her to come back to me, she was so horrified to find the bed empty, its still pale occupant gone, that she gave an involuntary cry of fear, which brought Dickie to her side in a moment. Then, hearing voices, they went in at the half-open door, and found me with Mr. and Mrs. de Rosny.

"Mr. de Rosny seemed to think that your mind was a little confused after the blow," my mother said. "Your head bled violently again, and we had to send for Dr. Little at once. He said that your moving had trebled the danger of fever, but, after all, it kept off. I can hardly believe that it is only four days since it all happened."

I knew what had kept the fever off—what had snapped that tight burning band round my forehead, which had seemed to grow tighter and hotter every day for the last six weeks. Nothing else could have done it—I knew that. My brain had been consumed with raging fire until I saw my enemy—my intended victim—holding his own wife in his arms, kissing her lips—not another's; consoling her—not taking advantage of my helplessness to linger with my wife.

The sight had been to me like cold water suddenly thrown upon raging flames.

"It is a strange thing," my mother continued, "but do you know these De Rosnys are both old friends of Dickie's? She knew them before they were regularly engaged, though there had been an understanding between them long before. She stayed with Mrs. de Rosny when she was Miss Urquhart, and there met Mr. de Rosny. The marriage was not spoken of at the time, though it was already a settled thing, and now they have been married more than a year."

"It does seem strange," I responded; but I could have told my informant a slightly different story about the arrangement of that match.

Miss Urquhart was, without doubt, the girl who had been forced upon the young man against his will. He seemed very well satisfied now, however.

"Mrs. de Rosny is a Scotchwoman, and has relatives in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as somewhere down the Clyde—Dumbarton, I think. They spent three months in Edinburgh, as her health required bracing after the birth of their little girl, and have been here since the new year. They are going home in a day or two now, to avoid the March east winds. I wonder Dickie never met them

and where—don't you? It would have been a pleasant surprise for her, and would have cheered her up."

"Do you think she has required cheering, then?"

"Well," consideringly, "I know what her answer would be to such a question—that she wanted nobody but you and me, and was perfectly happy with us; but yet I have fancied lately that she has been a little quiet and low-spirited—the winter weather, no doubt."

I knew, by my mother's manner, that she was putting forth her sentiments in the mildest form possible: I knew, too, that the keen breath of winter had only given my Dickybird new life and strength, until my cruelty had descended upon her like a scorching blight.

"Mrs. de Rosny is quite a girl, and so lovely," my mother remarked, and it was with difficulty that I refrained from answering:

"Yes, Dickie told me she was."

But the sight of the black rings round the eyes of my sleeping wife caused me to reproach myself anew. I had to see my old rival, De Rosny; he was so anxious about me, so full of concern, that it would have been churlish to refuse, and I bore him and his inevitable gratitude as well as I could, though I would rather have suffered instead half-a-dozen such injuries as mine.

"I know who he is," I had whispered to my wife, just before he came into the room, and there was no surprise in the sad and wistful look with which she answered me.

"I guessed that you knew," was all she said.

I liked him immensely—he was the sort of man that no one could help liking—and admired him even more; but I was glad he was going away. The thought that he had once been her lover was not pleasant to me, and he could hardly have forgotten it, though he had consoled himself so quickly. Not that I distrusted him now, but no one could ever quite forget a girl like Dickie—of that I felt sure.

Before leaving, he gave us a warm invitation to Normandy, where his mother's estates, which on his marriage she had made over to him, were situated, and where they intended to pass the summer, and probably the greater part of their lives.

Directly he was gone, I turned to Dickie and asked her what had become of the pistol—stumbling ashamedly over the word—that I had had in my hand when I fainted away.

"Oh, do you remember that?" she answered, with a look of disappointment, almost of apprehension.

"As well as I remember De Rosny being here five minutes ago. Did it do any mischief?"

"No; Mr. de Rosny took it out of your hand. Nobody saw it except he and I."

She was kneeling beside my easy-chair, my hand clasped in hers. Now she drooped her face low, out of my sight.

"Did you guess what I was going to do?" I asked in a shamed whisper.

"The thought did flash upon my mind," she said. "The sight of the pistol made me think that you must know or guess something. I knew that you had thought a great deal about him at one time, and so, if you knew that I had seen him lately—if you had found out who he was, the sight of that—that thing, seemed to give me the clue to it all. Oh, Arnold, what must you think of me for concealing it from you! But I did it with the best of intentions, dear."

"I am sure you did."

"Mr. de Rosny took it for granted that you were not in your right mind, and I was very glad to take his view of it. He said you looked frenzied when you entered the room, and that you evidently meant mischief. He saw it in your hand directly, and was in terror for his wife, not dreaming, of course, of your having any particular object; that was only my idea, which, equally of course, I kept to myself. After you had been put into bed again, and had fallen asleep, he showed it to me, and asked me if I knew where it was kept. But I had never seen it before. I did not know you had such a thing in your possession. However, the key was left in the little drawer that you always keep locked up, so he looked there, and found the case, with another in it. He put it back in its place, and locked the drawer, and returned me the key. He wanted neither you or anybody else to know anything about the—the—its having been found in your hand, for your own sake; and he thought that if, when you were recovered, you found the drawer just as usual, you would never remember anything."

"He was very kind to try to save me pain," I said, "but it is beyond his power, Dickie, and yours too. I knew what I was about well enough. Perhaps no man furious with jealousy is perfectly sane, but I was quite sufficiently so to bear the responsibility of my own actions."

And there and then I told her the whole miserable story, and she listened in such self-reproach and deep grief for my sufferings as made

my heart ache to see. She did not seem to think of herself at all—of how I had injured her. Nothing of that entered into her unselfish heart, all her pity was for me—all her sorrow for what I had endured—all her reproaches for herself. Knowing her tenderness and generosity, I had dared to hope for pardon from her, and here she was pleading, instead, for pardon from me!

"I did it for the best," she told me, "though now I see I was wrong in keeping anything from you. It made me miserable directly, but after keeping it secret at first it seemed impossible to speak later on. I thought it would disturb you to know that I had seen him—you would be fancying that I was grieving over his marriage or mine; and as I never thought to see him again, it seemed not worth while to mention it. He did not know then that they were coming on to Glasgow, and had he known it he would not have thought to tell me, for I did not tell him we lived here. We did not say much to one another upon any subject, for our chat only lasted about ten minutes. I met him just as I was turning into the close. We were so surprised, and still more so when we discovered that the one had been as easily consoled as the other. We had a hearty laugh over our faithlessness."

And this while I had been tormenting myself with every vain and jealous thought possible!

"I heard you call him 'Arnold,'" I said, in self-excuse, "and you spoke so softly that I imagined you speaking to him like that two years before, when you were free to love one another. I think that our having the same name has made it worse for me all along. I often thought that, just as you had liked my name for his sake, so perhaps you had loved me because it was mine as well as his, for the memory, the associations, connected with it; and so, when—"

"Oh, Arnold, you goose!" she broke in, speaking in such a way that the words sounded like the softest of endearments. "Perhaps I did like the name for his sake, just at first, when I was a silly child, and thought I could never forget a man who had flattered me, and made a little love to me; but I soon forgot all about that, I soon learnt to love that name—not like it—for a dearer reason than that, Arnold. Scold me as much as ever you will for concealing all this from you," she went on, "though, indeed, dear, I did it thinking only of you."

"I know it, my love," I answered. "And how can I blame you for doing the best you knew how for me, when I have so entirely misjudged you—when I have thus given way to my evil impulses?"

"Don't think about it. You were not well. The knowledge which I thought concealed, preyed upon you until it warped your judgment and embittered your temper. You were not yourself, Arnold, say what you will. I saw that you were changed, but how little did I guess the cause."

She paused. I yearned to kiss her, as I had done many times in the course of her sweet consolations; but I did not, I was too deeply ashamed.

"What I cannot understand," I said presently, "is the speediness with which he consoled himself." She laughed. "Do you know how it came about? Did he tell you anything?"

"No; I heard nothing. It must have been only a fancy of his about me, and I was very young, and felt flattered, and so, no doubt, made a great deal more of it. There is no doubt that he is passionately fond of his wife, and, indeed, she is a very nice girl away from her mother; and so lovely, too—enough to make anyone love her. But I was disappointed in him—I thought he was nicer. I suppose it was after being used to you," naively.

"Why, Dickie, what made my jealousy a thousand times more bitter, was the thought of how I must appear in your eyes by the side of such a man as that. I did not wonder, when I saw him, that you had cared for him. If I were a girl I think I should have chosen him from the rest of the world. And you must forgive me, my love, for thinking that such a man as he was not easily forgotten."

"Oh, he is very fine and handsome—I don't deny it," she replied with a little toss of her pretty head. "And when I was a girl—we both laughed at that—"I suppose I was fascinated. Yes, I remembered him until I saw you. But he hasn't got your ways, Arnold—your dear, kind, gentle ways—nor your talk, nor your beautiful, fierce, sad eyes; and oh, I didn't admire him at all after you!"

What could I say to such an earnest flatterer, who believed so utterly every word that she said? I could say nothing; I could only stroke her down-bent head, and summon up courage at last to kiss the only bit of her within reach of my lips—the tip of her delicate pink ear.

"I do not wonder that you thought me deceitful," she went on to say presently. "It must have seemed very strange to see us meet again here after meeting in Edinburgh. But that time, when you saw him saying good-bye to me, was the only time we ever met here; and as to his getting into the Cross Hill car, I am able to tell you that he must have meant to take a Jamaica Street car, for when he



was explaining to us how it all happened, he mentioned that at the time he was going down to the docks in a great hurry, and being near-sighted, had great trouble in finding out which was the right one, especially as he did not know his way about Glasgow. He said that had it not been for his uncertainty and consequent flurry, he thought he should not have missed the step. And we know that a Cross Hill car will not take us to the docks."

"There! you see I was wrong altogether."

"Never mind, dear," she said, looking lovingly into my remorseful eyes. "The evidence was enough to mislead anybody, and no one knows but I."

I pressed my lips gratefully to her dear hand.

"Do not be too hard upon yourself," she went on. "In spite of all, you have acted nobly. You were mad with rage and jealousy, and you thought you had good reason—and yet you saved him. Never mind the rest"—stopping me as I essayed to speak—"I don't think of that; this one act, in my eyes, covers all else."

"In your kind eyes," I returned sadly; "but how about those of Another? Merciful though you are, my Dickie, there is another judgment than yours, before which I must stand, and before which your sweet pleading cannot avail me."

"And do you think that will be a less kind, a less merciful judgment than mine?" she said in her sweet way. "I am only a weak and faulty human being like yourself, Arnold. I can feel jealousy and hate, even as you; but yet I can take circumstances into account, and make allowances, and forgive all. And do you think He will do less?"

"Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once,  
When He that might the vantage best have took,  
Found out the remedy. How would you be  
If He which is the top of judgment should  
But judge you as you are?"

I quoted dreamily.

"There," said my wife, nodding her head, "you see you knew all about it without asking me. Let us say good-bye to the last few weeks, Arnold, and always trust in each other's love—shall we not?"

And our lips met in a long kiss of reunion.

Six months later the dear old mother died, holding our hands and blessing us, and was laid to rest on one of the loftiest breeze-swept ridges of the beautiful Necropolis. We could hardly mourn her, so glad was she to go, full of years as she was, and wearying for her rest. Her death seemed to break up many of the ties and associations that had bound us to Scotland, and when Miles proposed that we should go and live near him—not joining him at his unhealthy post; that would not do on my Dickie's account—but settling not far off, on the Mediterranean shore, where he will retire when work has lost its charm for him, or his health gives way, we with one accord agreed.

And so there Dickie dwells, in the fairyland which I once described to her, and which she declared would not be fairyland without me. I love to think now of her quick-growing affection for me while I stood to her but in the relation of a parent; it shows that our deep mutual love is more than mere passion—a love arising from kinship of natures—it supports my favourite theory of twin-souls.

As I sit writing at the window the low wash of the waves sounds in my ears; whenever I glance up I see the blue waters of the Mediterranean heaving and sparkling in the sunshine, and breaking softly upon the yellow beach like a huge jewel set in gold. I am better and younger now than when we lived in Scotland. The climate suits me, and my life is so calm and happy that under such circumstances it would be a wonder, indeed, if my health did not improve.

There is only one thing wanted to complete the picture—that is, my wife. And now she comes into the room and up to my side, and my happiness, as well as the picture, is made complete. She tells me that I grow younger and handsomer every day, while I am quite sure that I am the owner of the most beautiful wife in the world, not even excepting Arnold de Rosny.

And as we are so entirely satisfied one with another, there remains no more to tell, since when husband and wife perfectly agree, they cease to be interesting to any beside themselves.

(Concluded.—Commenced in No. 132.)

## Mrs. De Vere Appears in Public.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

It might be said of old Sam Sladger, as it was said of another, that his counting-house was his temple, his desk was his altar, his ledger was his Bible, and his money was his God.

What old Sam loved next best after his money was, to use his own expression, a "nob"—a lord, or a somebody of any sort, titled for choice. Next to a "nob," he loved his only child, his daughter Julia.

It was not a little hard to realise that Julia was his daughter,

or even that she bore the unromantic name of Sladger. She was beautiful, well-bred, and accomplished, was sweetly winning in manner, and was considered by her admirers, who were many, to be an "all round a winner," a phrase which appeared to them to happily sum up all her varied attractions, personal and mental.

Old Sam had determined that Julia should wed his friend, Mr. Alderman Chozzle, who was worth a mint of money, and would be Lord Mayor at no distant day. It was an excellent match from every point of view except one—Julia's. Julia would have nothing whatever to do with Chozzle, much less would she marry him. The matter was often debated between father and daughter, if that can be called a debate which was all command and loud-voiced argument on the one side, and all tears and silent obstinacy on the other.

Had Chozzle had no favoured rival in the field it is possible the poor girl might have been bullied into accepting him; marrying him, after the manner of the Irish lady, for the sake of peace and quietness.

But there was a rival in the field. He was an artist. He was very poor. He was a complete failure in his profession. He was exceedingly romantic, and his name was Vandeleur de Vere.

Anyone must see at once that these were quite good and sufficient reasons for any young woman falling in love with him. At any rate, they were quite sufficient for Julia. She thought Vandeleur was like a Greek god, which he wasn't; and that he had "latent genius," which he hadn't; or which, if he had, remained latent for the term of his natural life.

At last Chozzle became too much for Julia, even though she wasn't married to him. Her life seemed all Chozzle. Her father served him up, at breakfast, at dinner, and between meals. At last this incessant Chozzle diet, as it may be called, became unbearable. So Julia went out one fine morning and married Vandeleur de Vere, according to a prearranged plan.

Now, if there was one man old Sam objected to more strongly than another, it was Vandeleur de Vere. He branded him, with fine scorn, as "one of them good-for-nothing ascetic fellows"—by which he was understood to mean the great æsthetic brotherhood in general. When, therefore, he received a letter from his daughter, putting him in possession of the state of affairs, imploring forgiveness for herself and "my darling Van," the old man's feelings may, to use an altogether novel phrase, be better imagined than described.

In their lodgings, in a back-street in Camden Town, Mr. and Mrs. Vandeleur de Vere awaited the outraged parent's reply with a good deal of anxiety. They did not expect that he would "come round" all at once—that would have been too much; but they did hope that he would, after his first fit of passion, accept the inevitable, and his son-in-law. But they were soon undeceived—not quite so soon, however, as might have been supposed, for two days elapsed before a letter made its appearance, bearing on the cover the stiff, awkward writing of Samuel Sladger. When it did come, the young couple found it very brief and to the point. It was addressed to Mrs. V. de Vere, and ran as follows:

"MADAM,

"Your favour of 4th instant to hand, and contents noted. As you have made your bed, so must you and your vagabond husband lie. You have not broken my heart by your wicked and disgraceful conduct, but you have closed it against you for ever.

"I am a man of my word; that you know well. I cast you off, I disown you as a daughter, I forbid you or your Mr. de Vere to set foot in my house under any pretence whatever, and I tell you now, once for all, that you shall never have even one penny piece, or the value of it, from me. It will be quite useless to write to me, as all your letters will be returned unopened.

"SAMUEL SLADGER."

Writing to the obdurate old man under these circumstances was certainly a forlorn hope, but the young people did write—more than once, and each time the letter was duly returned unopened, and, it may be added, with the return postage unpaid.

To do Julia and her husband justice, they bore up under their misfortunes pluckily. Van painted pictures by the perch, the rood, the acre, but they would not sell. By the time all Julia's trinkets had been turned into money, and actual starvation was staring the young couple in the face—for dealers and art-shopkeepers wouldn't even look at poor Van's productions now—the landlady, who was getting anxious about the rent, which was rapidly falling in arrears, volunteered this—to Julia—mysterious piece of advice.

"If you can't sell 'em," and she indicated the blushing canvases, "why not spout 'em?"

"I—I beg your pardon, I don't quite understand," replied Julia, looking a good deal bewildered.

The landlady, in a tone of ill-concealed pity for her lodger's ignorance, explained that "spouting" the pictures meant pledging them at a pawnbroker's for whatever he could be induced to lend upon them.

Julia shrank from the idea at first, and Van was indignant when it was suggested that he should pawn his works of genius just as if they were flat-irons or Sunday suits. But Julia had grown more practical of late—was beginning to come out of her shell, as the landlady said—and soon reconciled herself to the notion of obtaining small advances upon her husband's pictures.

The work of pledging was by no means a pleasant one. Only a few pawnbrokers here and there could be induced to lend anything upon Van's priceless art-treasures. And those who lent anything at all lent very, very little, grumbling that "pictures was a drug in the market," and suggesting that they were prepared to make really liberal advances upon any articles of solid commercial value, such as fenders and blankets.

In their keen struggle for life both Van and Julia became smart and artful to a degree which surprised even themselves. Van very soon got to know the sort of picture upon which most money would be lent, and was lavish in the use of his brightest colours. But to Julia must be given the credit of hitting upon the idea of Van's producing endless copies of his most popular piece—a red-cloaked maiden walking in a gamboge corn-field under a brilliant ultramarine sky. Van soon dropped into the knack of "knocking off" these masterpieces at a terrific rate. He worked upon some half-dozen at once, first putting on six brilliant skies, then calling into being six fields of waving grain, and then introducing into each the simple maiden in the excruciating scarlet cloak.

For many a week did the young people live upon the proceeds of the gaudy manufacture, but there came a time when there was scarcely a pawnbroker in London who had not in his keeping one of Van's outrages upon Nature. But it gradually became harder to part with them, or with any picture at all, and the young people were getting terribly anxious about the future.

"Van, dear," said Julia one day, for the thousandth time, "we must have money somehow. I'm getting desperate. I wish, oh, how I wish I could earn some! But what can I do? I was never taught anything useful. I can play very decently, it's true, and I can sing, that's one thing I can do really well. But where could I sing? I have never sung in public. I have no recommendations nor introductions. I shall never make anything by singing."

"I'm afraid you're right, darling," said her husband gloomily, as he clinked the few shillings remaining in his pocket. "You could never make a public appearance, unless," and here he smiled at the quaintness of the idea, "unless you made it in the public streets, like that girl we saw with a crowd round her the other night, don't you know? How delighted your amiable parent—confound him!—would be if he knew of it. Wonder what he'd do!"

Julia was always ready to laugh at a quaint conceit, even in the midst of their poverty. But she did not laugh now. She started as Van spoke, and turned quickly away from the table. Van rose also, went to his easel, began misrepresenting Nature, and in that pleasing occupation very soon forgot all about old Sladger and the cantatrice of the pavement.

All that day Julia was exceedingly quiet and thoughtful.

"Van dear," said Julia suddenly, when they had been sitting talking for some time after tea, "I'm going out."

"All right," said Van, "I'm ready. Where do you want to go?"

"Oh, not far; there are several little things to buy. I can get them quite well by myself. You needn't come."

"Needn't come! But I don't like your going out alone at night. Besides, why should you go alone?"

"For a woman's reason. Because I want to. Now don't be angry, Van. You must let me have my own way. I won't come to any hurt, I promise you."

And Van gave in, of course. But he had a fresh remonstrance to make when he saw Julia wrap herself in a faded old black shawl, and put on a bonnet which had long since seen, not only its best, but pretty nearly its worst days.

"What on earth are you putting on those wretched old things for?" he enquired. "We're poor enough, goodness knows, but you have some respectable garments left, anyhow."

"For the sake of economy. I don't care how I look about here," and with that she hurried out.

Julia walked rapidly westward, looking neither to right nor left. She feared if she proceeded slowly, or hesitated, the courage to carry out the resolution she had made might ooze away.

At last she arrived near her father's house, a handsome corner building. It was about nine o'clock, and old Sam and his guests, for he was giving a dinner-party, were in the brilliantly-lighted dining-room.

Sam Sladger had changed a good deal since his daughter's departure from home. He looked aged and haggard. He missed her sorely, and yearned to have her back with him; but he had stuck stubbornly to his determination to have nothing further to do with her.

He had found, too, to his bitter annoyance, that the opinion of nearly all his friends was that he had treated his daughter with

undue harshness and severity, not to say actual cruelty. He feared that Vandeleur might be driven by poverty to resort to any shady means of getting a living that might present themselves, and he was filled with a vague terror that he might thereby find himself—the respected Sladger—involved indirectly in some scandal brought about by his son-in-law.

The old man, then, was not happy. But on this particular evening he was less unhappy than he had been for a considerable time, for among his guests was one of the "nobs" he worshipped—a lord, who had been induced to put his legs under Sladger's mahogany as a tacitly accepted payment in full of several sums his lordship had borrowed of the City man, who had never looked for any other payment than that which he was getting now.

His lordship did not contribute much towards the conversation, but whenever he did speak, his host drank in every word, said "Quite so," and "Exactly," with an air of profound conviction, and looked round the table, as if to challenge contradiction.

Sladger hoped that his noble friend would be a constant visitor.

"Well, as I was saying," remarked his lordship, continuing a conversation, "as I was telling you, there was quite a scene. Regular excitement, don't you know; everybody upset, and all that. I don't say there was anybody in particular to blame. But a scene is a thing I really cannot stand; and so, don't you know, I've never been to the house since."

There was a murmur of applause at this very spirited and aristocratic way of treating the affair, which had hardly died away when Sladger's face suddenly became ashy pale. He hurriedly drank a glass of wine, and listened with feverish eagerness, for it was something he had heard which had caused the blood to leave his cheeks. Yes, there was no mistake. Tremulous and low at first, but growing louder and clearer now, a woman's voice singing a simple ballad could be heard.

There was nothing much in that to other hearers, but there was a good deal in it to old Sladger. It was his daughter's voice. Surely he could not be mistaken. Making some trivial excuse for going to the window, he raised the blind and looked out. There, before his very doorstep, was a small crowd—one of those crowds which spring up in London as if by magic—and in the centre of it was a young woman wrapped in a faded and patched old black shawl, with a pinched and shrivelled bonnet on her head. In spite of this, it was clear from her general appearance and the timidity of her manner that she was not a woman accustomed to get her living by singing in the streets. Some in the crowd were sympathetic, others were mirthful, and others, again, merely looked on and listened, and wondered vaguely.

Old Sam knew her in a moment. He had not mistaken the voice. It was his daughter he saw before him.

He looked out at her for some moments, unable to decide how to act. He must not have a scene, and he must have his daughter. He cursed himself for having held out so long.

This sort of thing must be put a stop to, at all hazards. His daughter singing in the streets! It would certainly come to be known and talked about. The scandal would be too great.

Leaving the dining-room with as composed an air as he could assume under the circumstances, he went quietly to the hall-door, opened it, and passed out. As he did so, the song came to an end.

Stepping up to his daughter, who looked at him with steady eyes, he said aloud:

"Very well done, young woman—very well done! You must be tired. Come in and take a little refreshment!" And then, in a tone that only reached her ears: "For Heaven's sake, Julia, come into the house; stop this horrible masquerading! You'll disgrace me for ever! Don't hesitate or make a scene. I wouldn't have a scene here for anything. I—I take back all I wrote to you. I'll let bygones be bygones. I dare say your husband's a very good fellow—in his way. I'll—I'll make friends with him too. You sha'n't want for money, either of you."

And, so saying, the old man, almost crying with excitement, drew her into the house.

What passed between father and daughter then is, perhaps, hardly worth relating.

But a reconciliation must have been effected, for the young couple and the old man are now on the friendliest terms possible.

Extraordinary to relate, Sam has come to be actually fond of his son-in-law, for Vandeleur has made a name as the founder of an entirely new school of art, by his friends and admirers called the Mystic, and by his detractors the Moonstruck, and which, whatever its claims to consideration, is talked and written about a great deal, and that is the main thing, after all.

Julia says she has no secrets from her husband, but, all the same, Vandeleur has never learnt what became of his wife when she donned the old bonnet and shawl, or how it was that Sam Sladger's heart warmed so suddenly to his runaway daughter and her artistic vagabond of a husband.

## The Editor's Note Book.

THE speeches at the Colston Anniversary dinners at Bristol would have been even less interesting than political after-dinner oratory is apt to be if Lord Northbrook had not taken the opportunity of announcing a considerable modification in the measure which, under the name of the Ilbert Bill, has produced an extraordinary amount of discontent and excitement among the European population of India. In fact the protests of the best-informed Anglo-Indians have at last had their due effect on an unwilling Government, and Lord Ripon's ill-advised proposal is practically abandoned.

A VERY lively dispute has been going on as to the result of the Hospital Saturday Movement, its opponents looking apparently only to the comparatively small net annual income and pronouncing the movement a failure altogether, while Lord Brabazon, in defence, takes the total amount subscribed in ten years, and pronounces the fund a success on the strength of it. I think that most people who have no interest in the matter on one side or the other will be inclined to think that the proportion of wool to cry has been lamentably small, and that the device of placing ladies in the position of beggars in the public streets has certainly not been justified by any adequate measure of success.

THE new Lord Mayor, on taking his seat on the magisterial bench at the Mansion House on the day after his installation, struck the right key-note in saying that he considered that the first thing a Lord Mayor had to think of was his position as chief magistrate of the City of London. Entertaining is no doubt a very important part of his duty, and the Mansion House Committee business has of late years become a very fertile and remunerative source of self-advertisement. It is quite time that people should be reminded that the principal reason for the continued existence of the Lord Mayor is to be found in the proper discharge of his plainest duties.

THE Lord Mayor congratulated himself, the officers of his court, and the citizens of London, on the day after his show, on the extreme lightness of the charge-sheet and on the remarkably good behaviour of the crowd throughout the day. I can only suppose that all the roughs and drunks left the City and came West early in the day. Certainly, I hardly remember so much disorderly behaviour and so many drunken people in the streets as I saw about the Strand, the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, and Oxford Street, on the 9th of this present November.

I HAVE never had much belief in centenaries, commemorations, and functions of that sort, but I begin to think they are not without value as showing the world every now and then how little it knows of some of the great men who have helped to make history, and how ready it is to swallow formulas and fetishes whole, in blissful unconsciousness of their meaning. Thus, for instance, I talked last week with many men, more or less distinguished in divers walks of life, about the Luther Commemoration, but I found very few with any distinct and accurate knowledge of what it was that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther actually did, while, except to newspaper writers, with books of reference at their elbows, the very names of the equally great but less dramatic reformers who were associated with him appear to be absolutely unknown.

So much has been said in depreciation of the rank and file of the army, that it is well to draw attention to some remarks of Lord Justice Fry to the Grand Jury at Maidstone the other day. A very heavy calendar, comprising the names of sixty-seven prisoners, had just been got through, and it appeared that the ranks of the accused did not include a single soldier or sailor or any person wearing Her Majesty's uniform. Considering that the district included in this Assize contains seven garrison towns, this state of things is as gratifying as it is remarkable.

THE Amalgamated Cab-Drivers' Association has been in communication with Mr. Gladstone in reference to the amendment and consolidation of the Metropolitan cab laws, which are designated in the secretary's letter as extraordinary. No doubt the subject is one which requires attention, but it must not be forgotten that the public will insist upon having a very considerable voice in any alteration of the existing system.

WHEN people can ride in cabs with something like certainty of being drawn by a fairly good horse, and of being driven by a man who knows his way about and will be satisfied with his legal fare, it will be time for the cab-drivers to talk about the necessity of dealing with their "present frightful position." For the present, although there are very many honest and respectable men on the rank, the proportion of black sheep is far beyond any reasonable average.

MISS LEIGH, who appealed some little time ago—rather unnecessarily, as most people thought—on behalf of English ballet-girls in Paris, is now to the fore again, asking for five hundred pounds wherewith to start a British working-men's home in Paris. I do not think there will be a rush of philanthropists to provide the sum out of any regard for the abstract merits of the case, and the very perille arguments which Miss Leigh's letter to the *Times* advances in support of her scheme ought to have the effect of still further checking the flow of subscriptions.

THE requirements of the British working-men in Paris are, according to Miss Leigh, "their English paper and no less English cup of tea," "a place which shall be as near as possible like our own homes in England," where they can have "plain substantial food within their means, instead of, as one man called it, 'the table d'hosts,' with the many entrées, which rather confuse than satisfy the appetite." To this the obvious reply is, that the working-man who can afford "a table d'hosts" with many entrées, can very well afford his English paper and cup of tea; and that if he cannot go abroad without wanting charitable people to provide funds for all his English notions, he had very much better stop, and be independent if he can, on this side of the Channel.

MR. WILLIAM MORRIS, the author of "The Earthly Paradise," is a delightful poet when he permits himself to be comprehensible, and is likewise a fashionable authority on decorative art, but it seems a pity that he should meddle with political economy, or that he should make the name of art ridiculous by associating it with the crudest socialist arguments.

IN his recent lecture in the hall of University College, Mr. Morris is reported to have said that he was "one of the people called Socialists, as he believed that Socialism would take the place of competition among men in conditions of life, and that thus art would revive," an oracular saying which does not seem to me very far removed from absolute nonsense. Nor is there much more practical wisdom in Mr. Morris's expression of opinion that the employment of mothers of families in factories is "an abominable custom, especially when there are so many able-bodied men standing idle," or in his description of the middle classes as living "in a sort of swinish comfort," disregarding art.

RED-HOT enthusiasts like Mr. Morris really do what they call art as much harm as all the Philistines put together. Art has its own place in the world, and deserves, it may be granted, more respect and recognition than it generally gets; but that place can only be at best side by side with the hard facts of life and the imperious necessities of a relentless civilisation, of which it must always be, in the very nature of things, rather the servant than the master.

It would be, I suppose, hypercritical to look for much reverence for the English language in the paragraphs of the gentlemen who were once upon a time called "liners," and who now flourish as interviewers or graphic reporters. But, as a good slipshod bit of English, the following sentence, which appeared in the daily papers last week, is worthy of record: "The Lord Chancellor also called" on the Crown Prince of Portugal, "and inserted his name in His Royal Highness's visitors' book." Inserted, as Polonius would have said, is good.

MOST French writers, even when they are as well-informed as M. Max O'Rell, appear to be firmly convinced that it is the ordinary custom of Englishmen to buy and sell wives, and, as one isolated fact is quite enough for a Frenchman to build a vast superstructure of generalisation on, a prosecution which came last week before Mr. Justice Denman at Liverpool will probably confirm the superstition for many years.

IN this case one Betsy Wardle was charged with having bigamously married a certain George Chisnal—who was described in the report as being apparently just out of his teens—the legitimate Wardle being alive. The transaction turned out to have been of a strictly commercial character, Chisnal having paid Wardle a quart of beer for the lady, and everybody concerned, including two ladies, friends of the bigamous bargain, evidently looked upon the whole affair as being perfectly legal and proper. Mr. Justice Denman undeceived them by sentencing Mrs. Wardle to a week's hard labour, and the wife-market is likely to be inactive in Lancashire for some time to come.

THE story of the girl in Shropshire, in whose presence crockery, clocks, buckets, burning coals, and other incongruous matters flew about the house in all directions, is only a repetition of well-known tricks with which mischievous and hysterical girls have very often amused themselves at the expense of their credulous neighbours. The only remarkable part of the business is; not that the credulous neighbours should be taken in, seeing that there is never any lack of fools in the world; but that the girls who play these pranks should reproduce so accurately the proceedings of their predecessors, of whom it is in the last degree improbable that they can ever have heard. C.D.

## After an Ostrich.

IN lion-hunts, and in tiger-hunts, and in boar-hunts there are joys and risks of which all have heard; but of the ostrich-hunt the world which is not used to running after ostriches has heard very little. There is an old fable (which is only a fable) that the ostrich when pursued will hide his head in the sand and believe himself invisible. I know the ostrich has a stupid face, but he is for all that a sharp fellow, wary and long-sighted, and one of the last creatures to put his own head in a hole. I have hunted him in his own deserts and can testify.

Every year as the summer sets in, horsemen arrive at the oasis of Derej from the mountains in the north, distant about six days' journey. They come to hunt the ostrich and stay only during the summer; as it is only during the great heats of that season that a horseman has any chance of overtaking the swift-footed bird. In cold weather he will outstrip every pursuer.

An Arab friend of mine, who was bound for the hunting-grounds, once persuaded me, now a good many years since, to go with him and try my skill at running down an ostrich. My friend Sidi had a grand air, and sustained no loss of dignity by reason that his trip to Derej was made for the sake of gain. I who only went for sport was looked upon with much respectful wonder by my fellow sportsmen.

We managed to reach Derej a day or two before the hunt began, that we might rest and prepare for the fatigue to come. It began on a sultry morning in the middle of July. The hot Gibli wind or simoom had been blowing for several days, and the thermometer stood at ninety-eight degrees, or blood-heat, just before sunrise. We were sure, therefore, to have one of the hottest days of a Saharan summer. So much the better, for the warm-coated ostrich would find it hot as well as we. The dangers of this chase do not arise from the fierceness of the animals pursued, but from the fierceness of the sun, for an Englishman is almost more likely to come off unscathed from an encounter with a lion, than to return from an ostrich-hunt without sunstroke or brain-fever.

Our party consisted of ten horsemen, and a few scouts who had been sent out at daybreak to explore the sand for footprints of the ostriches, and track them to their feeding-ground. We were all well mounted, and made ourselves as light weights as we could be, dispensing with four out of the five thick pieces of felt which invariably form the Arab's saddle-cloth, and thrown off every superfluous article of clothing; only taking care to have our heads well wrapped up as precaution against danger from the sun.

We started about two hours after sunrise, following leisurely on the tracks of our scouts, and after proceeding thus for a few miles, came upon one who told us that five fine birds were grazing in a wady a little distance off. Knowing they would not stray far, we dismounted for a few minutes to ease our horses, and to allow time to run still further into the mid-day heat. A sultry wind was blowing from the south, and the sun's glow was returned from the white sand under our feet with almost unlessened strength.

The Arabs, who are made of very porous clay, having absorbed long draughts of water, and hung little gourd bottles of the same fluid to their saddle-bows, we mounted and set off again. From the top of a little hill, if you could call it by that name—a height of about ten yards—about the bottom of the wady, we saw the ostriches, who I expect had some knowledge of us before we were visible. They had already started at full trot, and seemed to skim along without any exertion, using their small downy wings to help them onward, and, like horses in full career, kicking up the stones behind them. We went after them in a canter, for had we tried to catch them at once in a gallop, our horses would soon have been blown, and the birds would have got out of our reach. Our plan was to follow them as closely as we could without frightening them into their quickest pace, and to keep them in view.

They soon parted, two going together one way, and the others starting each in a different direction. We followed a single ostrich, a fine male, the feathers of the male bird being the more valuable.

Noon passed, and the sun was rapidly declining. We had been following our ostrich for four hours, but not in a straight line, since these creatures have a fancy for running in large circles. My hands and face began to feel as if they had been skinned and salted. The excitement and emulation among us, however, made one forget every thing but the object of the chase. One by one the horses of the Arabs dropped behind dead beat. Sidi, two other Arabs, and myself, being the best mounted, alone kept up the hunt, our aim being to turn the ostrich, and so drive him back to our companions. The two Arabs pricked their steeds into a full gallop, one going to the right and one to the left, and tried, by making a circuit, to get ahead of him. Sidi, not liking the idea of being outdone, made a dash at the game on his own account. His horse had still a little strength and spirit left, and a few long bounds brought him alongside. The bird then saw that he was outrun and outwitted. With a little stick, such as we all carried for this especial purpose, Sidi tapped him on the neck, turned him, and drove him back to me like a tame creature.

The ostrich was, of course, a Mussulman, and soon convinced that it was in vain to strive against his fate. One by one we came up with our beaten companions; surrounded our bird, caught him, and cut his throat. It would have been simpler to have tapped him on the

head, and then have strangled him, for then there would have been no danger of damaging the feathers with blood. But such a way of killing is not in accordance with the Moslem creed concerning holy and unholy food; and of an animal so slaughtered the flesh could not have been eaten.

Ladies, I trust, will be satisfied with the amount of trouble taken to get for them their court plumes. But it is a pity that each feather which costs them a guinea scarcely brings a shilling to the Arab sportsman.

When we had skinned the bird and cut off the best joints, we rode leisurely back to Derej, which we reached a little after sunset, pretty well knocked up. Heartily glad was I, after a good supper of boiled leg of ostrich—which is a meat, not very choice, but welcome to the hungry—to lie in the soft sand, and take a nap that lasted until sunrise the following morning.

It has commonly been made to appear that ostriches are so stupid or so greedy as to be totally indiscriminate in the matter of food; but this is a mistake. When two kinds of food are placed before them, they will prefer the one, and are notably fond of certain kinds, such as mealies and prickly pears. Many of them even show a delicate choice. But a hungry bird eats almost anything. His system requires food in large quantity, but he always prefers the suitable kind. It is a fact, however, that the ostrich often dies a victim of over-indulgence. On the South African farms birds also die by the score from apoplexy, brought on by their keepers stuffing them constantly with all they can eat. An incredible number of pebbles are sometimes found in an ostrich's stomach, where they serve the same purpose, in triturating the food, as sand in a pigeon's gizzard. An ostrich farmer once found a carcass, the gizzard of which contained some nine hundred and thirty stones, of sizes varying from that of a pea to that of a walnut. Most of them were bright and hard, and all more or less rounded by constant rubbing. We may see the reason of that instinct which prompts the ostrich to stretch his neck over the fence and pick off a gold stud or a diamond pin from the breast of an unsuspecting visitor, or, in default of a jewel so attractive, to attempt to pull a button off his coat.

## Cookery.

### DISHES FOR PLAIN DINNERS.

#### THIRD DAY.

Stewed Haricot Beans.

Cold Beef.      Fried Potatoes.

Treacle Pudding.

#### STEWED HARICOT BEANS.

If the beans are left to soak all night in cold water they will be easily shelled, but, if this is not convenient, boiling water must be poured over them, and, after they have stood a few minutes, be drained. The skins will then come off easily. Choose the large white sort; a pint will make a dish sufficient for eight persons. Put the beans, when shelled, into enough broth to cover them; let them boil until tender. They will probably take three hours. Watch that they do not boil dry, adding broth or water from time to time. When the beans are done, add to them a pint of plain butter-sauce, broth, or gravy. Season nicely with pepper and salt; let them simmer for five minutes, and serve.

#### COLD BEEF.

As it is more than probable that there will be only just sufficient meat left on the bones to give each person a little, it will be best to cut it all off as neatly as possible, and serve it on the dish with fried potatoes. With a view to make the dish look prettier, a few pieces of home-made pickled cabbage can be put round the potatoes.

#### FRIED POTATOES.

Peel fine kidney potatoes, and cut them into slices from a quarter to half an inch thick, and as you do them, throw them into cold water. When all are done, drain and lay them in a cloth to dry; put them into a wire basket, which immerse in a stewpan half-full of boiling fat, and when the potatoes are a light golden-brown, throw them on to paper for a minute, turn them on to a dish, sprinkle salt and pepper over, and serve. Potatoes are fried thus, cut into chips, ribbons, or blocks, taking longer or shorter time according to the thickness.

#### TREACLE PUDDING.

Shred a quarter of a pound of beef-suet, roll it into ten ounces of fine flour, mix into a paste with a gill of cold water, roll it out to the thickness of a quarter of an inch, and line with it a pint and a half basin, which has been well rubbed with butter. Cut the remainder of the paste into rounds the size of the interior of the basin, put a dessert-spoonful of treacle in the pudding, then a round of paste, and so on until the basin is full, putting a round of paste on the top, and fastening it securely to the sides. Tie over with a cloth, and boil or steam for an hour and a half. When done, turn out the pudding; have ready half a pound of treacle made hot in a stewpan, pour it over, and serve. There should not be more than half a pound of treacle boiled in the pudding. If preferred, jam of any kind can be substi-



tuted for the treacle. The direction to shred the suet must not be overlooked, because, if minced, at least one ounce more of it will be required to make the pudding good and light.

#### FOURTH DAY.

##### Savoury Rice.

Stewed Beef, with Onions, Carrots, and Dumplings.  
Boiled Oatmeal Pudding.

#### SAVOURY RICE.

To prepare this in an economical manner, instead of slices of streaked bacon, use the bones from which it has been cut, and on which very little meat remains. Scrape the underside of the bones, wash, and put them into a saucepan with plenty of water, two or three onions, and a carrot cut in rounds. When the bacon is done, take it off the bones, mince it up very finely, return it to the liquor, and add a breakfast-cupful of rice to each quart of this. Boil the rice until it has properly swelled and has absorbed all the liquor; add a little pepper and salt, if necessary.

#### STEWED BEEF.

Take the thin end from the sirloin, wash it, and be sure it is perfectly sweet; put it in a deep dish with a light sprinkling of salt. Each day that it remains turn it about in the salt, and when ready to cook, rinse it with cold water. Put the meat into a saucepan with enough cold water to cover it. As soon as it boils up, skim and put in onions, carrots, and turnips. Simmer gently for two hours, or more if the meat is not by that time tender. It is best to allow three hours for the stewing, as, if done before it is wanted, the meat can be kept hot without any injury to it. When perfectly tender, keep the meat hot whilst you take the fat from the gravy, which thicken with flour, and having added pepper, with salt if required, put it with the meat and vegetables, and simmer together for a quarter of an hour. Prepare some dumplings as in the recipe given in No. 134 of this Journal, and having put the stew on its dish, place them round it.

#### BOILED OATMEAL PUDDING.

This is a cheap and nice family pudding. Mix a quarter of a pound of coarse oatmeal in half a pint of cold water, and stir on to it a pint of boiling milk or water; add an ounce of shred suet, or any other fat, two eggs, a little spice, sugar to taste, and by way of a treat, two ounces of sultana raisins. Put the pudding into a greased basin, cover with a cloth, and boil for an hour and a half. Make a sauce to eat with the pudding as follows: Boil an ounce of currants in half a pint of water for five minutes, break up the currants with a spoon, and stir in a tablespoonful of flour, mixed smooth in a little cold water; add a little spice and sugar to taste. Children like the sauce without the currants if sweetened with treacle.

#### FIFTH DAY.

##### Lentil Soup.

Rissoles. Curried Rice.  
Apple Pie.

#### LENTIL SOUP.

The bones having been cleared of meat, fry them until brown, put them into a saucepan with two quarts of cold water, a pound of onions fried, a turnip, carrot, a tablespoonful of salt, a dozen peppercorns, and a sprig of marjoram and thyme. Boil for an hour and a half, then put in a little celery or celery-seed tied in muslin, boil for another half hour, strain the soup, take off all fat, and add to the lentils prepared as follows:

Lentils require to be soaked. It is as well, if convenient, to let them lie in water all night with a pinch of carbonate of soda. Before soaking wash the lentils in several waters, rubbing them with the hands. The next day boil the lentils gently in the water in which they were soaked for two hours until they are tender, when they will be ready to use with the soup.

#### RISSOLES.

Mince the meat very finely, taking care it is free from skin and gristle, add to it about a fourth of its weight in breadcrumbs. Mix them with an onion boiled until perfectly tender, a few drops of essence of anchovy, pepper and salt, and sufficient egg to make it all into a stiff paste. Roll into egg-shaped balls, dip each in egg and breadcrumbs, and fry very gently. One egg, if well beaten, will suffice both to mix and egg the outside of a dozen rissoles of moderate size. Make a gravy of the water the onion has been boiled in, and the trimmings of the meat; and when the rissoles are done, pour the fat from the frying-pan, in which let the gravy boil up, then thicken with a little flour and water. A few drops of vinegar or any sharp sauce may be added with advantage, season with pepper and salt, and pour the gravy round the rissoles. It is better, if convenient, to fry them in a wire basket with hot fat.

#### APPLE TART.

See recipe in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No 131.

#### CURRIED RICE.

Patna is the best rice for curries. It should not be small or broken, and, if fine, costs as much as "Carolina." Well wash the rice, throw it into a saucepan with plenty of boiling water and a little salt. Keep the saucepan boiling fast for fifteen minutes, then try a grain of rice

by rubbing it between the thumb and finger; if it crumbles it is done, if not boil a few minutes longer. When done strain the rice into a colander, and pour quickly over it a small cup of cold water; this will cause the grain to separate. Make the curry-sauce as follows: Mince and boil tender, for a quarter of a pound of rice, half a pound of onions. In a pint of milk mix a dessertspoonful of curry-powder and a large tablespoonful of flour, add salt to taste, and mix with the onions and the water in which they were boiled. Thicken the sauce over the fire, and when this is done put in the rice; simmer together for five minutes. Finally stir in an ounce of butter and a table-spoonful of lemon-juice, and serve very hot.

## Runaway Marriages.

"THAT's all bosh!" remarked a well-known American physician to a journalist the other day, as he threw down a paper containing an account of a runaway in which the daughter of a local politician figured as the heroine.

"What's bosh, doctor?" asked the reporter, on the look-out for a possible item.

"Why, this runaway match which you have just published. That girl's father is a sharp man, but this is one of the sharpest tricks he has ever played since I knew him. That elopement was all a sham. It's as simple as can be. The girl's father is one of the best known men in this section of the town, and is a politician besides. He has, necessarily, a large acquaintance with the element who are always expecting him to stand treat upon the slightest pretext, and, what with this and the wedding festivities, supper and other etceteras, his daughter's marriage, if solemnised in the ordinary manner, would have cost him a great deal of money. An elopement saved all this, so he just opposed his daughter's wishes strongly enough to give a pretext for the two to run over to Jefferson, where the expenses of the wedding, all told, didn't amount to more than five or ten dollars. There were no fine dresses, flowers, gifts, or anything of that sort, and when they returned home they had a chance to go to housekeeping quietly and unostentatiously. It was a shrewd plan and a sensible one for all parties concerned.

"I have known a number of runaway matches which had no other reason than economy. Parents, relatives, and all are willing for the young people to commit matrimony, but the expense was a serious consideration, and a little timely opposition which caused an elopement smoothed out the crooked channel in which the course of true love was running. The cost of the wedding was saved for housekeeping, the young couple were forgiven, and all went on as merrily as if there had been any amount of marriage-bells ringing."

"In what classes of society do such marriages oftenest occur?"

"Generally in the middle classes—those who are only moderately well-to-do, and who yet want to keep up appearances. The very poor and the extremely rich are never troubled by such considerations, but the poor and proud often make use of this stratagem. I've known of some very aristocratic couples starting out on their matrimonial journey with an elopement, which was caused by nothing on earth save a want of funds. These fashionable weddings cost large sums."

"Are the young people ever in this secret?"

"Sometimes, but not often. Generally they are innocent parties to the deception. This is a new way to look at an elopement; but it's the real explanation of a good many, as I know from personal observation."

"The quickest courtship on record," added an old resident, "was that of Dr. Nick McDowell, who, driving along the street in his buggy one day, saw a beautiful girl standing at a window. He immediately stopped and hitched his horse, rang the bell, enquired the lady's name, was ushered into the parlour, announced his own name, said he was 'pleased with her appearance, and wished to marry her at once.' Nothing but the knowledge that she was actually in the presence of the celebrated physician kept her from fainting. To her plea of 'surprise at this unexpected announcement,' he only replied: 'Now or never.' When she asked to 'take a week to consider,' he said, 'I am going down street to attend a critical case, and have no time to spare right now.'

"Give me a day, then."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. When I am through with this professional visit I'll drive around and get a preacher. If you've made up your mind to marry me by that time, all right!" and he left her breathless, and unable to articulate another word. When he returned they were quietly married."

## Fashions.

THE most remarkable feature in the fashions for this month is the extraordinary combinations of colours upon which Parisian authorities have ventured. It seems as if all the rules hitherto laid down—those art canons which æsthetic people obey—are all to be set at defiance, and new contrasts invented never before tolerated.



M. WORTH has sent out some wonderful costumes, made of myrtle-green mixed with brown; and so successful has his courageous attempt proved, that several manufacturers are trying to produce goods of the same shades in cheaper materials to meet the popular demand. Rich myrtle velvet, with fans of brown ottoman let in at the skirt seams, looks well because of the costliness of the materials. Upon the velvet, rows of pendent pompons break the uniformity of the plain surface.

THE different shades of red, for which names are sought in vain which will describe them accurately, are all in favour—even greater favour, than last year. "Poppy," "fire-red," "boëuf sanglant," "ibis," "fuschia," "grenat," "cardinal," and "geranium," are all well-known shades. Of the blues, "indigo," "navy," "gros bleu," "gens d'armes," and "moonshine," the last being an improved electric blue, give ample choice. As to the greys, there seems to be no end to the varieties, for this colour is likely to be the rage next summer, so it is safe to invest in it now. The tender shades are seen in plush, satin, and silk gauze. The stronger, darker shades of "elephant," "quarry-slate," "greystone," "London-smoke," "lavender," etc., are in tweeds, serges, cloths, cashmeres, and in velvet brocades, black upon a grey ground, and grey upon a lighter grey ground.

IN all the brocades of this year, there are daring innovations upon old-established arrangements of colours, the grounds being of very bright shades, and the embossed patterns in sombre and heavy colours. Particularly novel are dark green flowers upon golden-brown, and upon ibis-red; also brown upon bright blue grounds, and black upon grey.

STRIPED tweeds are among the most striking dress materials of the season. A rainbow stripe of many colours in narrow lines arranged together, alternating with a plain one, the sizes of the patterns varying from half-inch to inch-and-a-half wide lines. More unobtrusive are the tweeds which are striped in two colours only, black and grey, blue and black, green and brown, brown and gold, crimson and black.

LONG tunics are more worn than ever, so long, that those which are open in front and of equal length all round, are occasionally left undraped and look like pelisses. The Elizabethan tunic, with which is a square-cut bodice, full habit-shirt, and large collar falling over the shoulders, one of the class alluded to, is made in serge, tweed, or velvet, and is worn over a surah skirt.

THOUGH the waterfall backs to skirts are still popular, it is unquestionable that not every material lends itself to such severe treatment. Thick serges, velvets, brocades, etc., fall into rich folds effectively. Satin de Lyon, surah, gauze, tulle, or any other very diaphanous material, is only pretty just at first, or for a ball, when worn by a young lady who is dancing, and not sitting down frequently. These thin skirts are better when looped up, not inside, according to old lines, but caught up outside, thus forming a kind of bournouse back. For outside looping, the back of the skirt must be at least two yards wide, and cut so long as to allow of being draped gracefully, with every appearance of liberality in supply of material. Cloaks are looped in a similar manner, but less than two widths in the back will not permit of outside looping with good results.

THE basque bodice, the back of which is nearly as long as the dress-skirt behind, making a waterfall coat-tail, is generally made of some heavy material, and with flat trimmings, so as to give the impression that it is tailor-made, as the dressmakers of the stronger sex depend upon cut and fit rather than frills and furbelows to make the reputations of their dresses.

VELVET, cross-cut, and laid on in folds, is used for trimming almost any dress, be it silk or woollen; for all sorts of soft silky trimmings of the nature of velvet, such as chenille, are most fashionable. For mantles, a broad band, from four to six inches wide, entirely composed of loops of chenille, like black caterpillars, repeated *ad infinitum*, gives great richness to the fronts.

THE same character, of long, soft, deep-piled surfaces, is seen in other goods besides trimmings. Angora gloves and mittens are of a long-haired cloth, somewhat resembling fur. From Wales comes a fur-shawl which is the application of the angora cloth to a travelling wrap, and is more novel than the Scotch plaids or the Welsh Mauds.

LIGHT-COLOURED furs are once more in favour as bordering, though chinchilla is so very unserviceable, and soon looks shabby if worn on damp days. Perhaps this perishable nature recommends it all the more to rich people who can afford to be capricious. Silver-fox is a good hardy fur, and, if moths can be kept at bay, does not suffer from wear in an English climate.

BEAUTIFUL, but deceitful, was the marabout trimming of the last two years. Its novelty recommended it to ladies who wished for a bordering less massive than ordinary fur, and more distinctive than cross-cut velvet or plush. The prices of marabout-trimming varied in different marts, and misguided purchasers were lured to make cheap experiments. This error in judgment had to be paid for by the loss of beauty on the first damp day. If these trimmings revive by being shaken up

before the fire they can be used again; if not, they must be consigned to the fire. Deep shoulder-capes in marabout are among this year's novelties.

IN millinery the most striking change is in hat-crowns, which grow more steeple-like month by month. As the crown rises in height it narrows in circumference, and is alluded to by sarcastic people as "the funnel." Our American neighbours call gentlemen's hats "stove-pipes," so we are now enabled to retaliate and accuse the American visitors to Paris of being the first patronesses of "funnels." The Regent Street steeple-hats are saved from being unbecoming by having the jet and lace upon the brims; and not a few have the leaf raised at one side very coquettishly. Others have long ostrich feathers passing from front to back and falling down behind. One or two small birds frequently seem to nestle on the front of the leaf. The nodding plumes of ostrich-tips are also placed in front of the high-crowned hats; the latter are of silk-beaver, velvet, or felt, in black, brown, or green.

CROCHET-WORK has been neglected since crewels came into fashion. Those who enjoy this kind of fancy work, especially in winter, when it can be carried on at the fireside, will be glad to hear of its revival. The newest outdoor dresses for children are little woollen overcoats crocheted in tricot-stitch. No longer can the old name "idiot-stitch" be applied to this kind of crochet, for the little garments are the very embodiment of common-sense, and to make them as tasteful as fashion demands requires no little experience and intelligence.

THE commonest tricot dress is a blouse, confined to the waist by a leather belt. The next is an ulster, buttoning across the chest, but with the addition of a thick-twisted girdle round the waist, terminating in two tassels. These forms are, however, but rudimentary, the aim of the best workers being to imitate some fashionable frock turned out by a dressmaker, and copy all the cuffs, collar, plastron, frill, revers, etc.; even the vest-front in a different shade, or colour, is worked in tricoterie. As tricot dresses are chiefly worn by young children, white wool is most used; the edge of the cuffs or of the frills being finished with filloselle, either white or coloured. For elder children who are likely to be out of doors in all weathers, coloured wool makes a more useful garment, all the five shades of brown, especially those tending to crimson, being used, and the filloselle finish is either of the same colour, gold, or white.

TAKING a princess frock as a model, it is begun at the bottom of the skirt and made in four breadths, one front, one back, and two sides, narrowed as required. When the front has been brought to about six inches from the waist, it must be wrought in two parts, thus making the front of the basque and bodice. When the skirt is finished and the seams joined, raised rows of chain-stitch can be worked on the outside, running vertically on the skirt, leaving three or four rows of tricot between each. This chain may be in either wool or filloselle, but the latter is expensive as it works up extravagantly fast. Most of the skirts have a trimming, a flounce, or frill added afterwards, and this is done by taking up a row of stitches at the head of the trimming, increasing one stitch in five for the first three rows, and not widening again until the edge is reached, when a scallop border in ordinary crochet makes the edge. A simulated basque is a pretty form to adopt, and the border for this can also be worked afterwards on the made-up skirt in tapestry stitch, using a netting mesh over which to form the loops. A thick white silk cord, sewed on to mark the basque, is less troublesome, but cord must then be used on cuffs, collar, and vest.

IN addition to the dresses, caps and capes are made in tricoterie. The former are round, worked in sections, and joined, being finished with a border in tapestry, and a tassel depending from the centre. The capes are begun at the border and narrowed to the throat. Chain-stitch comes in here again, to simulate a series of little capes, the coachman style.

INDOOR frocks for children are made of cashmere, honeycombed. Since it became customary to wear the sash considerably below the waist much of the skirt is quite concealed, so that the honeycombing need only come up to the scarf. Instead of one very broad sash of surah, or washing-silk, being worn by little girls, two ribbons of medium width in different colours, or two shades of the same, are twisted round the front, and bunched up in a mass of bows at the back. Roman scarfs are twined with plain surah ribbon. Watered sashes are no longer worn.

A PLEASANT fancy on an evening bodice, or one for demi-toilette, is a band of unmounted roses round the arm, or a bunch on the shoulders. With the bodice cut square, or half high, and an elbow sleeve, the flowers are pretty. Should the sleeve be dispensed with, a narrow band must still be worn, on which to fasten the flowers. A deep epaulette of lace, falling below the flowers, takes away from the skeleton appearance of an arm which is thin, or not beautifully moulded.

ALL kinds of steel, gold, mother-of-pearl, bronze, and jet ornaments are worn on dresses and bonnets, huge buckles looping up the tunics. Some Paris bonnets have folded velvet trimmings, fastened down at intervals with tiny squirrel feet, with silver claws.

Edited by Charles Dickens.]

## Christmas Music.

AT Christmas-time, when everyone is trying to be merry, music is the one enjoyment which never seems to pall upon us, and the greatest possible help to spreading cheerfulness around. Music attends somewhat during the festive season, and we feel that she must step down from her pedestal and frolic it with the rest. There are indeed some highly æsthetic people who would play the profoundest works of the old masters on Christmas Day itself, but most of us have a feeling that for once Bach and Correlli should lie on the shelf, and give place to more mirth-inspiring strains.

TOWARDS Christmas-time the sternest of pianoforte-teachers relax, and suspend the series of improving sonatas to admit of the pupil's timid request for a "light piece." It is so pleasant to be able to add a little to the enjoyment of an evening, and bright music sets every heart dancing and makes every one feel gay.

But we would not have the student imagine that light music needs no practice. Depend upon it, it needs as much practice as anything else to make it go nicely; slovenliness always tells, whether in a sonata or in a light piece, and in point of fact these ephemeral compositions require very beautiful playing to set them off. Take some new gavotte, for example; you hear it played at some theatre or concert, it goes trippingly, and has a very catching air; crisply and delicately the pretty phrases go, like the steps of some practised dancer. The thing gets popular, and you hear it played in drawing-rooms by every amateur. What a different thing it sounds! Heavy and loud, no time not kept up, difficult bits slurred over, no light or shade, no more notice taken of dot or slur than if they were put in to make the page look pretty. No, these light things require to be played with great precision to make them go well; it is a dreadful thing to play a gavotte and to let it fall as flat as a pancake.

TOWARDS Christmas the professional person is always being met by the enquiry, "Do recommend me a light piece." It is sometimes difficult to think of a list all in a minute, but a person who plays about much will soon get to find out what pieces are popular, and the likely to take with a general audience. When brightness is the question, if it can be combined with worth, so much the better. The works of Gounod, for example, are always delightful to listen to, and while the musician delights in the fine construction, the curious harmonies, and the originality of idea, the unlightened are caught by the alluring melody and the wonderful and indefinable charm which the master possesses. One could listen to his "Dodelinette" a hundred times and always with fresh pleasure. It is an excellent exercise in the *legato* style, but it is no good for anybody to attempt it who has very small hands. It cannot be kept smooth enough if you have not what pianists call "a good stretch." The "Faust" music is delightful, but the lighter parts have become somewhat hackneyed. Else nothing can be more enlivening than the "Kermesse" scene, or the "Maiden's Chorus." There is, however, plenty of charming music in the "Reine de Saba," which appears to be little known—a march and a quantity of pretty ballet music. Talking of ballet music reminds me of the great beauty of Schubert's "Rosamunde." It wants nice delicate playing, but is perhaps better as a duet than as a solo.

SOMETIMES, in looking through the scores of operas, one finds out all sorts of charming things in the shape of incidental music which are little known, and therefore more worth playing. There is a delightful nigger dance in "Aïda," for example, which goes very well on the piano, and there is also an Egyptian dance, which occurs in the scene in the Temple, which is wonderfully weird and catching. You can fancy the slave-girls dancing round the idol with their heavy features decked with curious jewels; you can see their slow movements, their waving arms, all matching the strange barbaric solemnity of the Egyptian temple.

THERE has been a great fancy lately for Hungarian and Polish music. It has to be played in a particular style, and then it is wonderfully catching. It requires a tremendous deal of spirit, although a nice discretion must be observed even in the moments when we are most carried away, and playing with apparent abandon, so as not to tear a passion to tatters. Some of our pianists deserve the reproof I heard given to one the other day by a little child of two. She was allowed to sit on her mother's knee to hear the pretty music, but was appalled to find the player belabouring the piano in a way which she herself was never permitted to indulge in. She thought it was time for her to interfere. "Not too hard!" she said, holding up her tiny finger; "play pretty!"

WITH this caution, we may recommend the highly interesting and delightful music of this class—the Hungarian dances of Brahms; the national dances of Moszkowsky; the interesting mazurkas of the Scharwenka. One work in particular by the last-named writer—the first of his set of Polish dances—enjoyed a great measure of popularity all through last season; it has a very striking commence-

ment, which may have something to do with it, for, alas! there is no better way with some audiences of commanding attention than to begin a song with a shout, or a pianoforte piece with a bang. It catches their attention at once, and they are curious to see what you will do next. The piece in question, however, has other merits; besides "beginning with a bang," it is full of light and shade, and of very clever pianoforte effects.

To speak now of a class of music lighter still. It is well even amongst that to choose the best. Mr. Walter Macfarren has written many charming tarantelles, and pieces of that kind, which are highly effective in a drawing-room; one in particular in F, which is very charming when played with piquancy. Some people appear to go through the world with their eyes shut—they never seem to hear of anything new. They never know of any new pieces, they never find out what style is in fashion. The theatre is a great place for hearing new music. If you listen between the acts you will hear all kinds of pretty gavottes, and savage dances, and things of that kind, and the names (in the good theatres) are always down in the programme. Sometimes, however, the name may not be found, or you hear an *encore* at a concert, or some piece in a drawing-room under circumstances which make it impossible for you to discover the title. The great thing to cultivate is the art of jotting down a few lines of music from ear, as then a few hurried lines on the back of your programme will serve as a memorandum of the melody; and once get the opening phrase, and send it to an intelligent music-seller, he will be almost certain to discover the piece for you.

## Anise.

ANISE grows wild in Egypt, in Syria, Palestine, and all parts of the Levant; but the Romans considered the Egyptian and Cretan anise to be the best, especially for medicinal purposes. The product of Southern Europe is now looked upon with favour. Among the ancients, anise seems to have been a common pot-herb in every garden. Although it is less used in medicine by the moderns than by the ancients, it still retains its former reputation as an excellent stomachic, particularly for delicate women and young children. The Romans chewed it in order to keep up an agreeable moisture in the mouth, and to sweeten the breath, while some Orientals still do the same. Some of the Persian poets have sung the agreeable qualities of the anise, and a modern ballad of Rome compares the slender grace of a young girl to the anise.

Anise is an annual plant growing to the height of one foot, carries a white flower, and blooms from June to August. The seeds are imported and used in large quantities on account of their aromatic and carminative properties. The distilled plant, when used in blossom, yields a sweeter and more grateful tincture than can be obtained from the seeds. Anise is extensively employed by the confectioner for the purpose of flavouring comfits and cordials. The anise-seed cordial of the shops is a compound of alcohol, anise-seed, and angelica. The oil is obtained by distillation from the seeds, and though habitually mixed with a great many cattle medicines, and regarded by the farmers of former generations as one of the most potent drugs, it performs scarcely any other office than the communicating of an agreeable fragrance. The Chinese cultivate it for the seasoning of dishes; and the Japanese employ bundles and garlands of it in the ceremonies of their heathenish superstition. Its appearance, when out of flower, as well as when in bloom, is decidedly ornamental.

## "Dead Man's Gulch."

THE following incident occurred during the early days of the Californian gold-fields, and is characteristic of the state of things that existed amongst the diggers at that time. A miner had died in a mountain digging, and, as he was much respected, his acquaintances resolved to give him a "square funeral," instead of putting the body in the usual way in a roughly-made hole, and saying by way of funeral service: "Thar goes another bully boy under!" They sought the services of a miner who bore the reputation of having, at one time of his career, been "a powerful preacher in the States." And then, Far Western fashion, they all knelt down, while the extemporised parson delivered a prodigiously long prayer. The miners, tired of this unaccustomed opiate, to while away the time, began, digger fashion, fingering the earth that had been taken from the grave. Gradually looks were exchanged; whispering commenced and increased, until it became loud enough to attract the attention of their parson. He opened his eyes and stared at the whispering miners. "What is it, boys?" Then, as suddenly his eyes lighted on the sparkling scales of gold, he shouted: "Gold, by jingo! and the richest kind o' diggin'—the congregation is dismissed!" Instantly every man began to prospect the new digging, our clerical friend not

being the least active of the number. The body had to be removed and buried elsewhere, but the memory of the incident long lived from the name given to the locality, for "Dead Man's Gulch" became one of the richest gold-fields in all California.

## Household Gardening.

WHENEVER the weather is mild, and the ground dry enough to work freely, planting may be done, both of fruit-trees, flowers, and bulbs, but never attempt this work when the soil is in a wet mortar-like state. It is undoubtedly wise to plant as early in the autumn as possible, especially in the case of flower-roots of all kinds of hardy border plants and bulbs, but in practice circumstances always arise, preventing work being done at the exact time, and when this time passes many persons think it is no use planting at all.

### TULIPS FOR POTS AND BEDS.

The earliest kinds of Tulips that were placed in pots in September and early October, as was advised, must now be withdrawn from the plunging material, and placed in the windows of rooms or on the shelves of greenhouses. These plants of the dwarf yellow, scarlet, white, and striped Duc Van Thol varieties, may be had in bloom at Christmas, and beautiful they are then when well grown, as may be seen by an inspection of the Christmas flower-markets.

When the pots are first uncovered, the growth of the plants will be an inch long, and almost white, as they will necessarily have become blanched by the absence of light; but the pots will be filled with roots, and thus the object of covering them will have been accomplished.

On first placing the blanched Tulips in the room or greenhouse, they must be shaded from the sun for a time, must, in fact, have several days of twilight. This can be easily managed by covering them with paper funnels, allowing these to remain until the growths assume a green hue, when they will endure the light, and cannot, indeed, have too much of it for ensuring stout leaves and fine flowers.

The roots of these, and all kinds of bulbs that are fairly starting into growth, must always be kept moist, not saturated, but still never dry; and although care must always be exercised in watering, yet it will be easier to err in giving too much than too little moisture, if the pots are packed with white fleshy fibres.

Later Tulips than the above may still be potted, placing three or four bulbs in a pot five inches in diameter across the top, and just covering them with soil, which should be free and good, yet containing a liberal admixture of sand or gritty matter of any kind.

As was advised for Hyacinths, stand the pots on a layer of ashes, either in the open air or a cold frame, and cover them six inches deep with cocoa-nut fibre refuse, ashes, or sawdust, the former being the best, and there let them remain for a month; by that time they will have produced roots and commenced growing, when they must be withdrawn and treated as described for the earlier sorts.

### EFFECTIVE VARIETIES.

There are both single and double Tulips that, potted now, will be strikingly effective in due time; the singles will flower first, and will be succeeded by their more massive congeners.

In selecting varieties, we will only name a few of the most distinct and inexpensive, for, as a rule, the longer the list of names the less useful it is to the majority of readers.

Beautiful single kinds are Pottelbakker, white; Vermilion Brilliant, rich scarlet; Chrysolora, yellow; Cottage Maid, delicate rose; La Belle Alliance, glowing crimson; Keizers Kroon, scarlet and yellow; and Prosperpine, rich rosy purple. Of doubles, the following trio only need be named: Tournesol, scarlet and yellow; Rex Rubrorum, deep scarlet; and La Candeur, pure white. These are very large and handsome; the last-named being the latest, and always admired when seen in its best condition.

### PLANTING IN BEDS.

The same varieties, both of doubles and singles, are amongst the best that can be employed for beds, and when grown in masses they have a brilliant effect in the spring.

Tulips like a sunny position and free generous soil. Let the beds, therefore, be forked well over, and at least a foot deep, otherwise the water will not drain rapidly away from the bulbs, and stagnant soil they abhor.

In planting, it is best to draw drills six inches apart and three inches deep; then scatter in them some sand or gritty matter of any kind, and on this place the bulbs six inches apart, sprinkle more sand over them, then level in the soil. They will then be covered two inches deep, and may be expected to grow satisfactorily. If holes are simply made in the soil with a stick, water accumulates in them and endangers the decay of the roots.

### DOUBLE AND SINGLE NARCISSI.

Bulbs of these beautiful flowers may also be planted now, and are sure to succeed if the soil is in good condition. There are many varieties, indeed far too many for enumeration, and only a very few of the most distinct and inexpensive will be recommended. Those persons who may require more kinds can safely leave the selection of them to a vendor, after stating the number required or the amount to be expended in their purchase.

### POET'S NARCISSUS.

This charming single ivory-white flower with its crimson eye is a favourite with everybody, and to meet the public demand for flowers in spring plants have to be grown by the acre.

For this purpose they are planted in rows under fruit-trees in market-gardens in the Thames Valley, and the orchards are thereby rendered additionally remunerative. Sometimes the trees are fruitless, but the ground is never flowerless in the season, and these lovely Narcissi are brought to London in cartloads.

This is suggestive, as it shows that these flowers will grow where many others would fail, and this is a great advantage to owners of gardens large and small.

Plant the bulbs five or six inches apart, either under trees or in the open, and if the soil is moderately fertile they will increase in size and numbers, and continue producing flowers year after year. The roots should be covered three or four inches deep, and not be disturbed in digging the beds or when planting summer flowers.

### DOUBLE WHITE NARCISSUS.

Flowering later than the preceding, of which it is a variety, this affords a most welcome succession of handsome blooms. These are two or three inches or more in diameter and equal in beauty a large Gardenia or small Camellia. Many of our readers have probably never seen them, or if they have, did not know the name of what they may have admired in the flower-markets in the month of May. If in future they see large handfuls of double pearly-white fragrant flowers at the period named, they may know it is the double Poet's Narcissus, also if they have gardens they may grow it for themselves. Plant now as above directed, and plants and flowers are sure to follow.

### THE GOLDEN NARCISSUS.

The typical example of this section is the fine old double Daffodil that for years has been the brightest flower of spring in thousands of cottage gardens and gentlemen's pleasure grounds.

Bulbs only need planting in clumps of half-a-dozen roots or so in each, and covering five inches deep to ensure a display of flowers, and if the roots are never disturbed the plants will spring up yearly for a generation, perhaps for a century.

Equal to the above—indeed, in the estimation of many persons, far surpassing it in beauty—is the large single Trumpet Narcissus. It grows and flowers with great freedom, and is also highly effective in pots in the greenhouse. A few bulbs should be tried by all who admire large golden flowers in their gardens in April.

### THE TWO-COLOURED NARCISSUS.

Tastes, of course, vary, but in our opinion there is not a variety in cultivation more beautiful than the one known as Narcissus Bicolor Horsefieldi. The first specific name—bicolor—indicates that the flowers are two-coloured, the last—Horsefieldi—being the name of the raiser, Horsefield, Latinised. The large cup of the flower is clear yellow, and the spreading sepals, that appear like wings, ivory-white. This kind is very striking grown in pots, and not less so in the open borders of the garden. Being scarce the bulbs are a little more costly than the others, but the price is not prohibitive. Let those who have the means to do so try a few bulbs of this fine variety.

### THE POLYANTHUS NARCISSUS.

As its name implies, this flowers after the manner of the Polyanthus, that is, produces a straight clear stem, surmounted by a cluster of flowers. These are small, about an inch in diameter, and range in number from six to twelve, or more, in each head. The colour varies too, one being white, another yellow, but the majority have white sepals and yellow cups.

These kinds are largely grown in pots, and a few plants in a house not only add to the beauty, but fill the air with fragrance; but though grown in pots the bulbs are perfectly hardy, and may be planted in beds the same as the others above referred to, the present being the time for both potting and planting.

### JONQUILS.

These are also Narcissi, but so dissimilar from the others as to command a distinctive name. They are among the most bright, elegant, and hardy of the genus, and are adapted for gardens in town or country. Their leaves are small and rush-like; their flowers also small, borne in small bunches, bright golden yellow in colour, and delightfully fragrant; there are double and single varieties, but the latter are the more elegant; and withal, single flowers are more fashionable than doubles nowadays. These pretty, cheerful Jonquils are usually planted in clumps, from six to twelve bulbs being placed together, disposed about an inch from each other, and covered four inches deep. Provided the soil is well forked and the sub-soil broken up, so that the rain passes away freely, they require no further care, but will go on flowering and increasing year by year, if they are not disturbed in digging the ground. We planted a number of roots twenty years ago, and now flowers can be cut in quantity every spring, and are particularly acceptable for room decoration.

### PROTECTING PLANTS.

Let everything that is tender be made safe against frost; only half hardy plants can be kept in cold frames, and these must be well covered with mats or other convenient material, and never forget that frost passes through the wooden sides of the frame if these are exposed to the weather.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### QUESTION.

LUDWIG wishes to know if the following "Sonnet," by Alfred Tennyson, which appeared in "Friendship's Offering," 1833, has ever been reprinted in any collection of the author's poems?

Check every outflash, every ruder sally  
Of thought and speech; speak low, and give up wholly  
Thy spirit to mild-minded melancholy;  
This is the place. Through yonder poplar alley,  
Below the blue-green river windeth slowly;  
But in the middle of the sombre valley,  
The crisped waters whisper musically,  
And all the haunted place is dark and holy.  
The nightingale, with long and low preamble,  
Warbled from yonder knoll of solemn larches,  
And in and out the woodbine's flowery arches  
The summer midges wove their wanton gambol,  
And all the white-stemmed pinewood slept above,  
When in this valley first I told my love.

### ANSWERS.

BUSY BEE.—We do not know of anything that will remove the gold paint. You had better send the frames to a good gilder. There is no reason why the black stain should show through if the re-gilding is properly done.

COCKNEY TOM.—1. Very few of the events in which St. Botolph is said to have played a part belong to the sphere of history, and it is difficult to discover the cause of his extended popularity. It has been surmised that he was a patron saint of seamen, and that his name indicates the character of a boat-help. In a "Life of St. Botolph," written or embellished by John Capgrave, and included in his *Nova Legenda* (London, 1516), we learn that Botolphus and Adolphus were two noble brothers, who, in early life, were sent into "Old Saxony" to be instructed in monastic learning. Botolph there became acquainted with two sisters of an English king named Ethelmund, who, at their wish, allotted to the monk a piece of barren ground, on which to build a convent. Like other marshy spots, in which the *ignis fatuus* abounded, it was thought to be infested by malignant spirits. These were soon, however, put to flight, and a convent, on the model of the house in which St. Botolph had been reared, was planted in the midst of their domain. It perished under Edmund (941-946); but the relics of St. Botolph, which had been enshrined in his own foundation, were preserved, and afterwards translated in the time of Edgar (959-975), through the efforts of St. Ethelwold. The head was sent to Ely, and the body equally apportioned to the royal cabinet of relics and the abbey church of Thorne. 2. We do not know of any such "Popular" Edition. The late author's copyright not having expired, no publisher can issue the books in another form. 3. We cannot tell you. 4. If fresh, the fruit stains can be removed with milk and salt; but if old, salts of sorrel will be required.

DOPS.—Many thanks for your letter. What you say does not, however, alter our opinion, and we must continue to believe that character cannot be truly delineated from handwriting. We consider that, as an amusement, it is dear at two shillings.

G. S. H.—"Auctioneer's Manual," by Allnutt, 4s.

HASTINGS.—Apply to the Commons Preservation Society (E. W. Fithian, Esq.), 1, Great College Street, Westminster. We do not suppose you have much chance of success, unless the Local Government take it up.

MARY.—Alfa is a kind of grass used for paper-making. It is the North African name for *Macrochloa arenaria* and its fibre, one of the varieties of esparto, which is grown chiefly in Spain and Algeria.

MUMBO JUMBO.—1. Hot ginger drink may be made more palatable by the addition of a little citric acid or lemon-juice. Very nice non-alcoholic beverages can be made with "Beckett's Fruit Syrups," which are called "Winterine." "Winter Punch" is delicious, and is made by simply adding boiling water to the syrup, which is like a liqueur, having an agreeable warmth and delicate fruit flavour. 2. "And many strokes, though with a little axe, Hew down and fell the hardest timber'd oak."—King Henry VI., Part III., Act II., Scene 1.

Q. L. B.—The pudding you require is called "Friar's Omelet," and is delicious. It generally turns out well. Make six moderate-sized apples into stiff sauce, sweeten with powdered loaf sugar, stir in two ounces of butter, and, when cold, mix with two well-beaten eggs. Butter a tart-dish, and strew the bottom and sides thickly with bread-crumbs; then put in the apple sauce, and cover with bread-crumbs to the depth of a quarter of an inch; put a little dissolved butter on the top, and bake for an hour in a good oven. When done, turn it out, and sift sugar over it.

SOPHIE.—We can only recommend you to take your work to the shops where such things are sold. If you are clever, you will, no doubt, get employment, but, if otherwise, there are too many second and third class competitors for you to have much chance.

## Puzzles for Prizes.

### RULES.

1. Answers should be written on one side of the paper only, and should be posted so as to reach the office, 24, Great New Street, Fetter Lane, E.C., by the first delivery on the Tuesday after date of publication. Envelopes must be addressed, "The Puzzle Editor," and each answer must bear the *nom de plume* of the writer legibly written on the top of the first sheet.

2. A First Prize of TEN SHILLINGS and a Second Prize of FIVE SHILLINGS will be awarded each week to the best and second-best answers respectively to the two Puzzles set. The Puzzle Editor reserves, however, the right of withholding either the First or Second Prize, or both, if, in his opinion, the answers received should not come up to the required standard of merit.

3. No winner of a First Prize will be eligible for another Prize during the same quarter. A winner of a Second Prize will be eligible for another Second Prize in the same quarter, but not for a First Prize.

4. Every Prize-winner must consent to send his or her name and address for publication.

5. The Puzzle Editor's decision is to be taken as final.

### PUZZLES.

#### 1. An Adaptation of Shakespeare.

This is a competition of a somewhat novel kind. The plot of a play in which the following characters take part is to be written: Hamlet, Ingo, Romeo, Benedick, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Touchstone, Falstaff, King Lear, Portia ("Merchant of Venice"), and Imogen. The dramatic personæ must retain exactly the same characters as Shakespeare gave them, though their positions in life may be altered according to convenience. Lear need not be a king, nor Hamlet a prince. The accidents of birth and place may be entirely set aside; but the plot must be constructed with personages corresponding in character to those mentioned. Nor must the play be a mere series of incidents thrown together at hap-hazard. It must be, as far as it is in the writers' power to make it so, a character-study, a work of art; in which some circumstances rise naturally from the characters of the persons who appear in it, and other circumstances, in their turn, react upon the dramatic personæ. In short, the dramatic method of Shakespeare must be followed as closely as possible. The answers must be kept as short as may be.

#### 2. A Threepenny-Bit Puzzle.

Draw on a piece of paper a circle the exact size of a threepenny-piece. Commencing at any part of the circumference begin to write the Lord's Prayer in consecutive rings gradually approaching the centre. If this can be done easily and the whole of the Lord's Prayer with the final Amen can be squeezed in, proceed to add the full name and address of the writer, and any other words which can be introduced. This is a test of eyesight and steadiness of hand. A watchmaker's magnifying-glass held in the eye, and a hard pencil with a fine point, will be found necessary implements. In examining the answers, legibility, and the number of words introduced, will be the two points considered.

### Prize Winners in No. 132.

1st Prize, 10s., "Atlas" (Miss E. Herdman, 33, Sterndale Road, West Kensington).

2nd Prize, 5s., "Ethel May" (Mrs. E. T. Bixby, 8, Hamilton Terrace, Ebner Street, Wandsworth, S.W.).

The Winners of Equal Prizes in No. 129, were J. Lowres, Esq., 27, Queen Anne Road, South Hackney ("Abracadabra"); Mrs. E. T. Bixby, 8, Hamilton Terrace, Ebner Street, Wandsworth, S.W. ("Ethel May"); Mrs. Alfred Campion, The Ferns, Derby Road, Watford, Herts ("Acacia").

The Charade Word-Square has not been correctly solved by every contributor. The answer is:

Q	U	E	S	T
U	N	D	E	R
E	D	U	C	E
S	E	C	T	S
T	R	E	S	S

OUT OF THE RUNNING.—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize: No. 121.—1st Prize, "Achilles"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 122.—1st Prize, "Midnight Oil"; 2nd Prize, "Stella." No. 123.—1st Prize, "Zyx"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 124.—1st Prize, "Ferdinando"; 2nd Prize, "Ambrosia." No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frensham," "Ryland," "Maidblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood"; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan"; 2nd Prize, "Maidblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May." No. 130.—1st Prize, "The Arabs"; 2nd Prize, "Alice." No. 132.—1st Prize, "Atlas"; 2nd Prize, "Ethel May."

Answers have also been received from—Alice, Acacia, Ambrosia, Adam, Aberystwyth, Achilles, Attaché, Abracadabra, Alert, Bosco, Bertha, Congo, Cackle, Emma Jane, Eureka, Elton, Ellen, Hop o' my Thumb, Iolanthe, Lorelei, L. C. L., Mary, Me, Majolica, Mumbakull, Mayflower, Mona, Olive May, Queen Bobba, Quex, Ryland, Snap, Starling, The Arabs, Zigzag.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—ATTACHE.—Prizes are given every week. ACHILLES.—Many thanks for your Puzzle. We have often given Puzzles based on the same idea. EMMA JANE.—We are sorry your name was omitted in the list of contributors. We received your answers and duly considered them.



## Odds and Ends.

DOHERTY, a former Chief Justice of Ireland, used to tell a good story of his posting days. He was going circuit in a post-chaise, and at a dangerous part, where the road skirted a descent, one of the horses, which had been behaving wildly all the way, began kicking furiously. Much alarmed, Doherty called out, "This is outrageous. I don't think that horse has ever been in harness before." "Bedad, your lordship's right. He was only took out of the field this morning." "And do you mean to tell me that you have put an unbroken horse to my carriage?" "Sorra a sight of the leather he has ever seen till to-day. And if he brings your lordship safe to the fut of the hill, the master says he'll buy him."

AN artificial baby has been invented by an ingenious Yankee for the benefit of those travellers who wish to scare away people from entering a carriage which they would like to keep to themselves. This "travelling necessity," as its inventor calls it, is so ingenious that it would deceive the most experienced mother, and is manufactured in three styles for various purposes. No. 1 costs £2, and "is so thoroughly irritating that it would keep away the most placid and loving individual." No. 2, for £1, emits "lamentable, intolerable, but intermittent cries;" and No. 3 is a capital imitation for 10s. Further, the inventor undertakes to repair the machinery gratis.

MANY years ago one of the Parisian theatres came under the management—or at least the proprietorship—of a rich native of the Ottoman Empire, who, nevertheless, kept a keen eye on the accounts. Among the items of expenditure was one of three francs a week for meat for eight or ten cats kept to protect the canvas scenes, etc., from the ravages of the rats. This item was promptly disavowed by the Turkish proprietor, who wrote upon the margin of the bill the following dilemma: "If the cats eat the rats, wherefore the meat? If they don't, wherefore the cats?"

A WELL-KNOWN actor had a horror of street-music. On one occasion the "waits" played before his house at midnight, and waited on him next morning. They were ushered into his room. "Well," said the actor, "what do you want?" "We played before your house last night," said the musicians. "I heard you," was his reply. "We are come for our little gratuity," said the melodious invaders. "Why, bless me," said the sufferer, "I thought you came to apologise."

AN authoress of some celebrity in her day once asked Dr. Johnson to give an opinion upon a work she was just going to publish, observing: "If it will not do, I beg you will tell me so, as I have other irons in the fire, and should you think this not likely to succeed, I can bring out something else." The doctor having turned over several pages of the work, returned it with the following laconic observation: "Madam, I would advise you to put this where your other irons are."

DANTE lived very poor and an exile at Verona, on a small pension from Prince Scaliger. At the same court was a buffoon who lived magnificently. "How happens it," said the latter to Dante one day, "that with all your genius you remain so poor, while such a blockhead and fool as I am abound in all things?" "I should be rich, too," said the indignant poet, "had I your luck to find a prince with a character so like my own."

ADÈLE is a splendid cook, but it is evident that she cannot content everybody and his father. The other evening madame went into the kitchen and found the gas-stove lighted. "Why, Adèle, do you light your stove at this hour?" "But I have not put it out since morning." "Why, girl, are you crazy?" "No; but madame is always complaining that I use too many matches."

A LADY who thought "something was the matter with her heart" sent in great haste for the family physician. After making a solemn examination, he said: "There is no danger, madam: your heart beats normally. Its beat is iambic. Were it trochaic or spondaic, there would be cause for alarm, but iambic is the normal beat of a healthy heart." The lady was much comforted.

"SEE here, sir!" exclaimed a grocer, bristling up with righteous indignation, as the milkman made his morning call, "I should like you to explain how the chalk that I found in my coffee-cup this morning got there." "Don't know, I'm sure," answered the milkman, "unless you sweetened your coffee with the same sugar you sold me yesterday."

A GENTLEMAN visiting a school had a book put into his hand for the purpose of examining a class. The word "inheritance" occurring in the verse, the querist interrogated one of the youngsters as follows: "What is patrimony?" "Something left by a father." "What would you call it if left by a mother?" "Matrimony."

IN one of the leading clubs, two prominent members were discussing the peccadilloes of another member. Said one: "That fellow deserves to be expelled. He has broken every rule of the club, save one." "Which rule is that?" asked the other. "That which forbids feeing the servants," was the answer.

DOING one's very best is one's simple duty. Anything short of this is a shame to any man. There is never a fair excuse for doing fairly well—if doing better were possible to the doer. Not how much you do, but how well you do it, is the true measure of success in any line of action or purpose.

IF money be not thy servant it will be thy master. The covetous man cannot so properly be said to possess wealth, as that it may be said to possess him.

SINGULAR that the word miser, so often expressive of one who is rich, should, in its origin, signify one that is miserable.

IF a man knew as much about himself as he does about his neighbour, he would never speak to himself.

EDUCATION begins the gentleman, but reading, good company, and education must finish him.

LADIES of fashion starve their happiness to feed their vanity, and their love to feed their pride.

NOR for herself was woman first created, nor yet to be man's idol, but his mate.

A CERTAIN country squire was the most uncalculating of mortals in money matters. He began to build a house, but his original design grew, with wing on wing, until it flew away with all his cash capital, and more too. He was in debt to architect, carpenters, and masons, and for everything about his new dwelling. One bright morning in March, as he leaned meditatively over a fence, looking towards the Aladdin palace, a stranger passing by asked: "Sir, to whom does that handsome edifice belong?" "That," said the squire, with a sparkle in his eye, "is just what I am trying to find out."

THE Spanish ambassador one day entered the room in which Henry IV. was on all-fours, with his little son on his back. The king stopped, and, looking at the ambassador, said to him: "Pray, sir, have you any children?" "Yes, sire, several." "Well, then," said the king, "I shall complete my round."

FATHER DOOLAN to Irish turf-man, half tipsy at mid-day: "Pat, Pat, this will never do! You must really go and take the pledge at once." Pat: "Then, bedad, yer riverence, I will require to part wid mi ould pony, for not a fut will he stir past a public-house until I pay it a visit."

A CYNICAL old bachelor, who firmly believes that all women have something to say on all subjects, recently asked a female friend: "Well, madam, what do you hold on this question of female suffrage?" To him the lady responded, calmly: "Sir, I hold my tongue."

THE ringing of the curfew-bell was resumed at Stratford-on-Avon on the night of September 11. One of the interesting features of this revival of an ancient custom is the fact that the curfew is rung upon the bell which tolled at Shakespeare's funeral.

"JOHN, what do you do for a living?" "Oh, me preach." "Preach, and do you get paid for it?" "Sometimes me get a shilling, sometimes two shillings." "And isn't that mighty poor pay?" "Oh yes; but it's mighty poor preaching."

IN his commonplace book, Boswell relates the following: Lord Eglinton said to his brother and heir, Colonel Montgomerie: "If I live, Archie, I'll take care of you." "Thanks," replied the colonel; "and if you die, I'll take care of myself."

A YOUNG lady the other day presented herself to the librarian of a public library, and enquired if "An Idle Clergyman" was in. Somehow things had got mixed. It was finally evolved that the book she desired was "A Reverend Idol."

A GREEK philosopher was asked what he thought was the proper time to dine. "Sir," replied the ancient, "the proper time for dinner, with the opulent, is when they choose; with the poor man, when he can."

THE zodiacal sign for the opening of winter is a goat. The goat is a hard butter, and hard butter is almost always the sign that the weather is cold.

SLANG is always objectionable. Instead of saying "A dead give away," we would advise you to say "A posthumous donation."

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 136.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## A Sorrento Love-Story.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

"WILL the signora buy the bird—the *uccellino*? He sings well—so well!"

So whined a lad—a big lad—in rags on a Sorrento road one spring afternoon. What a handsome boy he was! how well-fed, straight, and strong! and yet he whined. Beggars about Naples will whine, though they will laugh in a moment, and will pour manifold blessings on you if you bestow a *soldo* upon them, and the spirit of Neapolitan beggary extends quite as far away from the city as Sorrento, to speak within even unlikely bounds.

He held an unhappy thrush in his brown hand, and twisted round a finger was one end of a bit of string, whose other end was tied to the bird's leg.

He let it fly a little way.

"A good bird," said he, dropping the whine; "*un buon uccello, signora*. Will she buy?"

"Buy!" cried an English lady in virtuous indignation. "No—certainly not! You are cruel—far too cruel; you are the third boy I have seen this afternoon selling birds."

"*Sì, sì, signora*; those are my brothers. We catch the birds and we sell them."

"That is your trade, is it?" And the lady looked round.

What a lovely scene was about her! The fresh, spring green was about all the fields; the road, mounting higher and higher, wound in and out through orange and lemon gardens, their golden fruit shining in the blaze of the burning sun; the sky above was one still dome of motionless blue; the fair sea—the Bay of Naples—was one moving sheen of dancing blue and silver as the spray sprang aloft and eddied white and wild at the foot of the rocks. Away to the left, out of the sea rose clearly the grottoed island of Capri; straight across the bay were the distant and half-misty little Procida, sheltered by the round, stronger, bigger Ischia; to the right circled the white houses, and heights, and castles of Naples. Ending all these rose the funnel-shaped peak of Vesuvius, soiling the blue of the summer sky with an ever-rising cloud of pale smoke.

More and more white houses clustered carelessly round the foot of the dangerous mountain. All was far enough away for the dirt and beggary to be hidden. One only saw the beauty and the picturesque loveliness and grace; one seemed to breathe an atmosphere of poetic music and tender delicacy of form. Who ever thought of the fire-destroyed cities of old, or of the buried hundreds who a thousand years ago were dashed out of their careless lives into a hideous burning grave? So it is; one lives on and never thinks. To-morrow the very same doom may come again.

The English lady was thinking very much in this way as she walked quietly along. She knew Sorrento quite well, but she had some young people with her who did not, and they were rambling ahead of her and getting flowers. What thousands of flowers were everywhere! fragile spring flowers, hiding in the lush grass; one bank rosy with nodding cyclamens, then a hollow blue with forget-me-nots, poppies flaunting scarlet, and buds of roses bulging out thick and green, waiting for a few more suns to bid them awake. Mulberry-trees were in plenty, grown for their leaves, upon which the silkworms—they make half the trade of Sorrento—thrive. A knot of young men and girls were stripping a tree of the leaves for the purpose of feeding these wealth-making creatures. A ladder was against the tree, and a girl was high up.

Her olive-green skirt was short enough to show a pair of brown bare feet; the sleeves of her grey cotton bodice hung loose, and showed strong brown hands and arms; an orange handkerchief was pinned round her neck, above all was a brown laughing face.

"You, Pasquale," she cried, "go and strip that tree. We do all the work and you look on."

"*Sì, sì*," laughed the lad, "of course I look on when you are up there to look at. There is plenty of time."

"Yes, always plenty of time. You are too lazy for me. Go!" She flourished an arm, then, steadying herself on her ladder, she unpinned the orange kerchief, and, seeing the sun was high and scorching, she put it over the curly black head and tied the corners of it in the nape of her neck. One's head has to be taken care of down in the fiery south; one's body may go, but one's head—cover it from the sun.

"There are some foreigners," said the lad; "they are rich. I will ask for a *soldo*."

"You!" again cried the girl; "you know it is forbidden. Padre

Luca will come to you, and they do say that some day one will be put in prison for begging."

It is true; at Sorrento civil and religious authorities are beginning the Augean work.

"Bah! some day," and Pasquale strolled away, getting another girl to go along with him.

Two English girls were just below him, the lady we have seen was just above him; which should he go to? The elder lady, because she was gentle-looking, and he thought she had given 'Cinto, with the bird, some money. 'Cinto had run past with his hands in his pockets whistling.

"Ah, signora, *un soldo, un soldo*. We are so hungry, so hungry," both he and the girl cried together.

They were dashed aside by the two English girls who were hurrying up. One had the thrush in her hand.

"Is it not a horrible thing," they burst, "tying up a thrush like this. We just bought it so as to free it. Have you got a knife to cut the string, auntie?"

No, the lady had not.

"The bird must be freed," said one girl hotly, "and there is no untying the knot. Take care, you'll break the creature's leg."

But Pasquale had a knife, and it was not the first bird he had helped to free. Neither was it the first bird he had captured, as very probably in half an hour he would re-capture this poor, frightened, half-maimed one.

"You have been taken in," laughed the lady, as she watched the operation and saw the bird fly with his broken wing a short distance, then hop, then try to fly again. "It is useless trying to free birds here. You must not buy them; that is the only way to cure the boys' cruelty."

"I don't believe it!" cried the girl, who was full of impulse.

"Nevertheless, it is true, Mattie." How quietly the lady spoke! "You know it is true," and she spoke in Italian to Pasquale.

"*Sì, signora, sì*. The signora knows well the boys will do it. I did it myself when I was young!" What virtue shone in the lad's handsome brown eyes. "Will the signora give a *soldo*? We work, but ah, the *maestro* gives us so little."

"I think I know what the *maestro* gives," said the lady gently. "Besides, I never give to anyone who begs. I will help those who work, but I will not help a beggar."

The girls and she had met just beneath the mulberry-tree. The girl upon the ladder was known to these English people.

"Lina Fresco," said the lady, "how are they all at home? You have got work at last."

"Yes, signora, yes. For three days I have been here." She flushed rosy red. "Are those the signorine who will see the Sorrento work, the English signorine you spoke about?"

"Yes, and we are going to-morrow, or the next day, to Signor Garboni's workshops, to see how it is all done. Do you think there is anybody there who will care to show us over?"

"Signora!" exclaimed Lina. She set her heels firmly on a rung of the ladder, leaned her back against its upward slope, and clasped her hands with a vivid action. "You know it all, signora," she cried, "ah yes, you know it all. And I will see Petrino to-night, and I will tell him to be ready; it is he who shall show the signorine everything—yes, he."

"Is it Garboni's work the signora will see?" cried the lad Pasquale.

Everybody was standing near everybody else, so to speak, and there had been no hush over either Lina's words or those of her English friend.

"Garboni's work is not of the best; is there not that of the Cavaliere San Monti? It is there that my father works, he would devote himself to the signorine if they would go to him; the signora will permit me to lead her?"

The unthinking grace of the lad's action of head and hand cannot be reproduced in words. He was an Italian, of the people—that will suggest much.

"No, no," the lady shook her head. "I have promised Lina."

"All for that Petrino," sneered Pasquale. "What good is he?"

Love is a fire, and down in Italy it sets tongues to say wild words.

"What good?" the second girl, Rosetta, cried hotly. "More good than there is in thee, Pasquale. Lina chooses him before you."

"Does she? I say she does not. Will I not kill him? Will I not—"

The lad gave a short sharp cry of rage.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Rosetta flicked her thumbs, flung up her arms, and twisted round in a mocking dance.

Rosetta would have Pasquale for her lover, and Pasquale would have Lina, there was the whole sum and substance of the scene.

Lina was not lacking equal fire.

"What are you, you Pasquale, that you talk of hurting Petrino? He is strong, he will not be killed by you. Can he not fight? Ah, you are hateful to me!"

She clapped her hands together, then as sharply flung them over her eyes, and burst out crying.

"*Petrino mio, Petrino mio!* and I have brought thee to this. Why did I not dissemble? why did I not hide my love for thee? Go, you Pasquale, go, idle, lazy, you beg—go!"

She flung her arms out wildly, then dashing round, set to work plucking mulberry-leaves.

"What a rage!" said one of the English girls. "Do they mean what they say? It is not safe to live amongst them."

"It is nothing," said the lady quietly; "in a few minutes they will be friends. I have no fears for Petrino's life," she laughed gently, "but I wish Pasquale would see fit to admire Rosetta. She is a little monkey, and she has a spite against 'Lina.'"

So they went on talking, and they at last got to an old monastery high on the hillside, a monastery with a history, and about which clung old legends and old customs.

Presently they turned, and strolled home as the sun fell. Purpling shadows clothed the hills, ribbons of gold and crimson floated from the sky down on to the darkening waters of the bay, heralds of the sunset which as yet was far enough off. Fisher-folk were singing from the boats below, children and boys and girls were singing on the hills above, assuredly they were a light-hearted people.

'Cinto was on the road again, trying to sell another bird he had caught to some other strangers as the ladies passed along.

There was no hurry, and things came in the way, as things often do, to push aside one's projects. Miss Daly went hither and thither with the girls; for example, they went for two days over to Capri, and stayed ten days instead; they saw many lovely places, and well—to sum all up in a few words, the visit to the manufactory of Sorrento carved work was put aside for nearly three weeks. Neither did they see 'Lina Fresco much during that time—when one is out from one's hotel from early morning until nightfall one naturally misses many a sight of familiar and more stationary faces.

However, things had not been at a standstill.

Pasquale had nursed his anger, and he had declared to himself—nay, he had done more than this—and he had flung fiery words before Rosetta, about the vengeance he would wreak on Petrino for stealing 'Lina.

"Stealing 'Lina!" taunted Rosetta. "How could he steal from you what you never had? 'Lina never cared that," she snapped her fingers, "for you—never will! She is so good, so industrious, so wise; do you suppose she will have anything to say to an idle, lazy fellow like you? No, no, not at all! Get to work if you want her."

"You, talking of work!" retorted Pasquale.

"Yes, me, me! Do I not know the worth of a man who works? No need for me to work—no, I am not going to be married, but, there, if you want 'Lina Fresco you had better go and work. Lazy, you always were lazy—next, you will want the bread eaten for you."

"Will I?" he muttered.

Nevertheless, either taunts, or love, or jealousy made him act, and he did get work at the Garboni manufactory. Not being skilled he was far below Petrino, whose hands could do the best and most delicate work.

So things went on.

Then one day, a ten-lire note was lost from Signor Garboni's own desk. Men had been in and out, and not one more than another could be suspected. All were searched.

The note was found in Petrino Vali's box of tools.

Petrino was sent away.

He was known to be saving money for his wedding; but he was honest. Well, the most honest fail. However, having been so honest they did not punish him, but sent him away.

All this came to the knowledge of Miss Daly only on the day when she and her nieces went to see the work done. She had openly asked if a workman, called Petrino Vali, might show her round as she knew him and his people.

There was no workman in the place called Petrino Vali.

Pasquale sprang forward—so handsome, so clean, so neat he was; such a new, transformed Pasquale! And he it was who told the history.

"And 'Lina Fresco?" asked Miss Daly.

"Ah, the *poverina!*" sighed he. "She weeps, and she does not speak much; but, can she wait for a man who does not work, and who is—is a thief?"

"I do not believe it of Vali," said Miss Daly decidedly.

"No, signora, one would not believe it," answered Pasquale with serenely quiet virtue. He shrugged his shoulders, however. "But," said he, "what can one say? He hid the money there with his tools—yes, there!" and he dramatically threw out his hand, and pointed to a box in a corner.

"Poor 'Lina!" moaned the girl Mattie.

"The signorina is so good," exclaimed Pasquale, leading them out of one room to another; "it will console 'Lina if I tell her. But do not let the signorina grieve, it will pass away—always it is so—'Lina will forget in time."

Did 'Lina forget?

Not at all. But the fire in her died out, and instead of blaming anyone or rebelling, she simply sat still and waited. These words must, of course, be taken metaphorically, for she worked on, and when the gathering of mulberry-leaves was done, she began other work. She set up as a washerwoman for the hotels, and Miss Daly helped her on. But as to forgetting—there was a look in the girl's grave face which said she would never forget.

People looked askance at her because she too did not turn her back on Petrino; what honest girl would be betrothed to a thief? What else was Petrino?

'Lina heard—people of her class do not veil their words; what they think they say, and if they feel scorn they certainly show it. So of course 'Lina knew what was thought about her, and, taking to herself all her strength, she never answered back a word, but went on her way silently.

Time went on, and seeing she was so quiet, Pasquale, trim and gay, went to her as a lover. He was nearly as well-to-do as Petrino had been.

Then 'Lina was no longer quiet. How her dark eyes flashed, how her lips trembled, as they poured out angry and cutting words. How she scorned him, how she taunted him with wishing evil—she grew hot and unguarded—with acting evil against Petrino. She scarcely knew what she said, she accused Pasquale of taking her lover from her—how she hated—hated him for it! She declared he was himself the more likely thief. He it was who had ruined Petrino—he it was who had driven Petrino away.

The hot words poured forth like a stream of burning lava, to take a simile from the locality—they terrified, they subdued the gay and confident Pasquale.

He went away from her quite pale, and with his handsome head bent.

Had she, in her righteous anger, happened to hit upon the truth?

Vali had gone away, and this had made 'Lina very sore. She would have had him stay in Sorrento, and live down the evil tales that had gone abroad. So often women are in this way more courageous than men—she could not persuade him to think as she did, and he had gone, gone to try for work, any work at Castellamare. Perhaps he would have to go farther, even to Naples if the ill news clung to him. She had no power over him, and a long time went by without knowing what was happening.

There were the communal schools, and 'Lina could read and write, also Vali could do some little in that way, but, ignorance was about them, and they neither of them thought of there being much possibility of hearing of each other. Ignorance, certainly, kept 'Lina from devising any means of clearing Petrino by legal enquiry.

No; she and he must wait.

So she washed, and he became porter at the Castellamare railway-station.

The summer had followed on to the spring—nay, who could tell which day had been spring and which was summer? However, the figs were swelling round, and fat, and luscious on the sunny hills of Sorrento. Crowds and crowds of English travelling folk had left, and were leaving those fiery southern lands. Miss Daly and the girls, her nieces, were going too; one day they went to say good-bye to 'Lina Fresco.

"We shall see Petrino at Castellamare; what shall we say to him for you, 'Lina?" asked Mattie.

"Say, signorina? What is there to say? I wait. That is all—we—he and I—we wait. Petrino is honest, he never took that note. He steal a note of ten lire!" The girl's face flushed.

"It is not likely—"

They had waited long enough, Miss Daly thought, so what did she do? She was energetic, and she knew Italians, she spoke Italian well, and she could say the right words of appeal to an Italian's sense of justice.

Well, no time was lost. Signor Garboni saw what she wanted; if Petrino Vali were a *protégé* of hers, he had been a good workman of his, far better than the gay, showy Pasquale.

He made enquiries; he had a long talk with the first man of law in Sorrento. No one ever knows until they see that it is done, how law can discover secrets, and can turn appearances of one sort quite inside out, as one might say, so that the appearances bear quite another character.

The fates were propitious; just at this very time a merchant of valuable hard wood, such wood as one uses in the Sorrento work, went to Garboni's. He had not been there for many weeks, nay, it so chanced that his last visit had been on the morning of the very

day whose afternoon saw Vali, the head workman, accused, convicted, and dismissed.

Naturally, Signor Garboni having his head full of Vali and his affairs, spoke about them to Maestro Bullini.

"*Gran Dio!*" cried the seller of wood, "and I was here and saw it done! Done with the impudence of Messer Diavolo himself. Ha, ha! The fellow is a genius of a thief!"

"Is he?" returned Garboni grimly. "I want no such geniuses here."

"That is quite another thing, signor, quite another thing! This rare wood now! I have not shown it you before; it will make an innovation in your work—look! pale green. I offer it to you first. Is not your custom larger for me than that of the Cavaliere over the way?"

"Bah! deceive San Monti, if you can; I know it. Is it not pear-wood, steeped in—in—"

"*Tchu, tchu, tchu!*" and Bullini threw up his arms, "and I thought no man but I had the secret! You will not tell?"

"Not I," loftily said Garboni. "Clear up my secret, and I will let yours alone. How do you mean the theft was an impudent theft? What did you see?"

"Simply this. One of your men walked coolly up to your table, opened a box, and took out a note. As he came along he twisted it about in his fingers, the villain, just as if he had been sent to fetch it by the signor himself."

"He did, did he? He was not sent by me. Do I send men to my cash-box? Do I ever leave it unlocked?"

"You had done so that day," said Bullini sturdily.

"Yes, I had. I remember my wife wanted money, and I carried it into the house to her, leaving my books open and my box unlocked—for three minutes."

The fat little merchant shrugged his shoulders. "Three moments were enough, it seems," he said philosophically.

"He was a tall, thin man, in a blue blouse," began Garboni; "a man with a long head and close-cut hair. They are trying to make me believe he never did it, just because he had always been honest before."

"*Chè, chè!*" broke in Bullini before his customer had half finished. "Nothing of the sort; nothing of the sort."

"How! What do you mean?" Signor Garboni drew himself up rather haughtily. No man likes to find himself in the wrong; a clear-headed business man, too, such as he was.

"*Per Bacco!* but you are wrong, signor. My man was no long sword of a man, but a strong-limbed rascal, an Apollo of a man. Nay, he was but a lad, I'm thinking, but he had the features of a god; aye, and the curls of Bacco himself!"

"Ha!"

"Truly, truly," and Bullini nodded his round head stolidly. "I would know him again among a hundred."

"Would you?"

"Ah, that would I."

"Follow me, then, and when you see your man walk up to him, and make some remark about his work."

Bullini gave a little chuckle. What Italian, even be he but a seller of valuable woods, is there who does not love a little *finesse*?

Three minutes after he had set his hand on Pasquale's shoulder.

"Ah, my lad," said he, "your work is quick, quick; too quick to be delicate. Where is Vali? He was the man for the delicate work."

Pasquale's brown face paled.

It was found out that Pasquale had put the note amongst Vali's things from pure jealousy. What he tried for, however, he never got, for Lina had never for an instant swerved from her faith in Petrino.

Pasquale was dismissed, and immediately he gave up work altogether. He and the gay, lazy Rosetta were a pair; they went off together, and they may be seen going about Naples selling flowers, selling fruit, singing—doing all sorts of things; never doing any steady work.

Before Miss Daly and her girls left Sorrento they saw Lina Fresco and Petrino Vali married in the old cathedral.

There was a *festa* that day, and early in the morning there had been a grand procession. Many priests from other places came in, and as to the number of candles that were alight, who could count them?

Mattie, the English girl, tried to count, and she was stopped; her sister pulled her aside.

"There they are," whispered Nell.

"Who?"

"The bride and bridegroom. They are too early, they will have to wait till all this procession is over. What sillies to come so soon!"

"Better than being too late," smiled Mattie.

There they are, a party of seven. An old brown man and woman, Lina's father and mother; then a young man and his wife, Petrino's brother and sister-in-law; next Lina's sister, glorious in a scarlet skirt and pink bodice, and with the roundest and largest of red-gold rings in her ears, a white handkerchief, with lace on it, was pinned across on her breast—surely she was grand that day!

Petrino, too, how sober, but how glad he looked! He was a bridegroom to be proud of, so tall and straight, so well-clad in his brown-cloth suit; how well, too, did the glistening ends of his neckerchief become him, all of blood-red silk—real Sorrento silk.

Lina was the prettiest of brides. Her brown face was bent—what bride is not a little shy and bashful?—but she walked along proudly. Had she not a right to be proud? She had held out bravely against half the town, and she had conquered. Of course she was proud, and she forgot her shyness, and talked with her English friends as they all saw the priests and the choristers, and the banners and canopies, go round and round the church.

"That is the end, signorina," she all at once said, and she gave Mattie a little clutch on her arm. "That is the end, they will all go through that door. Tell me when Padre Luca comes out, signorina. Tell me, will you?"

"Padre Luca? Oh, I know," nodded Mattie. "When he comes, he comes to—to—for the wedding!"

## My Secret.

I HAVE a secret none must know,  
I carry it where'er I go;  
I hear it carolled by the birds,  
But it is never told in words;  
'Tis far too sweet for telling so.  
Yet all the world it seems has guessed  
The secret hidden in my breast,  
Or why should everything seem strange?  
What is there that has power to change  
The sad to gay, the worst to best?  
Ah no! the change must be in me,  
With other eyes the world I see  
And feel its beauty. Ask you whence  
I gained this new and precious sense?  
That is my secret; let it be!

## His Own Guest.

(A SERIAL STORY.)

### CHAPTER XXX.

No. 127, Broadway, New York, was one of those huge emporiums which of late years have sprung up in the capitals of the civilised globe, where anything and everything seems capable of being bought or hired.

Matters had prospered exceedingly with Messrs. Ridge, but although in flaring gold letters they announced upon their handsome plate-glass windows that they changed money, bought or sold stocks and shares, treated for the purchase and sale of lands, dealt in diamonds, were open to buy old artificial teeth, had the choicest assortment of fresh and dried fruits, were agents for the best known wine and spirit merchants in Europe, and could furnish an hotel or a cottage from garret to kitchen at a few hours' notice, yet the business that had been the keystone to their fortunes was now kept carefully in the background.

They had found that customers—their wealthier ones, especially—did not care to meet friends or acquaintances at a private-enquiry office, and having heard them give some such ostensible reason for their presence, as that Messrs. Ridge had a house put into their hands for sale, or knew of some one who wished to part with some rare old china, the thought struck them, why should they not have for sale the very things mentioned? Thus from an office their business grew into a store, and many a case of wine was ordered, and many a valuable bit of jewellery bought, owing to these chance meetings in the handsome building.

The gilded inscriptions upon the windows, which were intermixed with the arms of various countries and such announcements as "*Ici on parle Français*," and "*Man Spricht Deutsch*," served to veil, in great measure, the goods that were piled within, and to whet the appetites of the passing connoisseurs in china, armoury, old coins, rare furniture, or gorgeous Eastern stuffs; forcing them to enter if they wished to have a more complete view of the coveted article.

The firm of W. and F. Ridge consisted of two brothers, William being the elder and Francis the younger. In spite of their somewhat rigid rules, and of the questionable nature of some of the transactions in which they embarked, they were both liked by their large staff, and as a commission on all sales effected was given to the *employés*, there were few houses more sought after by the commercial youth of New York than theirs.

About the same time as Lady Meredith was debating as to the wisdom of giving her entire confidence to her new friend and ally, Gordon, Messrs. Ridge were closeted in their plainly-furnished office, discussing together two cablegrams received from England the previous day.

It was rarely that the brothers gave their joint attention to any individual subject, their respective services being in too general a demand; but whether there was a flavour of "Auld lang syne" in the matter before them, or whether, like Captain Skooter, they foresaw the making of money out of the Meredith secret, there they certainly both were discussing with no small amount of interest and energy not only the message sent by Colonel Skooter, but also one which had followed closely upon its heels from Gordon, who had also seen the advertisement.

"I felt sure," said the elder brother, "that something was queer about that first reply."

"Surely the sender cannot be the fellow who was mixed up in the notorious mine-swindle?"

"Why not? Maybe he thinks his name is not so well known, or that Ridge and Company is not so knowing a firm as it is."

"Anyhow, you think that the second message comes from Tom Meredith himself?"

"I do; but let me hear it again."

Francis Ridge took up the despatch which Gordon had sent, and read:

"T. M., *alias* Smith, may be communicated with as Mr. Gordon, at Meredith Court, Farehurst. Cable reply."

"Rum start that, a fellow living in his own house under an *alias*," commented the reader.

"Rather. But we've met with a good many rum starts in the course of our experience, and it's my opinion he's the real Simon Pure. It's an odd coincidence, and if we make anything out of this last job, quite a providential one, that three times the affairs of this young man have come to our knowledge."

"Three?"

"Yes, don't you remember? First, his stepmother set us to report upon his goings-on, then came the affair of our agent recognising him on board a vessel at sea, and now the death of Fletcher brings him to the front again. For the first job we sent in a smartish account, which Lady Meredith paid without demur, then her ladyship gave us a handsome present, and now——"

"Now do you think we shall clear the expenses of our advertisement even?"

"I think Fletcher's death will be as profitable to us as though we had insured him in one of the best New York offices."

Fletcher, in whom will have been recognised the evil genius who had wrought so much mischief in Tom Meredith's life, had, after many fluctuations of fortune, found himself a porter in the warehouse of Messrs. Ridge and Co. He had been injured to death by the falling upon him of a bale of goods, and, during a period of delirium which followed the accident, had talked a great deal about an altered cheque, a letter, and Tom Meredith. It was during one of these attacks that he had received a visit from the senior partner, who instantly recognised the name Fletcher so repeatedly uttered. Prior to his death his faculties became clear, and on being asked the meaning of his words, and whether he had anything upon his conscience which he wished to reveal, he told Mr. William how he had altered a cheque which Tom had given him for six pounds to sixty, how fear of detection had caused him to flee the country, and how he had, in a fit of remorse, written to exonerate his friend and beg his forgiveness. No reply had been received, and the fear had grown upon him that his letter never reached its destination. Having, however, obtained employment, he feared to reveal his address, and so, until the fatal accident, he took no further steps in the matter.

A memorandum of their clerk's death, and of the confession he had made, was entered in the private books of the firm, but nothing else was done at the time, a busy one with them, as they were then largely increasing their business, and it was not until some years afterwards, when searching back for some other matter, the senior partner's eye fell upon the entry, and made him come to the conclusion that the expense of an advertisement for the wrongly accused man was worth risking.

Now came the question how much they should reveal or how much keep back, and after a long and exhaustive discussion between the brothers, it was decided to put Gordon, *alias* Tom Meredith, in

possession of the whole matter, and trust to his generosity as to the amount of the reward.

The reply cablegram ran thus:

"Man in our employ named Fletcher left declaration of altering cheque of Sir F. M.'s from six pounds to sixty. Wrote exonerating son years ago. Full particulars on receipt of proof of identity."

The draft made by the elder brother was copied on to a telegram-form by the younger, who also entered it in the private memorandum-book.

In reply to the summons of the bell, a clerk entered the room.

He was a dark, good-looking Frenchman, with small hands and feet, was dressed in the height of New York dandyism, or as it would now be called, dudeism, had his hair iron-curled, and his moustaches liberally pomaded.

Messrs. Ridge and Co. had *employés* of all nationalities in their service, and had an unwashed pig-tailed Chinaman, instead of the dapper little Frenchman, answered their ring, they would have been in no wise disconcerted.

"Here is a message, M. Ernest, to go off at once," said Mr. Ridge, senior. "It is entered in our book, and you will, therefore, have nothing to do but hand it into the office in its sealed envelope."

The clerk bowed, and withdrew with the paper which contained such news of import to the dwellers at Meredith Court.

"Having disposed of telegram number two, what are you going to do, brother, about number one?" asked Mr. Francis.

"Do? Answer it also, but how I have not quite decided."

"We shall get nothing from that quarter."

"Nothing in the way of coin, but I shall have the pleasure of disconcerting a rascal who nearly took me in with those Cortez Mine shares."

And so the answering of Colonel Skooter's message was put off for the moment, but for the moment only.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

In her own apartment Lady Meredith was awaiting with no small degree of anxiety the appearance of the man who had so won her confidence, that she had resolved to trust him in all things except in that of the fraud of her stepson's death at sea. Such an opinion had she of Gordon's honourable disposition, that she felt his knowledge of such deceit would inevitably lose him to her as an ally.

No, she would remain silent as to the action she had taken in that business, and repeat her conviction that the individual who claimed to be Thomas Meredith was an impostor, and strive to alienate Gordon's sympathies from the reported dead Tom, by showing him in the light of an ingrate, a forger, and one totally unfitted to have ever been the head of an old and honoured family.

Punctual to his appointment, Gordon left the dinner-table, but was delayed in the hall a few moments by meeting with Edith, who, her arm linked in that of Mary's, was *en route* for the library in search of some books. Evidently an understanding had been come to between the two young ladies, and Mary was looking brighter than she had done for some days, in spite of what Edith designated as "Charley's sulks."

"And wouldn't you sulk," Mary had said, "if someone who had liked you, and whom you——"

"Worshipped in return."

"For shame, Edith! Whom you liked in return, suddenly became cold and disagreeable, and let you think someone else was being preferred to you. Wouldn't you sulk?"

"I don't think I should ever care sufficiently for anyone to do that," replied Edith with a toss of her well-shaped head.

"Suppose Mr. Gordon was to flirt with someone," said Mary.

"I should enjoy the fun. Then you admit having flirted with that delectable creature, Colonel Skooter? Mary, I'm ashamed of you."

"No, no; I didn't do that, but I let Sir Charles——"

"Oh, Sir Charles, is it now? Hoity-toity! you'll be expecting me to call you her ladyship next."

"Edith, I wish you would not tease; I wanted to say that I let Charles——"

"That's good, but Charley would be better."

"That I let Charles think I had not rejected the offer of becoming Colonel Skooter's wife. I had promised Lady Meredith I would lead her son to believe he must not think of me. But then, Edith, you were even worse; I heard you say you would never marry except to become Lady Meredith."

"Neither will I."

"What do you mean?"

"That's my secret, little one. You shall know some day, but in the interim were I in your place I should chase away from Charley's

brow and voice those sulks which you seem to think the prospect of having Edith Pennington for a bride instead of Mary Ray fully justifies his indulging in. Seriously, Mary, you ought to try and make the poor fellow look a little less unhappy."

"Edith, I dare not; I promised Lady Meredith, to whom I am under a heavy debt of gratitude, that I would not stand between him and his welfare."

"Which welfare means marrying an heiress, which heiress means me; but as I am not going to marry him, where is the welfare which you would stand between?"

It was at this point of the conversation that Gordon met them.

"What is the subject under discussion?" he asked.

"The fable of the dog in the manger," said Edith. "We are discussing a young lady who, though she doesn't want a youth of her acquaintance to marry anyone else, won't accept him herself."

"Does he care for her?"

"She fancies so."

"Oh, Edith!"

"Does she care for him?"

"That depends—different people see the same thing in different lights. He has asked her for her love, and she talks about a fortune."

"Don't mind what she says, Mr. Gordon; if you knew her half as well as I do you wouldn't, I'm sure. Once she gets into a teasing mood she's dreadful."

"Forewarned, forearmed; when she's in one of those moods, I shall know how to behave."

"How's that, sir, pray?" demanded Edith.

"Do as I am about to do now,

"Run away,  
And live to fight another day."

With which words Gordon laughingly kissed his hand to the girls, and left them. As he approached the door of Lady Meredith's room the smile faded from his face, and was replaced by an expression more in accordance with the serious work that lay before him.

On his entry, Lady Meredith installed him in the most comfortable armchair the room boasted.

"I have asked you here this evening, Mr. Gordon, to tell you of the difficult position in which I am placed, and to beg you—the occasion given—to be my friend and ally."

She held out her hand gracefully towards him. A plump fair hand, on which shone one valuable gem. It was a hand a young girl might have been proud to own.

To its owner's surprise Gordon did not offer to take it.

Mystification and surprise were Lady Meredith's first feelings—a belief that he had not seen her gesture; the next—

"From the short conversation on the subject of my stepson this afternoon, Mr. Gordon," she said, "it appears you know something of the sad business. It has been a terrible trial to me, I can assure you."

Gordon bowed an assent to the assurance which her ladyship sought to strengthen by wiping her eyes with a pocket-handkerchief of texture about as stout as a cobweb.

"You also know a little of his affairs," she went on.

"Yes, a little."

"That he altered a cheque which Sir Frederick, the most indulgent and kindest of fathers, had entrusted to him, to a considerable sum larger than it was drawn for?"

"I did not know that."

"There can be no doubt such was the case. I can show you the incriminating document."

She spoke with such an air of conviction that Gordon began to think she really did believe her stepson guilty of the fraud; but if so, why had she suppressed Fletcher's letter?

He had received the American telegram immediately before meeting Mary and Edith on their way to the library.

She drew a small, curiously-carved sandal-wood box which was on the table towards her, and opening it, took out the forged cheque.

"See," she said, "here is the evidence of Tom Meredith's guilt. Is it not clear?" she went on, handing the document to him.

"And this bit of paper," thought Gordon, "is what has kept me from my birthright. I have only to destroy it, and what charge can be brought against me? Why should I hesitate? I have suffered already for a crime I did not commit. Yet, stay; such an act would be even more foolish than wrong, since this document will serve to confirm the declaration of poor Fletcher."

Lady Meredith was growing impatient at his silence.

"It is clear, I hope," she insisted.

"Your ladyship hopes?" Gordon exclaimed in simulated surprise.

"You misinterpret my meaning. My question is, Is not this cheque convincing of Tom Meredith's dishonour?"

"As convincing as the memorial-stone in the church is convincing of Tom Meredith's death," Gordon replied.

The answer was so unexpected that Lady Meredith turned white, and her hand shook so that the next paper she took out fell from her fingers on to the floor at her feet. It was the letter she had received from him but a few days before, claiming the estate.

He stooped to pick it up, and handed it to her, but did not offer to return the forged cheque. In spite of his mental arguments, he felt loth to part with it.

Again Lady Meredith sought to reassure herself with the belief that the simile Gordon had used was, like his ignoring the hand she had offered him—accidental.

It nevertheless seemed to make the telling of her story more difficult.

"Have you no other papers?" he asked after a moment's pause.

"Several," she replied, taking sundry bills and I O Us, which Sir Frederick had paid for his son, from the box. "I do not think; however, they will help us much."

As the evidence of his own recklessness, of his father's long and severely-tried kindness, lay before him, Gordon's heart seemed to soften towards the woman whom his father had so loved, and he could not but admit that he had given the young wife cause to dread and dislike him.

"I think, Lady Meredith," he said, "these will help us to come to a conclusion. Look," he said, comparing one document, taken at hazard from the rest, with his own letter sent from London.

"The writing is very like," she regretfully admitted.

"Like! It is identical. Believe me, the man who wrote the one wrote the other."

"Surely," she said in great agitation, "surely, Mr. Gordon, you are not going over to the enemy?"

"Most men, Lady Meredith, are their own enemies. No man has exemplified the truth of that saying more than I in my life have done. I am going over to my own cause now, and in that sense am joining my own enemy as well as yours."

"You are speaking in enigmas."

"I will do so no longer. I am Tom Meredith, my lady!"

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

HAD a thunderbolt fallen at Lady Meredith's feet she could not have been more surprised and agitated.

"You—you!" she gasped. "It is impossible!"

"It is true. Look at my features, listen to my voice. Surely both must be familiar to you now that their identity is pointed out. Stay, let my signature speak for me."

He took a pen, and across one of Lady Meredith's dainty sheets of note-paper, headed with her monogram, signed his name—"Tom Meredith."

It was as though his words had fallen upon the paper, and been retained as evidence in his favour.

"I see it all now. I have been duped, deceived! But if you are Tom Meredith, you dare not proclaim yourself, with a crime hanging over your head?"

"Of which crime I alone possess the proof," he said, holding up the cheque.

"Yes, you are Tom Meredith," she said, "no other man would have stooped to gain his end by such trickery and falsehood as you have shown. Give me back that paper, it is mine!"

With her head thrown proudly back, and her graceful figure drawn to its full height, Lady Meredith advanced towards her stepson to retake the cheque.

"Nay," he said, stretching out his hand and bringing the strip of paper within a few inches of the flame of a candle which was burning upon a table, "let us be just; if I am guilty of trickery, who has driven me to it? Did you not say you would use every means to keep me out of my inheritance! Do you think it likely that I, who have lived half my life under the suspicion of a crime I never committed, will not destroy its evidence now I have the chance?"

"You dare not, it is mine."

"No, as the heir of my father, mine."

"You the heir of Sir Frederick! Who will believe you?"

"Who? You do, and the world will; my proofs are irrefragable."

"Let them be as powerful as they will, they cannot prevent my branding you as a forger; yes, even the destruction of the cheque will not save you. The bankers who were consulted in the matter are still living, and can—nay, shall, confirm what I say."

"I shall not destroy the cheque, Lady Meredith; I have a better way of clearing my good name than that."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and so have you."

"I am again at a loss to understand you."

"Do not feign ignorance of what I mean, but for this one act on your part, I could forgive the past and say 'Let us be friends.'"



"Friends! I will show you that, though you seemed to value my friendship so long as it aided your plans, you have underrated the power of my hate. You think to come here as a thief, under a false name, and snatch away our possessions and cheat my son of his title, but I tell you no; so long as the paper you hold in your hand exists, you shall not. If you destroy it, then your title shall come to you smirched and disgraced. Do you think the world will sympathise with one who by trickery has succeeded in destroying the evidence of his guilt? I tell you I love my son more dearly than life, and you will learn what my power is when you are forced to fly the country for a second time, scorned by all, and branded as a felon."

"For my father's—your husband's sake you dare not do it."

"Dare not proclaim the crime of a guilty man? I dare, and will."

"The suspected crime of an innocent man, of one whom you know to be innocent, Lady Meredith. I repeat you dare not."

"I know to be innocent! You are joking."

"Can you tell me you believe Tom Meredith guilty of the crime you impute to him?"

The impressive tones rather than the words of the question astonished the stepmother.

"On my soul I believe him guilty," she replied, "and why should I not?" she went on. "His extravagant habits, his bad companions, the cheque, his flight—"

"And on the other hand?"

"Nothing but his own denial."

"And the confession of the real offender, Lady Meredith."

"What confession?"

"The one conveyed in a letter to me which you suppressed."

"I suppressed? It is false."

There was the ring of truthful denial in her words.

"If I could only believe so I might forgive all," Gordon said.

The words, meant to be conciliatory, caused their hearer's anger to flame forth afresh.

"You forgive! You!" she cried. "You come here to rob your father's son of the house and possessions which for years he has thought were his, and then, forsooth, offer to forgive and forget. What new fraud, what new deception is this you are trying to palm off upon me in the matter of the imaginary letter?"

"Not imaginary, Lady Meredith, but one that was sent to me here, although I never received it. Thank Heaven, however, it is not now necessary to prove me innocent, for its writer, although he is dead, made further confession. I will be more generous to you than you have been to me, and say that I do believe in your assertion that you know nothing of a letter in which the man, William Fletcher, owned to being the alterer of this cheque, and which letter was addressed to me."

"In which of your *aliases*?" asked her ladyship contemptuously.

"In that of my rightful title, Sir Thomas Meredith, I assume. Since it has not reached your ladyship, I assume it has been lost."

During Gordon's reply to his stepmother's taunting question, old Watts had entered the room with a message saying Colonel Skooter had received an important telegram and wished to see her ladyship in the drawing-room.

"How on earth can the man's telegram concern me?" thought Lady Meredith. "Say I will be with him in a few minutes," was her reply.

"Watts looked very odd and upset, he scarcely seemed capable of delivering his message," Gordon thought.

He would have been still more surprised had he seen his behaviour on getting outside the room.

The old man staggered against the wall for support, and pressed his withered hands against his forehead as though trying to recall something.

"Addressed to Sir Thomas Meredith—but not lost, not lost, only mislaid," he muttered feebly.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 124.)

## Never Alone.

(A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.)

### CHAPTER I.

THE first person to tell me the news was Mrs. Denny.

This was scarcely to be wondered at, seeing that by common consent Mrs. Denny was looked upon as news-purveyor and gossip-monger in chief to our little community.

She was a widow, rich, and childless. She had lived in Eccleby for more than twenty years, and I verily believe she knew everybody in the town and for a circle of a dozen miles round it. She had a

pretty basket-carriage with a pair of ponies, which she drove herself, and I seldom missed seeing her, unless the weather happened to be very bad indeed, in the course of my morning or afternoon round among my patients. If I did not see Mrs. Denny herself, I was pretty sure to see the basket-carriage waiting at someone's door, and then I knew that she was not far away. Dear, dear, what a tongue the good woman had!

On this particular afternoon Mrs. Denny drew up her ponies and beckoned me with her finger. I crossed over and shook hands with her.

"As a matter of course you have heard the news, Dr. Bland?" she said.

That was Mrs. Denny's way—to assume that you were acquainted with some particular morsel of news, when all the time she knew quite well that it had not yet reached your ears. An irritating way, I called it.

"To what news in particular do you refer, Mrs. Denny?"

"Have you not heard that Mr. Muncastle is coming home at last, and that he is going to settle down at Bewleigh?"

No, I had not heard, and my looks must have betrayed the surprise I felt.

"I have it on the best authority, or I would not venture to mention such a thing," continued Mrs. Denny. "And quite time, too, that he did settle down."

"Perhaps he is going to give a mistress to the old house. Men generally do settle down when they get married."

"N—no, I fancy not. At least, I have heard of no such arrangement. Besides, Mr. Muncastle must be too old to marry."

"Are men ever too old to do foolish things? Mr. Muncastle cannot be more than fifty."

"Well, I hope with all my heart that he is married. Then, perhaps, we shall have a little more life and gaiety in the place, and goodness knows we need them badly enough."

With that Mrs. Denny gave me the tips of her primrose gloves, flicked up her ponies, and was round the corner in half a minute. I have no doubt she had a longer round of visits to pay that afternoon than I.

I always liked to have some scrap of news to take home. My sister had been an invalid for years, and rarely stirred out of doors, and the narrowed interests of her life made a little gossip about any of our friends or neighbours more welcome than it might have been under happier circumstances.

"It will be fifteen years on the 2nd of next October, since the late Mr. Muncastle died," was my sister's first comment when I told her Mrs. Denny's news.

I may remark that Barbara had a most tenacious memory, and was a perfect epitome with regard to dates of all kinds.

"The present Mr. Muncastle came to his cousin's funeral," she went on, "but only stayed at the Hall for two days after that event. There had been some quarrel in the family, and he had not been at Bewleigh since he was a boy."

"If I remember rightly," said I, "some considerable time elapsed before he came near it again."

"Two years and a half, and then he only stayed for ten days."

"It must have been on that occasion that he came to consult me. He was troubled with insomnia, if I recollect rightly."

"He was; and I remember the description you gave of him when you came to dinner. You said he was a saturnine-looking man, tall, lean, and dark; that he spoke no more than was absolutely necessary, and seemed to be of a very reserved disposition."

Barbara's words recalled Mr. Muncastle vividly to my recollection. I remembered feeling at the time that he was one of those individuals with whom it seems next to impossible ever to become on familiar terms.

"He has been at Bewleigh once or twice since then, has he not?" I asked.

"Only twice, and on neither occasion did he stay more than a few days."

"What can have been his motive, I wonder, for deserting his home in the way he has done?"

"Mere eccentricity, maybe; or, perhaps, an inordinate love of travel, and a perpetual craving for change of scene."

Tidings of Mr. Muncastle had come to hand in a casual sort of way on several occasions. Now he was reported as being in Egypt; at another time he was heard of among the Rocky Mountains; anon there came tidings of him from Japan. One could never tell when or where he might be expected to turn up next.

All this time the old Hall had been left in charge of servants, the windows of its reception-rooms being closely shuttered, and all the stately old-fashioned furniture sheeted up in brown holland. The beautiful gardens, however, had always been carefully tended, and their produce in flowers, fruit, and vegetables sent off by railway to Covent Garden for sale. Two days' notice at any time would see both the house and grounds fit for the reception of their owner.

The news of Mr. Muncastle's proximate arrival created quite a flutter in the tepid circles of Eccleby society. We had had no such excitement since Squire Kynaston's daughter eloped with her father's groom, and we did not fail to make the most of it. Of course, the one great question was: Is Mr. Muncastle going to bring home a wife, or is he not?

Mammas with eligible daughters, who lingered unaccountably on their hands, hoped with all their hearts that he was still a bachelor; while others, like Mrs. Denny, trusted that he would bring with him a wife who would infuse a little more life, spirit, and gaiety into our somewhat stagnant coterie.

When, one day, three van-loads of modern furniture came down from London, and the rumour spread that a suite of rooms was being specially fitted up for a lady, the mammas were ready to give up the case in despair, while Mrs. Denny and others like her were proportionately radiant.

Then, a few days later, we heard that Mr. Muncastle had fixed the following Tuesday for his arrival.

Tuesday came in due course, and I am afraid to think how many ladies, who were fortunate enough to have windows that faced the road leading from the railway-station to the Hall, sat watching beside them all day long, and how many friends dropped in in the course of the afternoon to keep them company.

But the evening waned and darkened, till at length the street-lamps were lighted, but no Mr. Muncastle had put in an appearance. He must have been detained in town another day, and would doubtless arrive on the morrow. But, when the morrow came, we heard that he had arrived by the last train on the previous evening long after most of the worthy townfolk were in bed. We all felt as if we had been defrauded of something.

"Did I not tell you that Bewleigh would have a mistress at last?" asked Mrs. Denny with a smile of triumph. It was the afternoon of the day following Mr. Muncastle's arrival; and she had stopped her ponies as usual in order to speak to me.

Now it was I who had first suggested to Mrs. Denny the notion which she had just endeavoured to palm off as her own, but for the moment I let that pass.

"If I remember rightly, Mrs. Denny, you did say something about Mr. Muncastle bringing home a wife," I answered a little maliciously, "but I am not aware that he has done anything of the kind."

Mrs. Denny opened her eyes.

"Do you mean to say that the lady he brought home with him last night is not his wife?"

"She is certainly not Mrs. Muncastle," I replied, "because her name is Mrs. Dare. She is a widow, very handsome, not more than thirty years old, I should say, and yet her hair is snow-white."

For an instant or two Mrs. Denny could not speak. It was the first time I had known her to lose, even momentarily, that faculty so dear to her sex.

Taking advantage of the opportunity, I smiled, lifted my hat, and passed swiftly on my way. I heard afterwards that Mrs. Denny did not reach home to tea that afternoon till quite an hour beyond her ordinary time.

The way in which this news had come to me, and come so quickly, was very simple. Among my poorer patients was an old woman named Mary Vann, who had been bedridden for a couple of years.

Medical skill could do nothing for her, but I used to call in and see her once or twice a week, and send her a bottle of some harmless mixture now and then, so as not to let the old lady think she was being neglected. Mary Vann had a grand-daughter, Nancy Vann, who was parlour-maid at the Hall. On the morning following Mr. Muncastle's arrival, Nancy having been sent into the town on some special errand, had stolen five minutes, or it may be ten, to look in at her grandmother's and tell her the news, and leave her her weekly packet of snuff. Half an hour later I was listening at second-hand to all that Nancy had to tell. Thus it fell out that for once in a way I was able to steal a march on Mrs. Denny.

Although Mr. Muncastle came to the neighbourhood as an entire stranger, he need not have long remained so. His ancestors had lived at Bewleigh for centuries, and the fact that he lived there and was a Muncastle, would have sufficed to give him the *entrée* to the most exclusive county circles. We heard of one great person after another—I mean great in the eyes of us humble Eccleby folk—as having called and left their cards at Bewleigh, but we heard of no response to these well-meant attentions on the part of Mr. Muncastle, and, before long, it was given out that the state of his health was such as to imperatively demand the most absolute privacy and repose.

"If his constitution is so much out of repair," said Mrs. Denny to me one day, "how is it that one never hears of a doctor being seen up at the Hall?"

This was a question that I could answer no more than she. In

any case it was quite evident that the coming of the master of Bewleigh would add no new element of liveliness to the doings of our little town. We might talk and wonder, but that was all.

And talk and wonder we did. There was much that might well cause us to do both, if all the scraps of news which reached us from the Hall might be accepted as authentic. A great part of the old house still remained shut up, as it had been since the death of the previous Mr. Muncastle. The present owner occupied a suite of rooms in one wing—the wing which had the pleasantest outlook from its windows. Mrs. Dare, who, by-and-by, we learned was a daughter of Mr. Muncastle's only sister, had her own rooms no great distance away. No one could have been more regular in his habits than Mr. Muncastle. Every morning after breakfast, unless the weather was at its worst, he and Mrs. Dare walked out together for a couple of hours in the park or gardens. In the afternoon they rode or drove, exploring the country in every direction for miles around. Later on uncle and niece dined together, and after dinner came music and chess, at both of which Mrs. Dare was thoroughly proficient.

We were not long in noticing that Mr. Muncastle was never seen abroad unless he was accompanied by his niece; neither was Mrs. Dare ever seen beyond the precincts of the park except in her uncle's company. They were invariably together when seen in public.

I met them several times in the course of my country rounds. I should have known Mr. Muncastle anywhere, although I had not seen him for a dozen years. He was a man not readily to be forgotten.

His hair and beard, which had once been black, were now grizzled by advancing years. His long, thin, brown face looked thinner and more eager than of old. But there was the same anxious, restless look in his eyes, which seemed to belie the thin lips and firmly-set mouth that I remembered so well. There was the same tall, lean, well-knit figure that I had noticed a dozen years ago. Me he had forgotten, or, if not, he did not choose to recognise me.

Nancy Vann had said that Mrs. Dare was a handsome woman, and Nancy was right. And yet her face was a sad one, with unmistakable lines of trial and suffering on it, lines such as no after years of happiness could altogether erase. And then that mass of snow-white hair, which formed such a strange and marked contrast to her large, dark, melancholy eyes and well-defined eyebrows, what right had it on the head of one who was still so young in years? There must be some strange story, perhaps some terrible romance of real life, to account for such an anomaly. It was a problem that interested me, but one that I was powerless to solve.

The fact of Mr. Muncastle never being seen out of doors except when accompanied by his niece, seemed to bear out in some measure a certain startling piece of information which gossiping Nancy Vann brought one day and retailed to her grandmother.

It was well known that when Mr. Muncastle came to Bewleigh, he brought with him two sedate, taciturn, middle-aged men, brothers, named Ephraim and Gared Strong. No one seemed to know the precise positions in the household occupied by the brothers. They dressed in black, and wore pumps and white ties, and all they seemed to do was to wait personally on Mr. Muncastle; and yet a man, however exigent he may be, can hardly need the services of two valets.

So carefully, however, were the ordinary servants at the Hall excluded from Mr. Muncastle's private rooms, that it took inquisitive Nancy Vann, with all her spying and listening, more than three months to ferret out the mystery that lay hidden behind those doors.

When she had discovered it, if she had been a discreet girl she would have held her tongue. But Nancy was not discreet. She told her grandmother, and the old woman told me.

I made a point of seeing Nancy the next time she walked down from the Hall, and of trying to impress upon her the necessity for keeping silence with regard to her master's affairs. Although she promised readily enough that she would do so, I felt that I might almost as well have spoken to the wind; and, indeed, two days later I had the same information imparted to me as a secret by two different people. In a little while everybody in the town was talking about it.

It appeared that for some reason best known to himself, Mr. Muncastle had an insuperable objection to being left alone for any length of time. Mrs. Dare was rarely far from his side between breakfast and the hour for retiring for the night.

After that the brothers, Gared and Ephraim Strong, took it in turns to watch by their master till morning came round again.

Mr. Muncastle slept on a small camp-bedstead, and one of the brothers sat in a large wicker chair at the opposite end of the room. A lamp was kept burning all night, and it was part of the watcher's duty never to sleep at his post. What the consequences might have been had he failed to keep awake, none of us, of course, were in a position even to guess.

I little thought at the time that what was a mystery to so many people would in a little while be a mystery to me no longer.

Mr. Muncastle had been at Bewleigh some eight or nine months. When one night, about half-past ten, a mounted messenger knocked at my door and told me that my services were required immediately at the Hall.

"Who is ill?" I naturally asked. "Not Mr. Muncastle, I hope?"

"No; it's Ephraim Strong. He was taken bad this morning, and he's been getting worse ever since."

I ordered my gig to be got ready, and half an hour later I was at the Hall.

Mr. Muncastle in person received me.

"I am sorry to have been compelled to summon you at so untimely an hour, doctor," he said; "but poor Strong, one of my servants, is so ill that he quite alarms us, and he is certainly much worse than he was a couple of hours ago."

"With your permission, I will see him at once," was my reply.

I was ushered into the sick man's room, and a brief examination showed me that he was suffering from a severe bronchial attack, combined with symptoms of inflammation of the lungs.

I told Mr. Muncastle what was the matter, and said that if he would let his groom ride back with me, I would at once make up some medicine, and that I would be at the Hall again early in the morning.

On my second visit I found no improvement in my patient, and on the third day, Thursday, he was decidedly worse. I began to have forebodings as to the result. On Friday, however, there was a considerable improvement, but Saturday brought a relapse, and on Sunday the poor fellow died.

Mr. Muncastle was much affected. All through the illness he had shown much sympathy and concern.

"He was as good and faithful a servant as any man could wish to have," he said. "I shall miss him far more than I can tell anyone. I am thankful that his brother is still left to me."

We were pacing up and down the terrace which overlooked the flower-garden as he spoke. The events of the week had served to bring us closer together than a year of ordinary intercourse in all probability would have done. He seemed to have taken rather a liking to my society, and I usually stayed and had half an hour's chat with him after leaving my patient.

I found him much less reserved and altogether more sympathetic than I had somehow been led to expect. He had seen a great deal of the world, was widely read, and could talk well on almost any topic that might be started. What motive could such a man have for leading the life of a recluse?

No one could see much of Mr. Muncastle without making the acquaintance of his niece. I found her to be a refined and accomplished woman, but with some underlying sadness so deeply implanted in her nature that at length it had become a part of herself. It looked out at you from her eyes; you could see it in the downward curve of her lips; you heard it in her voice like a faint, faraway echo; even in her smile there was a lurking sorrow.

"I wish you would come up at your usual hour to-morrow, doctor," said Mr. Muncastle as I was about to take my leave; "and put your stethoscope in your pocket. Now that nothing more can be done for poor Strong, I think you had better give me an overhauling."

"Certainly, if you wish it, Mr. Muncastle."

"I do wish it. I have long known that there is something radically wrong with me. Hitherto I have foolishly shrunk from ascertaining the truth. I will be a coward no longer."

"I trust we shall be able to prove that your fears have no foundation in fact," said I.

He shook his head as he pressed my hand, and bade me good-afternoon.

Although I had spoken cheerfully, as we doctors are generally bound to speak to our patients, I had little doubt that Mr. Muncastle was right in his surmise. His hollow cheeks, the sunken circles round his eyes, a certain nervous depression of manner which he never seemed able to fling off for any length of time, had already warned me that there was something amiss with him, either mentally or physically. It might be that after so many years of wandering, and of almost incessant change of scene, the quiet and seclusion of his present mode of life were having an injurious effect upon him. When one has used oneself to tonics for years it is not always wise to leave them off at once, and resort to sedatives in their stead.

My interview with Mr. Muncastle next morning lasted upwards of an hour.

"Well?" said he interrogatively when I had put away my notebook and taken off my spectacles.

"You are certainly far from being in such a state of health as I

should like to see you in," I replied. He had begged that I would deal frankly with him in the matter, and I intended doing so. "For one thing," I went on, "I should recommend an immediate change of scene."

The ghost of a smile flickered across his worn face.

"I felt sure you would recommend that," he replied. "Nevertheless, with all due deference to your opinion, you must allow me to say that I do not think any change of scene would benefit me in the least."

I bowed. Possibly he was right.

"Of course my heart is affected?" he asked after a moment's pause.

"I cannot deny that it is, but not, I think, to any serious extent. I see no cause for any present alarm."

"I am not in the least alarmed, neither should I be if the affection were twice as serious as it is."

"Is it not possible," I said, looking him steadily in the face, "that your present low state of health may have its origin in some mental disturbance rather than in any physical derangement?"

He bit his lip, and evidently hesitated before answering.

"Upon my word, doctor, I almost think you are right," he said at last. "In fact I am nearly sure you are. If you have five minutes to spare let us take a turn on the terrace."

We went out by way of the French-window, and walked to and fro in silence for a little while.

Then my companion turned to me, and said abruptly:

"Doctor, you are old enough to have had considerable experience. In the whole course of that experience did you ever meet with the case of a man who was haunted?"

I was somewhat startled by his question, but strove to hide that I was so. A little time was needed to consider my reply.

"I expect that most of us are haunted in one way or other," I answered guardedly. "Some people are haunted by recollections of a wasted youth, of a misspent manhood, of friends alienated, of love cast carelessly aside. We are all haunted at times by the faces of the loved ones whom we have lost, and it is well for us that we should be."

"That is not at all what I mean," he replied. "Have you never heard of men who have been haunted by one particular face or figure which has persistently appeared to them time after time for months, or it may be for years?"

"I have both heard and read of many cases of optical and other delusions very similar to the kind you speak of. But, then, we medical men know them to be delusions—or illusions, if the word please you better—something projected from the patient's own mental retina—that and nothing more."

"In this world, who shall say where reality ends and illusion begins?" asked Mr. Muncastle. "It seems to me that just now I am walking and talking with you, but that may be merely a delusion on my part. How can I assure myself, as a matter of fact, that you are anything more substantial than a projection of my own mental retina?"

He laughed a little bitterly. We took a turn or two without speaking.

"Is it not possible," he asked presently, "for what you would term a mere illusion to assume in the course of time in the mind of the person who is subject to it the proportions of a terrible reality, and as such, influence his life to a far greater extent than any of those common troubles that flesh is heir to would be likely to do?"

"That such is undoubtedly the case now and then cannot be denied. The victims of hypochondria, or by whatever name we may choose to call it, are often to be pitied far more than the world wots of. I once met a man whose fixed belief it was that he had inadvertently swallowed a small snake, which was growing bigger day by day inside him, and must eventually kill him. Who can tell what agonies of mind that man went through?"

It seemed to me that Mr. Muncastle had the air of a man who was longing to make a disclosure of some kind, but who yet had a shrinking dread of doing so. All I could do was to let him take his own course in the matter.

"Doctor," he began after a little while, "a few minutes ago I asked you whether you had ever met with the case of a man who was haunted. I am a haunted man. Call it by what name you will—mental delusion, hypochondria, what not—it is to me a most grim and terrible reality."

He spoke with a sombre earnestness that could not fail to carry conviction with it.

"May I ask the nature of the appearance—for I presume it to be an appearance—to which you are subject?"

"I am haunted by one figure and by one only. Day or night I dare never be alone for any length of time without its presenting itself before me."

"Have you been afflicted in this way for long?"

"For something like a dozen years. At first only intermittently

and at rare intervals, then by degrees more frequently, and for the last five years constantly, whenever I am alone."

"Is the appearance which thus forces itself upon you, that of anyone you have ever known?"

Mr. Muncastle's sallow cheek became a shade sallow. He glanced quickly round as if half expecting to see someone following us. Then taking me by the sleeve he said:

"The appearance is that of a man with whom I was acquainted many years ago—of a man whose death lies at my door."

He sighed, and walked slowly on with bowed head. Suddenly there was the sound of footsteps. We both turned. Mrs. Dare was coming towards us from the house.

"Not a word," said Mr. Muncastle in a low voice. "Come up on Thursday, and I will tell you more. I can keep my secret no longer. I must reveal it to someone."

Presently I took my leave.

(To be continued.)

## A Generous Giver.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

It was a winter evening. The fire burnt with a brightness that indicated frost without, and reminded one of the cheerless suburban streets, with their bare trees and endless rows of railings, touched with rime, and glistening in the darkness, and by the contrast increased the sense of warmth and comfort within.

A pretty girl sat by a table; a young man near her reading. Quite apart from them, some distance from light and fire, sat a woman knitting. She worked busily, her fingers moved swiftly, even when she was gazing at the couple by the table. She had a quiet thoughtful face, with a look of resolution upon it that made it unlikely that she would fail to carry out any plan she had decided upon. There was more sorrow than happiness in her eyes, except when they rested upon her companions; then they would grow full of deep satisfaction, and a smile would illuminate her countenance and give it strange pathos and beauty. At such moments she seemed a being that must fascinate and command all men; but it passed, and she was only a gentle and rather sad woman, no longer young, who had learnt that life is full of loneliness and unspoken trouble.

The young man finished his story, and put the book down.

"I do like that," said the girl. "I should like to be a fairy godmother, and dispense good gifts all round. I do like a cheerful ending."

"Yes, it's comfortable," said the young man.

"And I do like comfort in everything," replied the girl, drawing herself a little more to the fire, and looking delightedly into its warmth. "They all had everything they wanted; could anything be better than that?" she continued, referring again to the conclusion of the tale.

"I expect not," replied the young man.

But the listener in the corner knew that the fulfilment of desires is not always the best thing for the wishers.

"I shall never be tired of Cinderella," continued the girl. "I delight in the turning of the mice into horses, and the pumpkin into a chariot. I wish I could turn these chairs into ponies, and this table into a carriage."

"What for?" asked the young man.

"For you, of course, simpleton. I should like you to have everything good, and beautiful, and comfortable," and she laughed lightly. "I wish I could turn these leaves"—and she fluttered the pages of the book—"into bank-notes for you."

"Ah, that would be useful, indeed," he cried. "That would make all things straight; there would be an end to this weary waiting; we could be married then."

"That would make you so glad," she said, looking up at him, as he stood beside her, with a wistful tenderness in her bright face.

"It would make me joyful, my darling, and you too, I hope," and stooping he kissed her.

The clicking of the knitting-needles never ceased, and the worker in the corner heard and saw, and was content.

"Sit down, and tell me what you would do with the money," said the girl demurely.

He drew a chair close to hers and sat down beside her. They had left the table and moved nearer to the fireplace; but the woman in the corner could still see them, and take pleasure in the fresh beauty of their youth, and in their honest, hearty love for each other.

"What should you do with it?" again asked the girl.

"Become partner in Sowerby and Sons, merchants. My father has heard of a good opening there."

He spoke regretfully. It is hard to see the thing that would just suit you go by, because you have not the power to put out your hand and take it.

"How much would it cost?" she asked, and the knitting-needles were silent for a moment, so anxious was the worker to hear the answer.

"Some thousands, and I can never get them, so what is the use of thinking of it? We must be poor people, Nellie. Are you afraid?"

"No, never afraid with you!" and the earnest look in her eyes spoke the truthfulness of her heart.

And the knitting-needles clicked merrily, merrily. An idea had come into the knitter's mind, and she was working it out, clearly, swiftly, to the rapid movement of her hands. Her thinking went with a lilt, like a merry rhyme, and when her conception was finished her heart was beating wildly with triumphant joy.

Meanwhile, the young people continued talking of their future, speaking of the modest home that would content them, of the happiness of being together, of the prosperity that comes at last to those who are brave enough to be prudent and self-denying, and to hold the opinion of the world of small account.

Then their converse grew more tender and confidential, their voices sank almost to a whisper, and did not reach the knitter.

Her mind was so occupied by its own jubilant thoughts that she did not heed them, but when her excitement had calmed down, and her idea had merged into a steady resolution, she heard Nellie's sweet voice saying:

"My aunt is thinking hard; hear how fast her needles click!"

"How good she is," replied the young man earnestly. "I think she is the best woman that ever lived—a saint, an angel."

"Your guardian angel," said the girl.

"Yes, that is it," he replied. "Even from the first she took charge of me, watched over me, protected me, almost from myself," here his voice was full of solemn emotion, "and led me by the hand in the right path, even until she brought me to you. God bless her!"

"God bless her!" echoed the girl.

The woman in the corner heard the blessings and rejoiced, and her soul was lifted in thankfulness.

She rose and went towards the others, saying:

"It is supper-time, young people."

"Oh, aunt, how industrious you have been, and I have done nothing," said the girl.

"You have made two people happy, Nellie—Sydney and myself," replied the aunt with great tenderness.

Nellie's aunt, Anne Stornton, was an orphan, and Nellie was her only relative. She was thirty-six, and it was said that she looked old for her years. There were certainly silver threads in her dark-brown hair, and crow's-feet at the corners of her sad eyes. She was thin, and stooped slightly, and her dress was plain to dowdiness.

Two or three years before this, she had been very different. Then she was upright as a pine-bole, the smooth brownness of her hair was perfect, her eyes were soft, not sad, and often bright with joy, her cheeks were rounded, and there was something of the fresh beauty of youth in the delicate fairness of her complexion and the plumpness of her hands. She was always exquisitely dressed, not discarding bright colours, but using them with so subtle a knowledge of the harmony of tints that she and her apparel made a perfect whole.

She lived then, as now, in a house in a south-western suburb of London, only, instead of Nellie, she had an elderly lady as companion. The house was her own, and she had lived in it many years with her mother, her father having died when she was a child.

She had reached the mature age of thirty-five without receiving an offer of marriage, which is not surprising, as it is only in a very exceptional case that a man proposes without feeling nearly certain that his suit will meet with acceptance; and as Anne had not cared for anyone, she had never given the necessary encouragement.

One autumn day, the son of an old friend of her mother called upon her. He had come to learn business in a merchant's office, and was quite a stranger in London, so had no friends.

He was tall, broad, and strong, with amber beard and moustache; but in his frank blue eyes, and the healthy colour of his face, was a boyishness that charmed Anne into a great liking for him.

He was so frank, so simple and kind-hearted, and so gentlemanly, that as time passed her liking grew, and she was very kind to him. He was lonely in the great city, so far away from all his relatives, and came often to Anne's house, and got into a way of telling her of everything that happened to him—the little mistakes and annoyances of the business day, the news in the letters from home.

And when these topics failed, he would speak of his hopes and wishes. And Anne had for all he said interest and ready sympathy

Sometimes her greater knowledge, and larger experience of life, caused her to lead his mind to a wider range of thought; he followed gladly, docile as a child to his teacher. Sometimes the little dining-room was turned into a school, or temple of discussion, she and Sydney taking opposite sides of an argument; and she would urge him to hold his own with all his strength, because it was desirable that a man should be able at all times to speak clearly, fluently, and to the point; and she doubled and rounded upon him with such nimbleness and dexterity, that it really was a difficult intellectual feat to keep steadily to his own opinion. When he stumbled and wavered, she, metaphorically, picked him up and put him on his feet again with good nature. And when he went straight on to the end, and was triumphant, she gave him most cordial approval.

Whether they were agreeing or disputing, whether they were merry or depressed, they both found their happiest time in being together.

Winter and spring passed with unusual pleasantness to Anne, and one day in early summer, she found herself anxiously watching the clock, because Sydney Canton was a quarter of an hour late.

She was startled. She blushed crimson, she was no girl to whom her own emotions could have no meaning; and she stood self-convicted of loving Sidney Canton. A thrill passed through her, a soft rapture possessed her. She seemed to have a fuller life, a more complete existence.

She revelled in her new possession of a great love, the most divine gift of womanhood. She exulted. Her life could never be barren, her heart empty, both were filled with the fulness of a great joy.

It was shining in her face, she knew.

Would he see it? He must not, it should be hidden.

A note was brought, saying Mr. Canton was very sorry that he could not keep his appointment, but would be with her the next day. She was greatly relieved. She would have time to become accustomed to her new self, her perfected, her completed self, she phrased it. In her exultation of spirit, it seemed to her that a woman does not know the real capacity of her nature for delight, until she loves. She might have said for sorrows either; but her sorrows were afar off in the future, and she saw them not. She was happy—grandly, superbly happy. Already she was thinking what good gift she could bestow upon him who had given her this happiness.

She went into the garden, her countenance glowing with delight. She trod the earth, but her head seemed in the heavens, far above all littleness, difficulty, or tribulation, in a world of grandeur, goodness, and peace.

It was borne in upon her, that out of her abundance she should give largely, that she should pour out her love like water, or like wine, in full libations, when blessings must fall on him for whom they were made. To give, to give! was the cry of her grateful heart. In the most ecstatic hour she ever lived through. To give, was still her thought when the ecstasy was past.

The exaltation of spirit died out, as must all such excitement, but for many years, in dreams in the silent night, she lived through that hour of supreme joy, and walked in her garden seeing nothing that was actually there, yet seeming to have full vision of things magnificent. And sometimes the desire of her heart would pass into words, and she would be awakened by her own voice crying: "Give, give!"

The next morning she was very calm, her face was gentle and quiet as ever, her soul was full of steadfast happiness, but her mind was clear, and she sat down to an honest contemplation of her position. She loved Sydney Canton, that she admitted frankly. She was not a woman to use subterfuge with anybody, even herself. She loved him, and would love him always; there was a stubbornness in her nature that made change almost impossible to her. He did not love her; then a doubt, the colour rushed to her face, she clasped her hands together, her lips were set, her face grew white, a hard voice she did not recognise for her own said:

"It must not be."

And then she knew that the gift she must give him would be his own free heart. If he loved her, his love must be crushed back until it died.

There could be no marriage between them. She was more than ten years his senior. She would be an old woman when he was in his prime. And then in mind, in heart, in knowledge, and experience, she was many, many years older than he. She knew, with a wisdom she never doubted, that a man does not want a guide, teacher, and philosopher in a wife, but only a loving, helpful, sympathising woman. That he must not look up, but be looked up to. That the responsibility of having to think and act for the good of others would strengthen Sydney's character, and make him self-reliant. But if he married her he would continue to submit himself to her guidance and direction, so there could be no growth of mental stature, he would at best be but a weak, kindly man, until the knowledge came to him, as it must inevitably come, that

he had married an old woman—something of a schoolmistress; then he would love her no more, might even dislike her, in spite of his respect and esteem, and look back to the first year of their friendship as a time of phantasmal happiness that had lured him on to misery.

This must never be. She would love him secretly, silently, but with a sweet hopefulness that there would come a time when she might be able to do something that would be greatly to his benefit.

That very day the change in her appearance began. There was a little less gentleness in her face, a little less elegance in her apparel.

When Sydney knocked at the door her heart beat fast, but it was reassuring to know, by a glance at the mirror, that her face was pale. Sydney's eagerness to explain why he could not come the day before was a comfort to her, because it relieved her from the necessity of making more than a trifling remark, until she had become accustomed to his presence, in the awakened state of her feelings towards him. Then she was able to talk in her usual kindly fashion, but with an older voice, and an older manner.

Suddenly she was keenly conscious of the agony of her voice, and of a prim stiffness in her demeanour, and she thought: "Am I really growing old all at once, or am I overacting my part?" and she looked at Sidney and saw a puzzled expression on his face. She smiled. His countenance cleared at once, and he said:

"You were dull without me yesterday?"

"Not exactly," she said. "I cannot expect always to have you here so much."

"I missed you awfully," he said. "I can only feel happy here," and the look came into his eyes that she had resolved must not be there. "Can you not love me a little, Anne? May I call you Anne?"

Bravely she put aside her great delight, and said with steady voice:

"You may call me Anne, if you put 'aunt' before it. I am accustomed to be called Aunt Anne, and like it much. You shall be my nephew Sydney, and I will love you very much. We are just of the right ages to be aunt and nephew, and shall soon come to believe that we are related."

She looked steadily at him. His face grew sad, his eyes looked dull. She thought, was it possible he imagined she was laughing at him?

"I hoped—I meant——" he said.

She put out her hand, saying:

"Will you not have me for your aunt? Do. I am lonely. I shall rejoice to have you for a nephew; it will make me so happy."

He put out his hand slowly; he looked uncertain, bewildered; he could not resist her appeal, yet, had he not meant something quite different?

Anne grasped his nerveless hand and shook it cordially.

"We have made a good bargain," she said cheerfully. "I promise to make an excellent aunt, and I am sure I shall be proud of my nephew."

"I think I must go now," he said.

"Do, it is a beautiful afternoon for a walk."

They shook hands again; as he turned from her she said:

"I am sure I am already quite proud of such a fine stalwart fellow for my nephew. Good-bye, Sydney."

"Good-bye—Aunt Anne."

"Brave boy," she said to herself; "I am glad to hear those words from your lips at last."

She stood by the window watching him go out of the gate. He went with heavy steps and did not look up and lift his hat to her with sunny smile, as was his wont.

"His dream is rudely dispelled," she thought, "but a brighter one will come to him that shall endure." And she hid her face in her hands and wept.

In ten days Sydney Canton came again, and after a few meetings their intercourse drifted into its old friendliness, only a little subdued. Anne's sober dress and sober speech, sometimes a little didactic, made her a good representative middle-aged aunt. But she was always on her guard; she felt that there was a tiny spark which the least weakness on her part might fan into a flame. And when at last she believed that it was wholly extinguished, she was weak from anxiety and watchfulness, and she decided that she must go away and be at rest for a time.

One morning, nearly three months after she had understood her own heart, her companion told her that she looked strangely altered and aged, and she was glad. Her friend continued that she had lost her taste in dress, and her cheerfulness, and must be ill. She admitted that she was not well, and would have change, and before she had told Sydney of her plans, a summons came for her to visit her only sister who was ill. She was away three months, during which she wrote to her nephew Sydney, and received letters from him. She nursed her sister through a long illness, and followed her



to the grave, then brought her orphan daughter home with her to be her charge for the future.

She came back to her home a grave sad woman, with hair touched with grey, but she never regretted what she had done.

As the niece, Nelly's, grief for her mother's loss passed away, she and Sydney became fast friends, and Anne took to sitting apart in the background, and leaving them to entertain one another. She watched their growing love, while yet it was all unknown to themselves, and she said to her restless heart, that it would be well that they should marry, they were well-suited to each other in age and character, and when they told her that they were betrothed, she gave them the kindest wishes and congratulations, and prayed for their happiness far into the night.

#### CHAPTER II.

A FEW weeks after the evening on which Nellie so emphatically expressed her preference for a cheerful ending to stories, Sydney Canton entered the dining-room of Anne Stornton's house, when she was sitting there alone.

"I have such good news!" he cried.

"Good news!" she echoed; "I am very glad. I will fetch Nellie."

"You will never guess what it is; it is glorious!"

"I am very glad, but Nellie must hear it first."

She went up the stairs, a great joyfulness in her heart, that lit up her face, and shone in her eyes. The hand she rested on the banisters trembled visibly, and there was a curious vibration in her voice as she said softly:

"Sydney has good news, Nellie; come and hear it."

Then the two went down, and as they reached the dining-room she motioned Nellie to go in advance, because she knew that with her before his eyes, Sydney would give little notice to herself, and she wished more than ever to keep in the background.

The young man caught the girl in his arms and kissed her.

"Darling," he cried, "I never thought to be so happy in all my life, never believed it possible anyone could be so wild with joy. Something so good has happened—almost as good as your turning the leaves of the book into bank-notes;" and he looked at her with proud admiring fondness as if she had done this great thing for him. "I am rich, Nellie; I can be partner with Sowerby and Sons; some one has left me money."

Nellie could not speak for joy, she lifted up her bright face, the lips trembling, the eyes full of tears. He kissed it again.

"You shall be happy, my love, my love!"

She nestled close to him, a little overcome by the great news. As he stood with his left arm clasped round her, he put out his right hand towards Miss Stornton, and said with impulsive tenderness:

"Dear Aunt Anne, I should like to do something for you, too; you have been so good to me."

"You are doing everything for me," she said cordially, as she pressed his hand. "You are going to take entire charge of Nellie, and leave me free to carry out my old fancies."

"You have fancies?" he said with an incredulous smile. "Why, you are the wisest woman I ever knew."

"Ah, but I have whims and oddities as well as other people, and one of my whims is to travel. When you and Nellie are married, I am going away."

Anne had not thought of this before, but now it seemed to her the most natural thing for her to do, and the best.

"You hear, Nellie!" he said.

"Everything wonderful is happening to-day," the girl replied, as she sat down flushed and radiant.

"Yes," he answered.

Anne went to her usual seat in the corner, and took up her knitting.

"You have not told us yet who left you this money," said Nellie.

"I am a bit bewildered with the news, and the hurry and delight," he replied, his face, figure, and voice full of abounding gladness. "Yesterday, I had a mysterious letter from a solicitor, one of the grandees of the profession, saying that he had money of mine in his hands, which he should be glad to pay over if I would call at his office at eleven this morning. I went. He is a nice old fellow. Said he had been so fortunate as to have the pleasure afforded him of paying over to me a considerable sum of money. That for the convenience of transfer, he gave me a cheque of his own, and would send a clerk up with me to cash it, when I could open an account for myself. And here is my banker's book," and he took one out of his pocket, and the two heads were bent over it examining it with great interest. The knitter in the corner had a sideways view of the two happy faces, and thought a little sadly that when she went away she would be little missed.

"Then I signed a receipt," resumed Sydney. "You know I am not always very ready with my tongue, Nellie, and I was just

thinking how to ask for information about it all, when he said very blandly: 'I think our very pleasant little interview is over,' and a clerk moved towards the door to open it for me. 'But—but,' I cried, 'who gave it me?' 'I am not prepared to say that anyone gave it to you,' he replied with a smile. 'Left it to me, then?' 'Or left it you either,' he said; 'indeed, I do not much care to say any more about it, and I think if I were you I would be satisfied to have it, and not care where it came from.'"

"And what did you say then, Sydney dear?"

The knitting-needles were motionless, and the knitter listened eagerly for the answer to Nellie's question.

"I said I must know. 'Ah, then run over in your mind the people who are likely to have had anything to give you—that is the only thing you can do,' and he moved his papers as if he wanted me gone. I did as he desired, and I thought I had got it. 'It was Biggs?' I cried. 'Because I know he told me years ago I should come in for something in his will.' 'I am not at liberty to say,' he said, smiling. 'You do not deny it?' I said. 'I say nothing—absolutely nothing,' and his smile grew broader; 'but I am really very busy, and must beg you to excuse me.'"

"It was Biggs," said Nellie confidently. "How good of him."

"I suppose it was Biggs, for I cannot think of anyone else."

The knitting-pins moved swiftly again. The anxiety and wistfulness had passed from the knitter's face, and there had come upon it a look of serene happiness that gave it a soft rare beauty.

Sydney and Nellie came towards her, the girl saying:

"You think it was Mr. Biggs, auntie?"

"As likely as anyone else," she answered, looking at them with a radiant smile.

"How young and bright you look, aunt."

"The glory of Sydney's good fortune has reached me," she answered, and there was something of triumph in her gladness.

One fine day in early spring Sydney and Nellie were married, and when Anne saw them start upon their wedding-tour, she thought that her work for them was done. It was well that the duties of hostess constrained her to exert herself, or she might have given way under the sense of loneliness and uselessness that oppressed her.

On the departure of her last guest, who had stayed with her until evening, she sat down and wrote out an advertisement for the letting of her house furnished.

The next day she went carefully through all her possessions, deciding what little things she would take with her, and what should be given to Nellie. To Nellie, she said, but she knew in her heart that it was to Sydney she was giving. The quaint bookcase, the quaint cabinet, the chair that he said was the easiest he had ever sat in, and every little thing that he had admired by look or word, was put down in the list for Nellie, while only a few mementos of her parents, and a little statuette Sydney had given her, were in the one for herself.

Then she gave her attention to the completion of the furnishing of the house for the young couple. This, with the arrangements for letting her own, occupied her fully three weeks. Her tenant wished to come in at once, she wished to leave before Sydney's return, she dreaded a parting, and had a little fear that she might let herself be persuaded to remain in London, which would be inconvenient. So five days before Sydney and Nellie came home, she left the country.

Her old companion, who had been with her during the last week in her old house, went with her to the station, and afterwards told the young people how cheerfully she had started on her journey, in spite of her regret at not seeing them.

They settled down comfortably into the new life, and they did not greatly miss her, they were so occupied with each other. And letters came from her so frequently, with always some tender expression of regard for themselves, that lingered in their memory, and some bright bit of gossip, or vivid description of something that she had seen, that could be repeated to their friends.

Two years passed, and they had a new interest—a little Anne, and they had grown quite accustomed to have their best friend the other side of France. They were secure of her sympathy, and of her unfailing interest in all that concerned them, and it was pleasant to have dainty little gifts from over the sea, and to look forward to the proud moment of showing little Anne to her great-aunt. Years rolled on. Sydney grew very prosperous, and husband and wife never wavered in their love for each other. Another girl, and some years later a little son, were born to them, and their life was full of happiness.

About a month after she had left England, Anne Stornton took lodgings in a large seaport town in France. And when she had made her handsome rooms home-like with the few belongings she had brought away, with her, she went out and called at some of the principal schools, and said that she wished to give lessons in English. Her French was good, and her manner and appearance

that of a well-bred woman. A look of patient sorrow in her fine eyes gave a refined pathos to her handsome face, and touched the hearts of the sentimental people into whose midst she had come.

She quickly obtained employment at two schools, but that was not enough, so she advertised to give private lessons, and by the end of three months she had sufficient occupation. By the end of the first year she had an established reputation as a first-class teacher of English.

She taught men and women, boys and girls, but she preferred the latter for pupils—she was always so fond of the young. Through giving lessons to their children, she became known to many of the best families of the neighbourhood, and made many friends. She was so well read, and so refined in her ways, that mothers were glad that their daughters should be with her, and take pattern by her.

As years passed these girls married, and Anne was a loved and welcome guest in many happy homes. She lived on always in the same simple fashion, putting by more every year for the support of her old age. She desired to be independent until the end, and worked gladly and steadily for this consummation.

When she had led this simple industrious life for ten years, a letter came from Nellie saying that she had heard that Aunt Anne was giving lessons, and that she was indignant.

Then she wrote carefully, and said that her income was less than it had been, and that she had not told them before, because she knew they would be grieved; that she was teaching, and greatly liked doing so—indeed, would feel quite lost without her usual occupation.

Sydney wrote her a kind manly letter, in which she took great pride, but she did not give in to his wish that she should henceforth share his home. She begged him in kindness to herself to let her go on peacefully in the old way. She liked her employment so much, and was so accustomed to it, that the relinquishment of it, even to be with him and Nellie, must bring her discomfort, even sorrow.

So she lived on in the same fashion five years more, much liked and respected; and then there came bad news from England. Something had gone wrong with the firm of Sowerby and Co., and Sydney Canton was ruined, and he was very ill.

Anne wrote to her employers and friends, saying that she was unexpectedly called from home, got a letter of credit from her bankers, and started for London the day after Nellie's sad letter had been received. She was wanted, and she went, with all her old dauntless promptitude, to do the best for others.

When she reached London the Cantons were still in their handsome residence, but would soon have to leave. Sydney was suffering from typhoid fever. Anne, who had seen some people pass away, believed she saw death in his face. He was overjoyed to see her. He told her of the failure of his firm. She encouraged him to hope that something might be saved. He had faith in the clearness of her judgment, and was a little comforted.

The children regarded her as a sort of beneficent protecting genius, who had come to put everything straight, and make life pleasant again, for had she not stopped mother's tears, and made father cheerful once more? They looked at her with love and curiosity in their eyes, and she felt that she could not love them enough.

Sydney got worse, the doctors spoke doubtfully of the issue of his illness. Anne sat with him one evening, while his wife and the nurse rested. He seemed to be dozing. She was thinking, and bravely taking up a new burden.

"Anne," he said softly, "Aunt Anne."

She went and stood beside him. His hair was brightly brown, he looked very young and handsome, although fever had made his face haggard and his eyes sunken. Her hair was grey, and she felt very old as she looked down upon him. She touched his hand, grown thin in two weeks of illness. He opened his eyes and gazed at her.

"Always the same dear kind face, and dear kind heart," he said. "How good you are to me and mine. In death there should be no reserve between friends," he tried to clasp the hand that touched his.

She pressed his in assent, her heart was too full of grief for speech.

"Anne," he continued with feeble voice, "a very strange thought has come to me of late years, it has come and come until I am forced to believe it is truth. I have not spoken of it, because I respected your desire for secrecy, but now all things may be made clear."

He paused to gather strength. She was as if turned to stone, but she could not stop his words even by a wish. After a pause that seemed an age to the listener, he said:

"You yourself gave me that money, Anne?"

She could not resist the appeal in his enquiring eyes.

"I did," she said softly.

Then there was a gleam of joy on his face.

"You loved me?" he said.

"With all my heart," she answered, and stooping kissed his brow, the first and last kiss that ever passed between them.

And then she knelt beside his bed.

"Noble woman," he said, "you have given me the most perfect happiness for fifteen years, and I shall have more courage to die now you are near me."

"You have been truly happy?" she said with radiant face.

"Ay, truly and fully. God bless you for it!" he answered.

"And now," she said, speaking as if she were inspired like a prophetess of old, "you must have no care, no anxiety for the future. Your wife and your children shall be my charge. They shall be all that you can wish—happy and honoured—and I have the will to compass this, and God will give me the power."

"I believe it, my trust in you is perfect."

"We shall meet in heaven, and you will tell me that I have not failed you."

"I will," he answered solemnly.

She drew the clothes a little closer round him. His eyes, soon tired with gazing, even at her dear face, closed. She knelt by the bed until the nurse relieved her watch.

Two days later he died.

Her strong courage supported the whole family in their bitter sorrow. She, with the help of her own trusty solicitor, settled all things. And a few weeks later, she took the little grief-stricken band to her home in France. Her friends gathered round her and were kind to them for her sake and their own. For the children were pretty and pleasant-mannered, and Nellie was very winning in the gentle dignity of her great bereavement.

Anne did well for them all, and for the little Sydney, her heart's darling, she procured a first-rate education, and he is now all that his father could desire, even as to prosperity.

The two girls are well married. Anne and Nellie live together, still teaching, still thrifty in all things, but comforted by the consciousness that when old age incapacitates them for work, there will be something to support them in independence.

## At Midnight.

A SONNET FOR THE NEW YEAR.

WHITE fleecy clouds float slowly in a sky  
Of perfect azure, frosted o'er with stars;  
The cold clear moonlight lies in silver bars,  
O'er forest, field, and meadow. Far and nigh,  
The village clocks chime midnight, and are still;  
A moment more, and all the wintry air  
Is tremulous with music. Fresh and fair,  
The clear wild tones peal out o'er vale and hill.  
Ring on! sweet bells, and fill each heart with hope.  
Ring on! and fan life's embers into flame.  
Give to the narrower view a wider scope,  
Give to the daily task a nobler aim;  
Uproot life's weeds; sow fresh its barren fields;  
Till all the wasted past a fruitful future yields!

## The Editor's Note Book.

SINCE Lord Mayor's Day M. de Lesseps has been making a sort of royal progress through the country, and has been received with the utmost politeness by meetings of shipowners, Chambers of Commerce, and other commercial magnates. Many speeches have been made, and much mutual laudation indulged in. Nevertheless, the principal result of the tour has been to show, very distinctly, that the points at issue between the Suez Canal Company and its principal customers are too serious to be got over by any amount of polite speech-making.

AND I wonder whether M. de Lesseps and his son flatter themselves that we have forgotten the abuse which they heaped upon us during the Egyptian War, or the fact that they have uniformly figured as bitter and persistent enemies of this country. If they have laid this flattering unction to their souls, they have made a mistake which they will, in time, find rather serious.

FOR a Conservative, the Lord Mayor seems to have considerable zeal as a reformer, and, if he goes on as he has begun, upholders of some of the good old-fashioned City superstitions will have a lively time of it during the coming year. For one thing, to the great satisfaction of the Bishop of London, the Lord Mayor has, so far as his Mayoralty is concerned, abolished the custom of attending the City churches on Sunday in state.

No doubt this decision is for many reasons a wise one, but, unfortunately, it has been arrived at owing to Alderman Fowler's narrow Sabbatarian views and without any special regard to the common-sense side of the question. If the Lord Mayor's letter to his chaplain is to be taken as the rule of his Sunday life, I do not see how he can allow any Sunday work among his servants. On the whole, like many a man before him, the Lord Mayor has arrived at a wise conclusion, which would have seemed wiser still if the reasons for it had not been given.

ON the broad principles of Municipal Conservatism, however, the Lord Mayor is sound even to the point of obstinacy, and there is a fine old no-surrender and we-don't-want-any-argument ring about the speech in which, at the dinner of the Turners' Company, he defied the reformers all round. Here, again, the right honourable gentleman was not altogether happy in his arguments.

THUS he did not think that one Municipality for the four million inhabitants of London would answer, on the ground that a man who lived at Hampstead would know nothing about the drainage of Greenwich, and that an inhabitant of Norwood would be ignorant of the affairs of Tottenham. To show the absurdity of such a view as this, it is only necessary to imagine somebody endeavouring to show that a House of Commons is useless because the member for Aberdeen would know nothing about the drainage of the Isle of Wight, and an inhabitant of Hull would be ignorant of the requirements of South-West Lancashire.

SINCE the publication of this speech, Mr. Firth, M.P. for Chelsea, has pointed out that a man living at Hampstead might very well know about the drainage of Greenwich, seeing that both districts are at the present time drained on the same system and under the control of the same authority, but this is a detail which the Lord Mayor in his ardour for battle will probably look upon as of little importance.

As a sort of reply to the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily News*, which keep on hammering away with praiseworthy pertinacity at the question of the habitations of the very poor in London, the *Times* has been dwelling with great complacency on an address recently delivered by Mr. Giffen, the President of the Statistical Society, in which that gentleman endeavoured, and not without success, to prove that the average condition of the working man has greatly improved in the course of the last twenty or thirty years.

THAT Mr. Giffen is right in the main, although, after the manner of statisticians, he endeavours to prove rather too much, few people will be bold enough to deny. But as a matter of fact his argument has no bearing on the question more immediately at issue. The fact of the improvement in the average condition of the working classes must not be allowed to obscure the other fact, that there exists in certain districts in London a population which is shamefully, scandalously, and dangerously overcrowded, and which, by reason of its own numbers, reduces the wages for such work as it is capable of doing, literally to starvation point.

THE Bishops of Bedford and Rochester, speaking at a Temperance meeting last week, seemed inclined to attribute all, or almost all, the misery of "outcast London" to the immoderate use of strong drink. The way to cure it, the former prelate said, is to abstain from the bottle. Put a poor man into a palace, said the other dignitary, and with strong drink he will still live like a brute.

THERE is a good deal of truth in this, although it is by no means the whole truth. There is a terrible amount of drunkenness among the inhabitants of the slums, but it must be remembered that a great many of the "outcasts" are too poor even to have any money to spend in drink.

ABOLISH every public-house in London, and you will remove a great temptation from a great many people—incidentally punishing a great many others at the same time. But will abstinence from the bottle have any effect on the price of slopsellers' work? Will the destruction of the publicans cause the wages of matchbox-makers to rise? Will the abolition of strong drink make it more possible than it is now to put twenty people into space which can properly accommodate five, or will it enable a man with six or seven children to feed them on wages which, with the strictest temperance in all things, can only fairly be made to do for two or three?

THE truth is that the question must be considered as a whole, and not piecemeal or from the point of view of the believers in particular nostrums. To make it the battle-ground of sects, and Isaacites, and party politicians, would be a trifle worse than leaving it alone altogether.

A GOOD many things were said at the meeting of the Women's Union of the Church of England Temperance Society—"Phœbus! what a name!"—which are calculated to surprise people who are in the habit of looking at things soberly and temperately (a habit rare

among Temperance orators), but I think that the first prize is due to Dr. Norman Kerr. This gentleman, in his righteous wrath against grocers, confectioners, and railway licences, declared that many of his lady patients "took so much drink, that if they went out of doors they would not be able to walk straight."

I DO not know what sort of practice Dr. Norman Kerr enjoys, but, if his statement is to be accepted as literal fact, his patients must certainly belong to a very exceptional class indeed. I wonder whether they read the newspapers. If they do, I should imagine that Dr. Kerr will speedily find himself with even more leisure to address public meetings than he apparently enjoys at present.

THE annual farces of electing rectors to the Scottish Universities have been again performed, no doubt to the satisfaction of the students themselves, and, except in one instance, call for no particular comment. In the case of St. Andrews, however, it is noticeable that Mr. James Russell Lowell, the American minister, was brought forward as a candidate. It is possible that this nomination was intended as a protest against the preposterous custom of turning these elections into political contests. But if this was really the case, could not the young gentlemen of St. Andrews have found in their own country, or in England, some man of letters at least as deserving of the honour of their suffrages as Mr. Lowell?

THE proposal of the Metropolitan Railway Company to make a line under Hyde Park is interesting to the public principally on account of its bearing on the vexed question of the District Company's blow-holes, as the Government only abstains from opposing the new scheme on condition that no ventilating shafts are to be permitted. It would certainly seem that if the new line can be effectually ventilated without blow-holes, so also should that which runs under the Embankment likewise be able to dispense with them.

I DO not, I confess, put much faith in the Government stipulation. History usually repeats itself, and, in three or four years time we shall probably have the Company smuggling a Ventilators' Bill through the House of Commons, and justifying it by piteous appeals on behalf of the millions of people who narrowly escape suffocation in the Tunnel every year, and whose sufferings could be put an end to by the erection in the remote parts of Hyde Park, where they could interfere with nobody, of half-a-dozen or so of the structures which the architects of Railway Companies call elegant ventilating shafts.

A PARAGRAPH has been going the round of the papers to the effect that the sprat fishery off Deal has largely increased, and that a considerable industry has sprung up in the little town itself in the way of preserving the fish "like sardines." It would be interesting to know whether the preserved sprat is sold under its own name, or whether, after preservation, it becomes the sardine of commerce.

I AM afraid that the New York correspondent of the *Standard* is not fond of Mr. Irving. At all events his telegrams about the distinguished manager of the Lyceum are not worded in a particularly agreeable manner. Thus, in telegraphing last week to announce that ten thousand dollars' worth of seats had been booked for Mr. Irving's performances in Philadelphia, he added that this was equal to Mrs. Langtry's experience, and half as much as Madame Sarah Bernhardt's success. This comparison of Mr. Irving with Mrs. Langtry's "experience" as distinguished from Madame Bernhardt's "success" is very unkind.

C. D.

## Duggan and His Gang.

SOME eighty years ago, travellers by the stage-coach from Cork to Tralee might have seen eight skulls stuck on spikes on the roof of the market-house in the town of Macroom, in the barony of Muskerry.

The country people did not like to talk about these skulls. When questioned, they only said, "They were the murderers of Colonel Hutchinson," and no more could be got out of them. The skulls were a source of horror and disgust to the inhabitants of the town, for the heads had been put over the market-house just as they were when struck from the bodies to which they had belonged. They thoroughly cowed the people; and that part of the country, for many years after the event that gave rise to this spectacle, was the most peaceable district in Ireland; the fate of the murderers proving a most effective terror to evil-doers.

Colonel Hutchinson was an amiable and worthy man, who lived in a large and handsome house, standing in its own grounds, called Codrum, about a mile from the market-town of Macroom. Although belonging to what is called a "new family," he was much respected by the neighbouring gentry; the poor people, too, were fond of him, for to them he was always kind and charitable. His sister resided with him, and he had one man-servant. Although he was so popular, he was nevertheless an active magistrate; but notwithstanding this,

no harm had ever been done to him or his property. It was his habit to sit up late at night, and the light in his bedroom could be seen burning at all hours. He was rich, and known to have much valuable property in the house, but he had never taken any extra precaution.

One morning, early in the summer of 1800, the neighbourhood was thrown into consternation by the report that Colonel Hutchinson had been murdered in the night. Some labourers passing to their work saw that the large kitchen window had been completely smashed, and going up to learn what had happened, they found the shutter broken in, the front door open, and the body of the unfortunate gentleman lying stiff and dead at the foot of the stairs, with a wound through his head. Shot dead, as was supposed.

None of the inmates could give any account of the matter. Miss Hutchinson could only say that she had been awakened by the noise of the breaking of the kitchen window, and the sound of several persons rushing into the house. In her fright she had left her bed, and hid behind a large press upstairs in a garret, and had not ventured out until long after all was quiet. Keen, the man-servant, stammered and looked very confused, but could give no information. He declared he was very deaf, and had heard nothing at all during the night. He was, of course, suspected and taken into custody; but nothing could be got out of him. All the neighbouring gentry belonged to the yeomanry corps—Catholics as well as Protestants—and they bound themselves by an oath not to rest until the murderers were discovered.

A large reward was offered for information that would lead to their detection. A remarkable feature was that, although a handsome looking-glass had been broken, and some furniture pulled about, nothing whatever had been stolen. At last suspicion fell on a man named Malachi Duggan. He was a farmer of the better class, but bearing a very bad character. In appearance he was the very type of a ruffian, of gigantic stature, and strong in proportion; his countenance was brutal and ferocious, and with a dash of cunning which made it all the more repulsive. When the officers went to his house to arrest him, they found him at home. He made no attempt to escape, and seemed, indeed, to treat the charge with much apparent indifference. On the road, however, he must have been anxiously considering his position, for when he and his escort arrived at Macroom, he offered to turn informer if he were assured that he would receive the large sum offered as a reward. His offer was accepted, when Duggan stated that on the night in question fourteen men, under his orders, assembled and went in a body to attack and plunder Codrum, but with no design of harming any of its inmates. Colonel Hutchinson was sitting up reading as usual, and, on hearing the noise below, he immediately went downstairs to see what was the matter. He found the hall filled with armed men, and seeing his own gamekeeper among them, he most incautiously exclaimed:

"What, you here, MacCarthy?" on which Duggan, the captain of the gang, at once called out:

"MacCarthy, do your duty."

The gamekeeper raised his gun, fired, and Colonel Hutchinson fell dead. The sight of his dead body filled the ruffians with such panic that they fled from the house, taking nothing with them. Duggan then gave the names of all the men who had been with him. A strict search was immediately begun, but the criminals, as soon as it was rumoured that Malachi had turned informer, took to the hills and concealed themselves—the country people, of course, assisting and hiding them. The county was at that time under martial law, and the Cork Yeomanry were a formidable body. They were determined the murderers should not escape, and they hunted down all those suspected of giving them shelter. One day they were on the track of some of the murderers; but the inhabitants of a mountain hamlet had assisted them and they escaped. Prompt measures were taken. The cabins were searched; every article of furniture was dragged out, piled in a heap, and set on fire; the wretched owners standing round, not daring to say a word. One of the soldiers, searching an outhouse, found a feather-bed carefully concealed. He was dragging this bed to share the fate of the rest, when the captain interfered, crying out:

"No, no; those wretched people have suffered enough; let us at least leave them the bed."

As he spoke a ball whizzed past, grazing his ear. Turning round, he saw a puff of white smoke over the brow of the hill behind them. Immediately he and two other officers galloped to the spot, feeling sure they had at last come upon some of the criminals. They only found, however, two peasants who belonged to the village, one of whom, exasperated at seeing the wanton destruction of their goods, had fired the shot. They were at once seized and dragged to the prison of Macroom. They were tried, not for firing on the yeomanry, but for aiding and hiding the murderers, and were condemned to transportation. The trial and sentence made a great sensation. When they were on board the hulks their relations and friends came in a body and offered, if these two men were restored to their families, that the whole county should join in hunting down the murderers and giving them up to justice. After some consideration this offer was accepted.

The men were pardoned and sent back to their homes, and the people of the county began to keep their word. The fugitives now led the lives of hunted wolves, and endured fearful hardships. Winter was approaching, but they did not dare to enter a cabin, for everyone was now against them. Some few contrived to escape to America, but the others wandered about the mountains, famished, hiding under rocks, and not daring to kindle a fire.

At length the people pretended to be friendly, and some villagers invited them to come to a supper in a barn, where they declared they would be safe. The miserable wretches, more than half-starved, came down the mountain, and, refusing to enter the building for fear of being surprised, sat down on the ground and began to eat voraciously. While so engaged, the peasants fell upon and disarmed them, and gave them up to justice. The trial came on at Cork. Duggan swore to them all, gave a circumstantial account of the murder, and seemed utterly callous to his own infamy. One of the culprits was actually a cousin of his own.

The prisoners were all convicted and sentenced to be hanged, their heads to be exposed on spikes round the market-house—MacCarthy, the gamekeeper, as the man who actually fired the shot, was to have his hand struck off and affixed above his head. They were ordered to be executed at Macroom, where they were conveyed, accompanied by the hangman, a hideous person, in an open cart.

The priests were removed when about half the journey had been performed, in order that the people, seeing them die without the consolations of religion, might be struck with greater awe. One of the convicts, quite a young boy, cousin of the gamekeeper, protested his innocence to the last, and it was the general impression that he was innocent, but that Duggan had sworn against him in order not to leave one of the family alive, who might take vengeance upon him hereafter.

When the cart with the wretched men arrived at a grove of trees at the entrance of Macroom, it was halted. A beam was laid between two trees, and two of the men were hanged at a time, one at each end; their miserable companions waiting their turn, and the people standing in silence around. When all had suffered, the hangman proceeded to carry out the remainder of the sentence, and the dreadful sight of the eight heads struck even more terror into the people than the execution.

Malachi Duggan, the captain of the gang and treacherous informer, received the reward which had been promised him and returned to his farm; he was quite brutalised, and had no feeling of shame. The first day on which he appeared at Macroom, he looked up to the heads and said: "Ha, ha! some of my soldiers are up there; the best place for the rascals."

He survived the trial many years, and, contrary to expectation, died in his bed at last; but his memory is held, even to this day, in the deepest execration in that part of the country. Of this there was a curious instance in comparatively recent times.

A gentleman, living some distance from Cork, had several servants, one of them a very nice young girl named Duggan, being a very far-away cousin of the horrible Malachi. There happened to be a dispute about some trifling matter on one occasion, when one of the other servants said to Duggan, "We shall really, miss, be obliged to call you Malachi." The poor girl did not answer a word, but that very evening left her place and set off to walk home to Cork, a distance of five-and-twenty miles, so disgraceful did she deem the imputation of belonging ever so remotely to the hated and treacherous informer.

## The Family Doctor.

### NEURALGIA.

THERE is, perhaps, no disease which produces such widespread suffering as neuralgia, for few people are so fortunate as to escape it altogether, and many are reduced by its tortures to a state verging on despair.

The word "neuralgia" simply means nerve-pain, and certainly the name is an apt one. For, whatever be its cause, its seat is in the sensory nerves—those nerves which carry sensation to the brain. Two most important kinds of nerves are distributed through our bodies—the sensory and the motor. They may be compared to numbers of telegraph-wires, all connected with the brain, which may be likened to the central telegraph-office. The motor nerves carry messages from the brain, which produce motions in our muscles, while the sensory nerves carry sensations to the brain. For instance, suppose a hot coal falls on the foot, the painful sensation rushes up by the sensory nerve, and immediately a message returns down a motor nerve which causes muscles to contract, and the foot is consequently immediately withdrawn. This is what, in the language of physiology, is called a "reflex action."

### SYMPTOMS.

Since the seat of neuralgia is always a sensory nerve, excruciating pain is its unfailing symptom. It is almost invariably unilateral—that is, confined to one side of the body. It is intermittent, with irregular intervals. In some cases the pain recurs periodically. It may begin suddenly and as suddenly depart, leaving behind a grateful sense of relief. In many instances the pain darts from one place to another. There may be tender spots, where the sensation is as if a nail were being driven in. In old standing cases, a certain tenderness of the affected parts may remain, even during the periods of intermission.

In ordinary cases, as a rule, there is no external appearance of the disease, except, perhaps, a superficial redness, a slight muscular twitching, or an increased secretion of tears or saliva. But in rarer cases it may destroy hearing or vision, may turn hair grey and lead to divers complications.



# CAUSES.

There are many causes which produce, or at least predispose to neuralgia. The most potent cause of its first onset is debility. It matters little how the constitution has been enfeebled. Anxiety, fatigue, worry, an enfeebling illness, may have been the predisposing cause. And the victim may remain to all appearance robust, while the nervous system is weakened or deranged. On the other hand, luxury and *ennui* produce enervating effects equally pernicious. In short, any depressing influence whatever may produce neuralgia, or aggravate it if it already exists.

Malarial disease renders the system very liable to be attacked by neuralgia. Cold and damp also act as existing causes. It may be produced reflexly by irritation, occasioned by decayed teeth, indigestion, or sudden mental emotion. It may likewise result from local injury, a nerve may be wounded and partly cut through, or it may be squeezed by some growing disease in a structure near which it lies. For example, the pressure of tight boots may cause neuralgic pains.

# VARIETIES OF NEURALGIA.

Any superficial part of the body may be the seat of neuralgia, but certain parts or nerves are more commonly affected by it than others.

The fifth nerve is largely composed of sensory fibres, and has a wide distribution in parts of the head and face. Certain branches of this important nerve are, at special points, subject to neuralgia. The most commonly affected part is the eyebrow and the region adjacent. But there are many other spots about the head and face that are subject to excruciating pain.

*Migraine* or sick-headache, as it is commonly called, is another common form of neuralgia. The pain is on one side of the head, and sickness usually results. The sickness appears to relieve the pain, and it often happens that the patient falls into a sleep after it, from which he awakens, free from the acute pain, but with a stupefied feeling, and a sensation of tenderness about the affected parts. Excitement, heated rooms, and especially worry and mental restlessness, are the chief causes of this form of disease.

The chest and abdomen may also be the seats of neuralgia. The back, too, is not exempt.

*Sciatica* is the name given to it, when it runs down the back of the thigh, the nerve affected being a large one, called the sciatic nerve, running in that direction. This form is often very persistent, and may resist all attempts to cure it. Youth is generally free from it; it is apt to attack those between the ages of forty and forty-five. There is the usual tendency to tender points, whose situation varies in different cases.

Internal organs may become subject to neuralgia. When the heart is so attacked, the pain is accompanied by intense agony and a sense of suffocation. *Colic* is really intestinal neuralgia; the reflex cause in this case being undigested food.

# PROSPECTS OF CURE.

It is difficult to foretell the course and end of a case of neuralgia.

If it be due to malarial disease, of not too long standing, appropriate treatment will soon cure it. The older the patient the worse the case, and a history of neuralgia in the family is always unfavourable.

Neuralgia is always most serious when it attacks those in the decline of life. Other important factors in the case are the patient's circumstances and surroundings, such as whether he be much exposed to cold and damp, and obliged so to continue. His social conditions are really most important of all. Neuralgia can never be cured amid worries and anxieties, or in those living among people who jar and irritate, while perhaps the worst condition of all is the idle, listless existence of so many well-to-do women. All these matters must be looked into, before any hope of a cure can be entertained.

# TREATMENT.

The successful treatment of neuralgia is certainly the most interesting part of the subject, which sometimes baffles the most skilful physician.

There are two methods of treatment—the one where the means are directed to improve the constitution of the patient, and the other, the application of local remedies.

Every means of strengthening the body should be employed, and everything which tends to enfeeble it should be scrupulously avoided. Food should be nutritious and easy of digestion. It frequently happens that persons subject to neuralgia have a great objection to fats; and experience has proved that they derive great benefit by overcoming this dislike. If they cannot bring themselves to enjoy the fat of meat, they must, at least, be unsparing of the butter, and some can bring themselves to heartily relish the savoury though homely article called "dripping." Cod-liver oil, especially, and even olive-oil, is good. A more palatable remedy is Devonshire cream, which should be taken in gradually increasing quantities.

Outdoor exercise and plenty of fresh air are good, and it is well not to wrap up too closely. Entire change of scene and society will occasionally effect a complete cure. The patient should observe what tends to bring on or aggravate his pains, as this varies in every case, and should avoid such.

Many drugs have been prescribed for neuralgia. The beneficial effects of most are at least doubtful. Quinine is certainly efficacious

in malarial neuralgia, in two or three grain doses three times a day. It may also prove useful as a tonic in ordinary cases. Other drugs may do good in some cases, but should only be taken at a doctor's direction and under his supervision. This warning specially applies to opium, which in the form of morphia, injected in small quantities under the skin, is often very efficacious. If the patient obtains relief from his medical attendant applying this remedy, he should not rest satisfied there, but should utilise his respite in fortifying his constitution against a return of the disease, otherwise this hypodermic injection will become a persistent and unwholesome necessity, gradually losing its power to lull the torture.

Ten minims of turpentine taken three times a day may give relief. It may be taken in milk.

Among local remedies, electricity must be mentioned as beneficial. It is best in the form of a continuous current, and not as obtained from turning the handle of a medical battery.

Counter-irritation effected by blistering agents or hot irons has been practised—a mustard-poultice may be equally useful. If the part affected be on the face where any kind of blistering is undesirable, a useful liniment may be made by getting a chemist to mix one part of chloroform with seven parts of olive-oil.

If all these remedies fail to give relief from tortures which are so intense that they cannot be endured during the length of time it must take to build up the constitution to throw them off, if indeed that were possible at all while such agonies were going on, then recourse may be had to surgical treatment. This consists of the nerve being divided. Some vary the operation by stretching the nerve, which occasionally gives permanent relief.

But the main points are to combat debility, to restrain worry and mental excitement, and to study the conditions which make for a healthy and happy life. This is better than to seek an insecure refuge in sedative and narcotic drugs. To hear some people speak, one would think "the nerves" had been given us for our torment. This is no more the case with them, than it is with our arms and our legs.

## An Algerian Lion.

ALGERIA is, even to this day, infested with lions, to say nothing of panthers and other ferocious animals.

At the foot of the great mountain called Le Chaitla, seven or eight and twenty miles to the east of Batna, there are vast thickets of trees which form an excellent cover for the king of animals. He rarely leaves them except at night; and he then follows the numerous paths which cross them in all directions.

An Arab, one day, going to cut wood, hatchet in hand, was thoughtlessly following one of these paths, when, at a sudden turn, he found himself in the presence of an enormous lion. The animal, as much taken aback as the man, bristled his mane and uttered low growls; while the Arab, believing the lion about to attack him, brandished his hatchet with threatening gestures, a proceeding which could only serve to enrage the animal. In fact, the lion did advance; and then the Arab, mad with terror, dealt him a terrible blow on the head with his axe. Although stunned, the brute soon recovered and rushed upon its aggressor, and with his formidable jaw broke his thigh. The poor wretch's screams of pain, repeated by the echoes from rock to rock, seemed to have made the lion believe that he was surrounded by enemies, for he let go his prey and fled to his secret fortress. The unhappy man, in spite of his wound, profited by the short respite. With prodigious efforts he managed to haul himself up a tree, at the foot of which, the lion, soon discovering his mistake, stretched himself at full length to watch the victim who had just escaped him. But at last his friends discovered his situation and came to his rescue. Seventy or eighty Arabs, armed with guns and yataghans, halted about a hundred paces from the tree on which the poor fellow could hardly longer retain his hold. Among them was a famous runner, who used to run races with horses. "Fire all at once," he told them. "To attack you he will quit the tree. I shall then be able to get up it and support the wounded man until an opportunity occurs of fetching him away." A general discharge ensued. The lion, only wounded, rushed at his assailants, but, hurt as he was, did not succeed in catching one. He then returned to the foot of the tree, up which the nimble Arab had climbed, and was holding the patient in his arms half dead with pain and fright.

Meanwhile, after reloading, the Arabs came back determined to make an end of it. Forming a circle, they advanced within fifty paces, fired all at once, and again fled, pursued by the exasperated animal. Taking advantage of the moment, the runner slipped down the tree, bringing with him the wounded man, whom he hoisted on his back, and then hastened to escape. The lion, who had seen every movement, was on the point of seizing his prey a second time, when the poor man's two brothers, who had reserved their fire to cover his retreat, discharged their guns at the lion, who, this time seriously wounded, fell, but soon got up again. One of them then plunged his yataghan into his belly. The lion turned sharply upon him, and with one stroke of his talons and one bite of his jaw, killed him on the spot. Leaving this victim on the ground the Arabs accompanied the first sufferer to the village, where he also soon breathed his last. The survivor of the three



then swore an oath that he would either kill the lion or that the lion should kill him. He then stripped himself of all his clothing, took two guns and a pistol, and went off, expressly prohibiting anyone to follow.

Arrived at the scene of the recent combat, he saw the lion lying on the ground, about ten paces from his brother's body, close to a copse of evergreen oak. The lion allowed him to approach to within twenty paces without seeming to pay any attention. The Arab took aim between the head and the shoulder, and fired. In two bounds the lion reached his enemy, who coolly stuck the muzzle of his second gun into the animal's ear and blew his brains out. Of course, the victor, after receiving hearty and loud congratulations, was carried in triumph to his tent. The probability is, that if the man who first encountered the lion had had sufficient presence of mind to have quietly stepped aside from the path, the animal would not have followed.

## American Newspapers in the Far West.

THERE is not a town anywhere in the Far West without a local weekly, bi-weekly, or even daily paper. As it never happens that the whole community is of one mind in matters political, we generally find one devoted to the interests of the Democratic party, and a second to the well-cherished opinions of the Republicans—these two parties dividing social affairs and public and private life in "the Far West."

The first thing which attracts attention in the little, dirty-looking, ill-printed sheet, is its astounding personality, which is generally not so much directed against the other party, or even against the rival paper, as against the editor of it in his private capacity. Every Western editor's name is prominently printed at the head of his paper, and instead of talking as the *Eastonville Gazette* might, of our "contemptible contemporary, the *Journal*," the Western paper talks of "that low-lived hound, Cephas E. Slocum, who edits his miserable two-bit thing over the way."

Here is a description of the character and appearance of a San José editor as painted a few years ago by a rival journalist:

"He is a professional loafer, and may generally be seen round drinking-saloons, not only at election times, but for years after. He makes a game of politics, and plays as he would a game of short cards—a cut-throat monté. He wears his hair short—a style known as the 'fighting cut'—that he may always be ready for a scrimmage, and his adversary may take no undue advantage. The preponderance of his brains is located between his ears. His countenance is concave, and one, or both of his eyes, are usually 'in mourning,' from the effects of his last fight. He is 'powerful' in 'primaries,' where he votes early and often for his favourite candidates, succeeds, and calls the nomination regular. He can tell the difference between a whisky straight and a gin cock-tail with his eyes shut, and can snuff a treat two blocks off. He spends his money in riotous living, and makes it a point of honour never to pay an honest debt. He accepts office for the sake of stealings, and is loyal because it pays best."

There is no joke here; the man was perfectly in earnest, as none who knew the brace of worthies would doubt. Nothing can better illustrate this personality, as well as the dearth of local news, than the following, taken from a Nevada newspaper, the *Virginia Enterprise*.

"We observe that Brier, local of the *News*, has on a new coat. If we remember right, there was a dry goods store burnt out a short time ago, and that a number of coats which were put on the street for safety, after having been saved from the fire, were missing. Of course we don't intend to cast any reflection, or to say that Brier nipped any of them. Oh, no!"

Sometimes these personal pen-battles are a little more truculent. There was a well-known editor "out West," of the name of Prentice; Prentice was never known to be put out, and accordingly Mr. Smith (as we shall call him) of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* made a fatal mistake when he penned the following: "Prentice is a liar, and we shall tell him so when we meet him!" Prentice thus replied in his next paper: "Ah! Will you, Mr. Smith? About that time there will be a funeral, and the Smith family will be the principal mourners!"

Probably, no one likes, when "running" for the honourable office of Congressman or State judge, to have it announced in a newspaper that, in an early portion of his career, he murdered his grandmother, and ignominiously buried her in the back-kitchen. Mr. "Artemus Ward," himself a quondam "newspaper man," exactly struck this nail on the head when he represented in the "controversy about a plank-road," this attack upon the editor of the *Eagle of Freedom*. The passage is worth quoting:

"The road may be, as our contemporary says, a humbug; but our aunt isn't bald-headed, and we haven't got a one-eyed sister Sal! Wonder if the editor of the *Eagle of Freedom* sees it." This used up the *Eagle of Freedom* feller, because his aunt's head does present a skinned appearance, and his sister Sarah is very much one-eyed. 'We have recently put up in our office an entirely new sink, of unique construction, with two holes, through which the soiled water may pass to the new bucket underneath. What will the Hell-hounds of the *Advertiser* say to this? We shall continue to make improvements as fast as our rapidly increasing business may warrant. Wonder whether a certain editor's wife thinks she can palm off a brass watch-chain on the community for a gold one."

As might be expected, such personalities occasionally lead to hostile encounters between rival editors, and between editors and their readers. Most frequently these consist only in a thrashing on either side, and probably few Western editors have missed having a difficulty of that sort at one time or another on their hands. In a scrap-book kept by Mr. B. Griffin, of Victoria, in the early years of California, such items as the following are not unfrequent: Collision between H. A. De Courcy, Esq., editor of the *Calaveras Chronicle*, and Mr. W. H. Carter; "Editorial Difficulty down at Santa Clara—Man Shot," etc.

The following story is told of a new editor who had come to a place which was infested by a gang of ruffians. Before his face was generally known, he attacked these men most violently in his paper. One day, as he was sitting in his office after the appearance of a particularly severe article, a stalwart individual, brandishing a whip, rushed in and enquired for the editor. Suspecting evil, he asked his visitor to be seated, and said he would call the editor, who had just stepped out for a minute. On his way downstairs he met a second individual, carrying a bludgeon, who likewise enquired vigorously for the editor. "Oh, sir, he is sitting in his office upstairs. You'll find him there." When he next peeped into the office, the two were belabouring each other with all their might, rolling over and over, and each fancying he had the editor in hand.

## Teaching at Home.

### ARITHMETIC. PART I.

NOT long ago I happened to be drinking tea with a large family of children, when the middle little girl—there is always a middle child in a large family, who serves as a link between the "big ones" and the "little ones"—when the middle little girl proposed the following question:

"I have got four sweets; and how am I to divide them between my three dolls?"

The "little ones" looked puzzled, and suggested various impossible answers, till presently the youngest of the party, who had somewhat the reputation of a dunce, and had not yet had lessons in arithmetic, remarked:

"You must give one and one-third to each doll."

The big ones, who had not condescended to show any interest about the dolls, and had been listening with calm superiority to the guesses of the little ones, were quite excited by this display of wisdom.

"Why, how did you know that, Henry?" "Hallo, Henry, who taught you fractions?" "How did Henry find that out, mamma?" were the questions heard on all sides.

Henry, unaccustomed to so much notice, and blushing, half with confusion and half with pleasure at the sensation he had produced, reflected in silence for a minute or two, and then announced his method:

"You think, and think, and think, and then it comes."

For the benefit of those who are unacquainted with juvenile language, I would explain that "it" refers to the answer of the arithmetical question proposed.

The little fellow had unconsciously hit on the true method of studying arithmetic—you must think.

If I had, in one sentence, to point out the distinction between the study of arithmetic and the study of language, I should reply that language is chiefly a matter of memory, and arithmetic a matter of reasoning. Of course this only expresses the subject in a very rough way, and applies chiefly to the colloquial knowledge of a language. Memory also helps us in the study of arithmetic, but it is so much more a matter of reasoning that, at any rate in the elementary stage, a very quick memory is sometimes a drawback, the pupil trying to recollect when he ought really to reflect.

In teaching arithmetic, people too often forget that it is a science, founded, like other sciences, on observation and reflection. With a majority of pupils it is the only exact science they will ever have the opportunity of learning; it is therefore the more to be lamented, when their one chance of scientific training is wasted by the incompetence of a teacher, who presents arithmetic to them in the light of a series of conjuring tricks—so many figures here, so many there, shuffle them about a little, and behold the result!

THE pupil has to remember a large number of rules (perhaps it would be more correct to say recipes, for the language of the arithmetic-book too often suggests that of the cookery-book), and as he does not understand the reason of what he is doing, he is unable to apply them intelligently, and can only work out sums when they appear in a shape to which he is accustomed.

I have known parents among the labouring classes and the little shopkeepers, whose own education had been neglected, express their surprise at finding their children, after years of school teaching, unable to perform the arithmetical operations needed in everyday life, and which the parents themselves had solved by mother-wit alone. Yet these same children could doubtless work out sums in multiplication

and long division, gabble through their tables, give you interesting information about firkins and kilderkins, and even tell you what weights you should use, if you wanted to buy rubies or diamonds.

I DO not mean to say that this unintelligent mode of teaching is universal, but that there is far too much of it I am certain, from the number of times I have heard children ask: "Please, sir, what rule am I to do this sum by?" If anyone has doubts on the subject, let him try and find out how many fairly educated women can explain the reason of the method usually adopted in working a long division sum.

THE home teacher, or any independent teacher, has a great advantage over the national school teacher, in that he is not obliged to take his pupils along at any given rate of speed. Nowhere is this freedom of such advantage as in teaching arithmetic. Indeed, where it is decreed that a child of seven years old shall know so much arithmetic, that at eight years he shall know so much more, and so on, it is impossible for many children to learn intelligently.

BEFORE a child begins the formal study of arithmetic, or is put to work with numbers on slate or paper, he should have a certain amount of practical acquaintance with the subject. Anyone who has watched very young children will have an idea of the way in which the first ideas of arithmetic are formed.

A LITTLE child just learning to speak seldom uses a plural. He will say chair, chair, chair, to every chair in the room, or button, button, button, to every button on your dress. He looks at each object separately, and has not yet thought of adding them together, and speaking of them as chairs or buttons. His first step forward will be when he recognises a certain likeness between chair and chair, which does not exist between chair and button. Even yet, however, he will probably not employ the plural, but some other word, such as "more" or "another," or the nearest approach to such words as his baby lips can frame.

PERHAPS he is standing at his mother's knee when he makes his discovery. He has possessed himself of that object so dear to the infant mind, his mother's work-basket. She is watching him as he takes up a reel of cotton and, having duly examined it, sets it on the table beside him. He makes a fresh dive into the basket, and again brings out a reel of cotton, and shouts delightedly "More reel." He has made his first effort at addition, the little word "more" shows he has noticed a connection between the two reels of cotton, which he had not noticed between the several chairs or buttons; he is feeling his way towards a plural. At this point the mother probably steps in, and counts over for baby, "One reel, two reels;" or a little sister is playing in the room and gets tired of hearing him repeat, "More reel—more reel." "Why don't you say two reels, baby?" she calls out. "Here are three reels, and here are four reels;" and she arranges them for baby's contemplation, till he wearies of her airs of superiority, and makes a dash at the little heap, and sends them flying across the room. But none the less he has had his first lesson in arithmetic, and it will be well for him if all his future lessons are as judicious.

WHEN our baby has once learnt to count his two reels, he has acquired a better knowledge of arithmetic than some savage tribes ever attain to; other races never get beyond number three in their reckoning, though it is difficult to imagine how a five-fingered being can stop at that point.

THE various nursery-rhymes and baby games carry on the child's education. Nurse, as she puts him to bed, counts over the little toes while she relates the time-honoured history of the five pigs who went to market, or she holds up her fingers one after another to the rhyme:

One, two, three, four, five,  
I caught a hare alive;  
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,  
I let him go again.

THE games at ball or skipping, when the bigger children count how many they can keep up, all help the unconscious learner, till an ordinary child of five years old will generally be able to count up to twenty, though he may not yet have had any formal teaching.

MANY children, of course, can do much more than this, but I should be quite satisfied with the above rate of progress, for arithmetic is, above all others, a study where it does not answer to hurry. It is quite immaterial (unless you have the fear of the examiner before your eyes) whether your pupil learns multiplication at the age of eight or nine; the important thing is, that he should know what he is about, and not be puzzled, for instance, because he is given two figures to multiply together, and can't decide which should be the multiplier, and which should be the multiplicand.

WHERE a child shows a great aversion to the study, or appears to find unusual difficulty, it is very likely a sign that you have begun to teach him too soon. His mind may not be ripe enough, or his ideas about numbers may not be yet sufficiently advanced for him to get any good out of formal lessons in arithmetic. In such cases it is best to drop the subject for a time, and merely encourage or help the child, in an indirect fashion, to increase his knowledge of numbers.

Get him to count things over for you occasionally; perhaps there is some treasured toy, a puzzle, or box of spellicans, and you tell him to count the pieces as he puts them away, and make sure they are all there—let him share things among his brothers and sisters, deal out the dominoes or counters when they are playing a game.

AT the end of a twelvemonth try him again at his sums, and you will very likely be surprised at the difference that a year has made; the child learning as much now in six weeks as he would formerly have done in six months. Not only will he now learn faster, he will also learn better; you will find that you need to explain much less, and that your pupil will be able to find out much more.

THE first thing to guard against in teaching arithmetic is allowing your pupil to give an unintelligent "Yes" to your remarks. It is so easy for him to say "Oh yes, I see;" such a trouble for him to make sure that he really has grasped your meaning. And the misfortune is that when once a pupil has been allowed to get into an unintelligent method of working, it is next to impossible to get him out of it.

WHEN he has got the idea fixed into his mind that the object of arithmetic is to fill up a paper with neatly-worked sums in the most expeditious manner possible, he resents any attempt on your part to explain the principles by which he should be guided as a foolish waste of his time, and, instead of listening to what you say, is only wondering when you will leave off. Yet in no study is it more important for pupil and teacher to work together than in arithmetic. With patience and repetition, the most absent-minded or thoughtless child may be drilled into learning verbs and declensions, but it is hopeless trying to make him reason when he will not even give his attention. The mischief is so irreparable, when once committed, that the only thing to be done is to prevent its ever arising, and I would even defer a child's beginning arithmetic for years rather than teach him before he was mentally competent to learn it rationally, or let him have his young mind confused by an incompetent teacher.

I HAVE hitherto spoken only of the preliminary education in arithmetic, which a child obtains from his own experiences and the ordinary conversation around him, and which often enough, unfortunately, remains the only intelligent and practically useful instruction he ever receives on the subject. In another paper I shall hope to offer a few suggestions how best to carry on the education begun by those two most excellent teachers, Nature and Circumstances.

## "A Gentleman."

TWO great errors colouring, or rather discolouring, severally, the minds of the higher and lower classes, have sown wide dissension and wide misfortune through the society of modern days. These errors are in our modes of interpreting the word "gentleman."

Its primal, literal, and perpetual meaning is—"a man of pure race," well bred, in the sense that a horse or dog is well bred. The so-called higher classes, being generally of purer race than the lower, have retained the true idea and the convictions associated with it, but are afraid to speak it out, and equivocate about it in public—this equivocation mainly proceeding from their desire to connect another meaning with it, and a false one: that of "a man living in idleness on other people's labour;" with which idea the term has nothing to do. The lower classes, denying vigorously, and with reason, the notion that a gentleman means an idler, and rightly feeling that the more anyone works, the more of a gentleman he becomes and is likely to become—have, nevertheless, got little of the good they otherwise might from the truth, because, with it, they wanted to hold a falsehood, namely, that race was of no consequence. It being precisely of as much consequence in man as it is in any other animal.

The nation cannot truly prosper till both these errors are finally got quit of. Gentlemen have to learn that it is no part of their duty or privilege to live on other people's toil. They have to learn that there is no degradation in the hardest manual, or the humblest servile, labour when it is honest. But there is degradation, and that deep, in extravagance, in bribery, in indolence, in pride, in taking places they are not fit for, or in coining places for which there is no need. It does not disgrace a gentleman to become an errand-boy or a day-labourer; but it disgraces him much to become a knave or a thief. And knavery is not the less knavery because it involves large interests, nor theft the less theft because it is countenanced by usage or accompanied by failure in undertaken duty. It is an incomparably less guilty form of robbery to cut a purse out of a man's pocket than to take it out of his hand on the understanding that you are to steer his ship up Channel when you do not know the soundings.

On the other hand, the lower orders, and all orders, have to learn that vicious habit and chronic disease communicates itself by descent; and that, by purity of birth, the entire system of the human body and soul may be gradually elevated, or, by recklessness of birth, degraded, until there shall be as much difference between the well-bred and ill-bred human creature (whatever pains be taken with their education) as between a wolf-hound and the vilest mongrel cur. And the knowledge of this great fact ought to regulate the education of our youth and the entire conduct of the nation.—*Ruskin.*

## Household Gardening.

WITH December comes winter, not always sudden and severe, as the seasons vary, and the character of the weather is seldom the same in all districts; yet where sharp frosts have not occurred they must be expected and prepared for. Outdoors everything of a tender nature should have protection, and in the case of greenhouses means must be adopted for keeping out frost. In the open garden a wisp of litter wound round such plants as the lovely, tender Tea-Roses, will usually preserve them from injury, while a few handfuls of ashes or cocoanut fibre refuse placed over the roots of Carnations, Hollyhocks, Chrysanthemums, Fuchsias, and other plants liable to suffer by extreme frosts, will be of great service. Too commonly, persons are very active in making their plants "safe" after they have been injured. We would have them move in the matter a little sooner, and have everything in readiness for use when it may be needed, and thus disappointment will be averted, and plants saved that might otherwise be lost.

### EXCLUDING FROST FROM GREENHOUSES.

Beyond all question the cleanest, safest, healthiest, and best method of effecting this is by a boiler, and warm water conveyed round the house in pipes. In fixing a boiler and pipes a few hints of guidance will be of service to many, for although a small apparatus may be obtained from any ironmonger, it is not at all certain that he will be able to fix it to work satisfactorily, as it is not all ironmongers even who have had the requisite experience. Many of them are very competent, but not all, and it is always of advantage to a purchaser to be able to perceive that what he is having done is being done properly.

### BOILERS FOR HEATING.

There are so many different boilers in the market, and each is lauded so highly, that the inexperienced amateur is not a little puzzled in making a selection. We will endeavour to simplify the matter by stating that no one boiler possesses half, or even a tenth part of the superiority over another that is represented, and if there are ten boilers, each guaranteed to heat a given quantity of piping, no one will make a very great mistake if he chooses the cheapest, be it saddle, conical, tubular, or spiral.

A saddle boiler is just what its name denotes, a vessel for holding water arched like a saddle, the fire being made under the arch for heating the water. This is a plain useful kind and will burn almost any kind of fuel—coke, coal, or wood.

A tubular boiler consists of a number of hollow tubes, either arranged vertically or horizontally, the former being fed from the top—coke being the best fuel for them—the latter from below, the same as the saddle boiler. Both the above kinds, saddle and tubular, have to be set in brickwork, and a bricklayer will know how to set them.

A conical boiler is a simple double cylinder containing water with a space in the centre for fire, the fuel being placed in at or near the top and closed with a lid. Coke, or a mixture of coal and coke, is the best for heating this boiler, which is complete in itself and requires no masonry in setting. This is very useful and convenient for very small structures.

A spiral boiler consists simply of a pipe coiled round in the form of a screw, and the coil enclosed in a case of iron lined with fire-clay, the top of the pipe being connected with the piping in the house for conducting the water out of the boiler, this pipe in turn being joined to the end at the bottom of the coil for conveying the water back again. This is a very simple and efficient apparatus, and needs no brickwork. The fuel is put in through a lid at the top, and there is an ash door at the bottom.

All the boilers that are made, by whatever name they are called, belong to one or other of the kinds mentioned; the two latter—the conical and spiral—are usually the most convenient for small greenhouses from twelve to twenty feet long, the others for larger structures where they are likely to remain as fixtures for a number of years.

### ARRANGING HOT-WATER PIPES.

The manner in which this is done is of far more importance than any mere shape of boiler. Water may be heated in any boiler under or around which a fire is confined, but we want the water to flow out of the boiler, circulate freely through the pipes in the house, and back again into the boiler to be heated again. That is the great desideratum, and it is easily effected.

Every boiler, no matter what its shape, must have two openings in the form of short pipes forming part of itself. One of these must be at or near the top, the other near the bottom; the farther these pipes are apart the better; the former cannot be too high, nor the other too low. If they are close together, or nearly so, reject the boiler, for it would be costly as a gift.

In placing a boiler its top must always be distinctly below the level of the pipes that are conducted through the house. A foot lower will do very well, but two feet would be no worse, while if the boiler happened to be ten feet down the circulation would be perfect. This is mentioned in case it may be convenient for having it in a cellar.

### FLOW AND RETURN PIPES.

The pipe connected with that at the top of the boiler is called

the "flow" pipe, because the water flows out of the boiler through it. This pipe is best to have a steady rise, say of an inch in nine or ten feet, to the farther end of the house; it is there turned by an elbow and brought with a steady decline or regular "fall," and connected with the opening at the bottom of the boiler. From the bend back to the apparatus the pipe is called the "return," because the water returns through it into the boiler.

Observe particularly that the flow-pipe should not have any sudden dips throughout its course, such as for passing under a doorway, as this would impede the circulation of the water, this, when heated, always having a tendency to rise because of its being lighter. Nor must the return pipe anywhere in its course be sunk below the bottom of the boiler, or there would be a decided obstruction to the free movement of the water.

### AIR AND FEED PIPES.

On the very highest part of the flow-pipe in the house, a small air pipe should be fixed. Drilling a small hole in the pipe and inserting a peg will do, this to be withdrawn if there should be air in the pipes. When water follows when the peg is drawn out, all will be right, and the aperture must be closed. A small pipe with a tap in it instead of the peg renders the work more complete.

The feed-pipe is for keeping the apparatus supplied with water. The most convenient method is to have a small cistern that will hold a gallon or two, fixed above the boiler, an inch pipe passing from it and made to enter the return pipe close to the boiler. If this cistern be placed just on a level with the highest part of the pipes, in the house, or a little above them, and kept filled with water, that will be evidence that the pipes are filled too, and all will be well.

### JOINING THE PIPES.

The cleanest and quickest mode is to get some india-rubber rings of the right size; place one of these round the end of a pipe, and push it firmly into the socket of the next; a water-tight joint will thus be made in a moment, and the aperture can be filled up, if preferred, with a little cement, which will make the pipes firm throughout their length. India-rubber rings are specially made for this purpose and can be had from an ironmonger.

There are other methods of arranging and fixing pipes, but the plan described is the simplest and best. Rightly carried out it is certain to prove effectual, and the entire apparatus will be absolutely safe.

The principle of heating indicated is applicable to the largest ranges of houses, containing, if need be, miles of four-inch piping, or to a miniature greenhouse or frame with its few feet of one or two inch gas-piping for conducting the water from and to the boiler.

A very small apparatus may be heated by gas where it is provided, or, failing this, with a petroleum stove or lamp; but in every case, whether the heat is communicated by coal, coke, gas, or oil, the fire is best outside the house, and this can generally be contrived by the exercise of a little ingenuity.

The subject under notice is one that exercises the minds of so many individuals at this period of the year, and is supposed by not a few to be so complex, if not dangerous, that we have endeavoured to make the matter plainer than it was before; and we are not without hope that those who think out the points as they read them, will find the process of heating a greenhouse as easy as A, B, C. We pass now to a totally different subject.

### GRUBS IN GARDENS.

A correspondent, whose case we know to be a typical one, seeks information relative to the extirpation of "grubs an inch and a half long, something like a piece cut out of the middle of a worm, but dirtier-looking and browner." This is the larvæ of the crane fly, commonly known as the daddy-long-legs, the popular name of the grub being the "leather jacket."

This is one of the worst and most difficult to destroy of all garden and farm pests. It often takes possession of lawns and spoils them, the sheaths from which the insects emerge being seen protruding through the surface and the grubs are found in shoals. They devour every vegetable they come in contact with, and not unfrequently ruin entire fields of wheat.

In fields the natural enemies of the grubs are starlings; in gardens, fowls. The former birds should never be destroyed; and as for fowls, although they are generally a nuisance in gardens, there are times when they may prove beneficial.

By no departure from the ordinary time of sowing or planting, can the depredations of the daddy-long-legs be evaded. Lawns in which the grubs abound should be rolled heavily and frequently. The following mixture may also be tried by pouring it on the nests. If it does not kill the grubs nothing will without also killing the grass, or the plants they may be attacking.

### A GOOD INSECTICIDE.

First dissolve two ounces of soft-soap in a gallon of rain-water, then mix in this thoroughly by violent agitation a small wineglassful of petroleum; next add a little water to two ounces of white hellebore powder and form a paste, and this dissolve in a gallon of water. Now mix the two solutions, soap-petroleum and hellebore, stirring forcibly, and pour on the infested parts. This will kill almost anything in the way of insects, while it acts slightly as a manure to the soil. But do not apply it when the sun is shining, but only in the evening, or on dull days.

GAS-LIME AND GAS-WATER.

Vacant ground, in which grubs abound, may be now advantageously dressed with gas-lime at the rate of two or three ounces to a square yard of surface, and forked in, mixing it well with the soil. This is an excellent grub antidote and also acts as a manure; but it must not be applied amongst crops, nor at the rate mentioned just before plants are inserted in the spring. It is readily obtainable at gasworks. Ammoniacal liquor, also to be obtained from there, mixed with five or six times its volume of water, and poured on the soil or grass is similarly beneficial; it is an excellent manure, while insects of all kinds detest it, and usually take their departure from ground to which it is applied.

Correspondence.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

ANSWERS.

AGNES.—The first step you must take to qualify for a schoolmistress is to learn to spell properly. Do you know that although you describe yourself as "a nicely-educated girl," you have, in your short letter to us, misspelled three words—"military," "civilian," and "occasions"?

ATTACHÉ.—Your only chance is to take specimens of your work to the shops where such things are sold.

CUPID.—"That air and harmony of shape express, Fine by degrees, and beautifully less."—"Henry and Emma," by Matthew Prior, 1664-1721.

DICK SWIVELLER.—The poem you want is called, "Break, Break, Break," and is by Alfred Tennyson. It was written between thirty and forty years ago, and you will, therefore, see it cannot possibly have such an application as you suppose.

DOS AND CO.—A slip of the author's, of course. He apologises, but, at the same time, feels highly complimented by the very close attention you must have given to the story.

ENGINEER STUDENT.—The subjects of examination and marks awarded are: Arithmetic, 300; handwriting, 40; accuracy and intelligence in writing from dictation, 60; composition, 100; grammar, 150; French, translation into English, 100; French grammar, 50; geography, 100; algebra up to and including quadratic equations, 300; geometry—the subjects of Books I. to IV., and Book VI. of "Euclid's Elements," and the definitions of Book V.—300; total, 1,500.

E. T. N. A. J.—1. It depends on the nature of the disease; medical advice should certainly be sought. 2. Consult an optician. No doubt spectacles of a proper kind are necessary. 3. You could dye the wrap yourself, but whether one bottle of Judson's dye would be sufficient depends upon the size of it.

H. F.—1. You should wear leather wrist-straps or bands, which will afford support, and elastic anklets for the weak ankles. Avoid standing as much as possible; bathe the weak joints with salt and water, and apply gentle friction afterwards. 2. Enquire at University College, Gower Street. See "Dickens's Dictionary of London." 3. Apply to Effingham Wilson and Co. for a list of their publications. 4. We do not know of any better stylographic pen than that sold by Messrs. Waterlow. The cost is from twelve to sixteen shillings.

JARGE.—1. The best position for painting is a northern aspect. 2. The designation of private soldiers in the Royal Engineers. Formerly the non-commissioned officers and privates of that corps received the general appellation of the Royal Sappers and Miners, which is now no longer used. Their duties consist in building fortifications, in executing field-works, and in performing similar operations under the direction of their superior officers.

J. B. S.—We do not know of any fund available in the case. You will find in "Herbert Fry's Handbook of the Charities of London," particulars of all charitable funds and institutions.

J. S. (Glasgow).—The play was "No Thoroughfare," and was played at the Adelphi. We do not know if it was printed. Enquire at French's, 89, Strand. We do not answer questions of this kind by post.

LEONORA.—1. "Steff-ah-know-tiss," accent on first and third syllables. 2. The present fashion is a fork, but we prefer a spoon as more sensible. 3. Always, unless he apologises. 4. It would improve with practice; at present it is rather young.

LITTLE EM'LY.—We doubt whether any pope acted in this way. In any case such action was needless. The change was gradual, both the Jewish Sabbath and Christian Sunday (*dies solis*) being at first kept as holidays. The twenty-ninth Canon of the Council of Laodicea (about 370 A.D.) no doubt greatly promoted the exclusive observance of Sunday; and Gregory the Great (Bishop of Rome) issued instructions on the subject. For further information, see Hessey's "Bampton Lectures."

Puzzles for Prizes.

RULES.

1. Answers should be written on one side of the paper only, and should be posted so as to reach the office, 24, Great New Street, Fetter Lane, E.C., by the first delivery on the Tuesday after date of publication. Envelopes must be addressed, "The Puzzle Editor," and each answer must bear the *nom de plume* of the writer legibly written on the top of the first sheet.

2. A First Prize of TEN SHILLINGS and a Second Prize of FIVE SHILLINGS will be awarded each week to the best and second-best answers respectively to the two Puzzles set. The Puzzle Editor reserves, however, the right of withholding either the First or Second Prize, or both, if, in his opinion, the answers received should not come up to the required standard of merit.

3. No winner of a First Prize will be eligible for another Prize during the same quarter. A winner of a Second Prize will be eligible for another Second Prize in the same quarter, but not for a First Prize.

4. Every Prize-winner must consent to send his or her name and address for publication.

5. The Puzzle Editor's decision is to be taken as final.

PUZZLES.

1. Catechism on the Policeman.

Catechising is not now so much in vogue as a means of imparting knowledge as it was a few years ago. Everyone remembers "Magnall's Questions," "The Guide to Knowledge," and "Joyce's Scientific Dialogues," with their gravity, their stilted language, and their occasional odd turns of dialogue, so unlike the fragmentary conversation of everyday. This is the sort of thing that is now to be burlesqued in a "Catechism of the Policeman." Questions are to be asked and answers given concerning that functionary, his outward appearance is to be described, and an analysis made of his mental state, imparting to the whole as much humour of a whimsical kind as the writers have at their command. Answers are not limited in length; but the proverb about brevity and wit must be kept in mind.

2. A Poetical Acrostic.

The following confused lines are taken at random from one of Lord Byron's plays. When they have been arranged into their proper sense, the initials and finals, read downwards, will give two characters in the same piece:

1. E'er deepest the the mourn truth fatal must.
2. Me before fallen none and baffled have many.
3. Hour of that nor moment a redeem would.
4. Disclaim upon I strength my defy do.
5. Gadara Eros Anteros and at.
6. Fair me then thine come thus it for do let pledge.

Prize Winners in No. 133.

1st Prize, 10s., "Syd Gardnor" (S. G. Jarman, Esq., Grosvenor Villa, Wembdon, Bridgwater).

2nd Prize, 5s., "Medway" (R. H. Rook, Esq., 19, Clapton Square, Clapton, E.).

The Winner of First Prize in No. 130, was Miss C. Choe Bayley, The Wilderness, Ascot ("The Arabs").

The Single-Rhymed Alphabets are remarkably good, and among so many excellent specimens, especially minute criticism has been employed. Numerous verses have been rejected on the old score of defective metre, but a large number were perfect in this respect, therefore a further weeding was effected by the rejection of imperfect rhymes, and again by the putting aside of verses which disposed of the X line by a device such as Xcellent. Many alphabets, otherwise good, were disqualified on this account. Among the best may be mentioned "Atlas," "Amethyst," "Gloire de Dijon," "Warwickshire Lass," "Mary," "Barney," "Ethel May," "Anceps," "Crystal Palace," "Irish Exile," "Sporran," "Pericardium," "Cupid," "Eft," "Trehelig," and "Zozimus."

The Answer to the Arithmetical Charade is:

"Necessity is the mother of invention."

1. Orchis; 2. Hot; 3. You; 4. Vine; 5. Test; 6. Fen; 7. Sit; 8. Me; 9. Ne; 10. I.

OUT OF THE RUNNING.—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize: No. 122.—1st Prize, "Midnight Oil"; 2nd Prize, "Stella." No. 123.—1st Prize, "Zyx"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 124.—1st Prize, "Ferdinando"; 2nd Prize, "Ambrosia." No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frensham," "Ryland," "Maiblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood"; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan"; 2nd Prize, "Maiblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May." No. 130.—1st Prize, "The Arabs"; 2nd Prize, "Alice." No. 132.—1st Prize, "Atlas"; 2nd Prize, "Ethel May." No. 133.—1st Prize, "Syd Gardnor"; 2nd Prize, "Medway."

Answers have also been received from—Acacia, Anceps, Amethyst, Ambrosia, Attaché, Azile, Abracadabra, Atlas, A Sleaford Herring, Alice, Azalea, Ayrshire Lassie, Auburndale, Barney, Bosco, Bo Bo, Baitabite, Chestnut, Charman, Castor and Pollux, Cricket Cap, Crystal Palace, Chutney, Chaos, Canada, Congo, Con, Cloutarf, Cupid, Cuckoo, Cœur de Lion, Cui Bono, Clock, Cintra, Dormouse, Dora, Echo, Ella, Emma Jane, Ethel May, En Avant, Ellart, Eclipse, Eft, Eve, Ernest Louis Napoleon, Esperance, Froggie, Gloire de Dijon, G. T. Long, Hanson, Irish Exile, Ignoramus, Ina, Iolanthe, Jane Eyre, Josephine, Jason, Kangaroo, K, Ladybird, Lewis's Coffee, Lance, J. C. L., Mary, Majolica, Maiblume, Mona, Marie Louise, Mrs. Brown, May Queen, Olive May, One and All, Perseverance, Pericardium, Pollie, Polarizator, Parallelogram, Quatre Bras, Quex, Quarrington, Quadrangarian, Ryland, Romola, Richmond, Spider, Sparrow, Snug, Snap, Sambo, Seaweed, Sybil Grey, Starling, Tarradiddle, T. G. D., Try Again, Trehelig, Umbra, Veritas, Vernon de Montgomery, Wallington House, Warwickshire Lass, Wildfire, Wooden Spoon, Walm, Ximena, Yorkshreman, Zigzag, Zephyr, Zozimus.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—STARLING.—It is necessary, except under exceptional circumstances, to answer both Puzzles in order to gain a Prize. WARWICKSHIRE LASS.—We are sorry we cannot now refer to your verses.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 132 received too late from Dum Spiro Spero.



## Odds and Ends.

JASON MAGNUS was a celebrated lawyer of Pisa. One day being engaged in a cause with another lawyer, of the name of Socin, and finding himself somewhat embarrassed by his adversary, he took it into his head to fabricate a law at the moment, which gained him his cause. Socin perceived the trick, and as he was not less cunning, he immediately overturned Magnus's reference by another not less precise. Jason, who had never heard of such a law, insisted that Socin should declare where it was to be found. "It is to be found," replied Socin, "in the next chapter to that you have just referred to." Lorenzo de' Medicis, who was present, much applauded this repartee, and the whole assembly was entertained by this novel kind of argument.

A COUNTRY squire, walking through one of his woods, met a labouring man just getting over the gate at the entrance to the wood. On a tree which overshadowed the gate was a board, on which was written, "No path." "Can you read?" said the squire to the man. "Ya'as; where do you s'pose I was born and bred, if I can't read?" "Well, as you can read, will you be so good as to tell me what you see written there?" "What I sees written up there? Why, I sees a great lie. It says, 'No path,' and, hang me, if there isn't as good a path as ever I seed—wide eno' for you and me to walk on at the same time." Landlord, confounded, walked off without saying any more.

A COMICAL incident, caused by the absorbing interest of a piece, occurred not long ago in the performance of the play, "Mankind." One of its scenes is a coffee-house, the separate compartments of which are occupied by various people. Here two villains abstract from its lawful owner a will, which is immediately afterwards snatched from them, through a window, by a woman. One night when the woman appeared at the window, intent on this purpose, the villains were startled by receiving from a sympathising spectator in the pit a warning, in a thundering voice, to "look out for the old ooman."

THE miseries of a poor verbal memory are great. The Rev. Arthur Mursell says that his own father was one of the most impassioned and powerful extempore orators he ever heard; but he had a bad verbal memory, and "after working us up with a splendid passage of unprepared and impromptu eloquence, he tried to close the sentence with the text, 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' But the words escaped his recollection and he said: 'Mercy and truth are met together; and—and—and two similar sentiments have kissed each other.'"

THE boy that wears a watch is an important character. At school he is envied and in the street he is respected. None of the boys grab him and throw him down, for they might break his time-keeper. He has a way of twisting the chain when he talks, and of looking at his watch when he hears a railroad train, and saying twelve-ten, or six-five, or eight-sixteen. The other boys stand round and regard him with admiration. He grows up and probably goes to college with a distinguished air, but in a few years he pawns his watch with a man who, as a boy, often stood round and admired it.

THE following characteristic story is told of the commander-in-chief of the French army in the Crimea: Some years ago Pelissier, on parade one morning, got angry with a *sous-officer* of a cavalry regiment, whose *tenue* seemed to him very defective. He abused the man most violently, and cut him across the face with a whip. The man seized one of his pistols, and endeavoured to fire at his commanding officer; but the pistol missed fire. Pelissier, swearing a fearful oath, but otherwise quite calm, said: "Fellow! I order you a three days' arrest for not having your arms in better order."

An old maid died recently in Norway, leaving a will in which she directed that her estate be divided into six equal parts and distributed to her six discarded lovers, who are all poor. In explanation of this bequest, the deceased left the following upon record: "These lovers either courted me for my money, which they may now have, or else they loved me, and for that reason they shall have the money, because I disbelieved them."

A LITTLE bright-eyed boy, upon hearing his father read the story of Joan of Arc, was greatly moved by her sad trials; but when the part was reached where she was about to be burned to death at the stake, the poor little fellow could not contain himself any longer, but sobbingly clutched his parent's arm, and with big tears running down his plump little cheeks, cried, "But, pa, papa, wh-e-re were the police?"

EDWIN JAMES, examining a witness, asked him what his business was. He answered, "A dealer in old iron." "Then," said the counsel, "you must, of course, be a thief." "I don't see," replied the witness, "why a dealer in iron must necessarily be a thief, more than a dealer in brass."

THE town of Chartres was besieged by King Henry the Fourth of France, and capitulated. The magistrate of the town, on giving the keys, addressed his majesty: "This town belongs to your highness by divine law and by human law." "And by cannon law," replied the king.

AN hotel-keeper charging a traveller three times too much for bad accommodation, "What will you do when you have killed the goose that lays the golden egg?" said the grumbling traveller. "Wait for another goose," said the unabashed landlord.

"My dear," says Rattler, at the tea-table, looking up from his evening paper, "this French-China trouble looks serious." "Yes," answered Mrs. Rattler, "Bridget broke the handle off the sugar-bowl to-day, but I didn't think you would notice it so soon."

MR. GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA regards it as one of the luckiest and most merciful things that can possibly happen to a man that he should be almost invariably unlucky at cards. His own remembrances of poker are brief, but full of acute anguish.

A GOOD *bourgeois*, with his wife on his arm, cries out to a cartman: "Why do you beat your horse so cruelly?" "Because I haven't got any wife."

WHEN Mr. Ruskin says that a couple should court seven years, he fails to state who should pay the expenses.

SOME of the superstitions about Irish brides are amusing. It is an ill omen to rise before the sun the marriage morning; to dream of the croaking of a raven, or to see the shadow of his wing flit by in the sunshine; or to hear the knock of an invisible hand, which, however, should be listened for; or to note a winding-sheet in the candle. It is still more ominous to meet a red-haired woman on the 1st of May if the wedding is to be the following month, or to tread upon the poisonous beetle, whose death bodes fire or pestilence, or to speak with her lover before meeting him in church; and there are many other equally mysterious saws that are not very alarming because there are as many favourable omens on the other hand to counteract them.

WHEN M. Roland was presented to Louis XVI. on his appointment as Minister for one of the departments of State, the simplicity of his apparel excited the surprise and indignation of the Court satellites, who, deriving from etiquette their sole importance, believed the State depended on its preservation. "Oh, dear sir!" said the master of the ceremonies, with a countenance of alarm, whispering to Dumourier, and glancing at Roland, "he has no buckles on his shoes!" "Oh, shocking!" re-echoed Dumourier, with comic gravity, "we shall be ruined and undone."

WHEN Sothorn was in Philadelphia a lady in his company, who played a very minor part, gave herself an extraordinary amount of airs at rehearsal. Sothorn ordered a bill to be printed with the lady's name starred in large type, "supported by the following ladies and gentlemen:" and then followed the names of the company, ending up with Sothorn's in the smallest type of all. The bill was hung up in the theatre, and the young lady's pride came down several pegs.

"WHAT's that crowd about?" asked a stranger, as he noticed a stream of visitors going into a fashionable residence. "It's a silver wedding," obligingly replied his informant. "What's a silver wedding?" "Why, a chap's been married twenty-five times, and he's a celebratin' of it."

AN East End gentleman takes no interest whatever in the prevailing dog show. He says he has one of his own at home. His wife has a temper, and he and the children rarely pass a day without an exhibition of "Ma's tiffs."

A QUAKERESS said recently to a friend, in reference to the Quaker formula of marriage: "It is true I did not promise to obey when I was married; but I might as well, for I have had to do it."

"I AM afraid," said the Duke of Buckingham to Sir Robert Viner, "that I shall die a beggar." "At the rate you are going on," said Sir Robert, "I am afraid you will live one."

A GENTLEMAN asked Dr. Johnson why he hated the Scotch? "I don't hate them, sir, neither do I hate frogs, but I don't like to have them hopping about my chamber."

A CERTAIN duke was much addicted to the bottle. On a masquerade-night he asked Foote to suggest a new character to go in. "Go sober," said Foote.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

NO. 137.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## Ursula.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

"Oh, Ursula, I am so glad that stupid lesson is over at last, I thought Herr Schultz would never stop, and you looked so aggravatingly interested in his wanderings. Two are company and three are none all the world over, and I think if it were not for the pleasure of learning with you, you dear old stupid, I should prevail upon my stern parent to allow me to discontinue the study of the German language. It is so slow, and I am so lazy."

So saying, Lilian Beauchamp threw herself back into the comfortable depths of a cushioned wicker chair, and surveyed her friend, who was industriously packing away the German books into a pretty little bookcase which filled one corner of the room.

"I suppose we were five minutes over our hour," said the last-mentioned girl meditatively, "but I wouldn't give up German, Lily, for all that. You'll get over the drudgery in time, and then think of the delight of reading 'William Tell' as Herr Schultz has been reading it to us this afternoon!"

"I'd rather forego that delight, Ursie, if the attainment of it is to render me so perfectly exhausted as I feel at present. Let us hie to the shade of the big oak, and perchance there we may find your swain, impatient, I have no doubt, to view once more your many charms, and study my stupidity."

At the beginning of her friend's remarks Ursula had still looked meditative, so meditative indeed that Lily had despaired of her words ever reaching her apparently-befogged brain, but the magic mention of George roused her, and, holding forth her hand to help Lily to rise, she said:

"Ah yes! George was to come, we were to play tennis, you and I, against him. I am quite ready, Lily; let us go at once."

Briskly, as she was bidden, Lily extricated herself from the enchanting chair, and the two girls passed out of the French-window on to the upper terrace of the old Manor House. Indeed they were bonny girls both; Ursula Lascelles "tall and stately," dark-haired, dark-eyed, looking straight ahead; Lilian, leaning on the strong arm, golden-haired, blue-eyed, willowy, not nearly so tall as her companion. To them, ere they had proceeded many steps from the house, advanced George, the swain before-mentioned.

"Ah, girls!" he called out, "I thought you must be asleep. Aunt Hannah and I have exhausted every topic of conversation, and are both tired of each other and ourselves. You must come and enliven us."

"Enliven you!" said Lilian, "I think it is Ursula and I who want enlivening after an hour and five minutes such as we have just passed through."

"I think I should like tea," murmured George; "may I run back and order it to be brought to the oak, Ursula?"

"I will go," she said, and turned back, nor did he offer to go with her as a lover might be supposed to do, but instead, in most unloverlike fashion, walked slowly on with Lilian, and, arrived at the oak, threw himself down in an easy attitude at Aunt Hannah's feet.

"You look tired out, George," said Aunt Hannah; "has that small walk been quite too much for you?"

"Quite too much, auntie, and for me, too," replied Lilian; "it is much too hot for tennis this afternoon, I am sure."

"It is very pleasant here," lazily responded George.

It was pleasanter still when, ten minutes later, tea was brought, and Ursula completing the group, dispensed it, with the accompaniment of great red strawberries deluged with cream, to her friends.

The summer sun glinted through the boughs of the trees; it was very delightful there in the shade. Beyond them the tennis-lawn lay in all its dazzling brilliancy; indeed it was too hot to think of playing until the cool of the evening.

When people are lazy, and have tea to drink and strawberries to eat, they are pretty certain to be silent and absorbed in doing and thinking as little as possible. It is therefore an excellent opportunity to explain a little who these people are.

Aunt Hannah, or Miss Morris, is Ursula Lascelles's aunt, sister to her mother; she lives with Ursula, and has done so since her father's death, one year before this time. Ursula's mother, who was Dora Morris before she married, was younger than Hannah by some three years; they both loved the same man, Hubert Lascelles, Hannah intensely and absorbingly as was her nature; Dora dearly, and with demonstration. Hubert chose the latter, not witting that Hannah's

love was his; he wanted a wife, and saw that Dora liked him, and so they were wed.

When Ursula was nine years old her mother died, and her father, who was somewhat of a sybarite, did not trouble to marry again. He cultivated art, and made a companion of his small daughter, and also of his old college chum, Charles Dacre, to whom he presented the living of Dowthwaite, which lay in his gift. In George we see Charles Dacre's son. The friendship which existed between Hubert Lascelles and Charles Dacre was very great; they were both men of poetic temperament and rather impractical, and from the earliest days of Ursula and George, the children were encouraged to be much together, George's mother having likewise died very young.

It is almost needless to tell what plans were made for their future, plans in which Ursula and George figured as boy and girl lover, later as man and wife. The two most conveniently fell into these plans. George, as a boy, had not any great individuality of character; Ursula had; the consequence being that where Ursula led, George was perfectly willing to follow. It seemed quite a matter of course to him that Ursula should one day become his wife; so that when Mr. Dacre had talked to George and Mr. Lascelles to Ursula, the two met quite quietly, and George said, "I suppose, Ursie, we were always meant for one another. Do you love me?" and she answered, "Yes, George," and no more was said about it. It was in Ursula to throw her arms round George and kiss him, for she loved him truly, and she loved love; but she did not, because George did not appear to wish it. Certainly he did kiss her, but that was at parting in the evening when he had bidden Mr. Lascelles good-night, and quite in his ordinary and customary fashion—nothing different.

So matters had progressed. George had gone to Oxford; Ursula had lived on her life with her beloved father, until death snapped the chain, and he was taken. She then turned to George for comfort, and the young man gave it to the best of his ability. Ursula magnified that ability, and made a hero and ideal of her future husband, and so we find her at the present time in a perfect dream of happy love, not looking for much outward show, which, indeed, she did not get, but taking much for granted, and perfectly contented with the state of things as they were.

Ursula's friend, Lily Beauchamp, is the only one we have not mentioned. She is a new friend, one whom Ursula has not known for more than six months, and almost the only girl-friend she has ever made. She lives with her father, General Beauchamp, in the house not far from the manor, called Dowthwaite Hall.

It is a bonny place, this village of Dowthwaite, very peaceful, very lazy-looking, lying in a valley with mountains on three out of four sides; four miles away is a market-town, very conveniently placed for getting to any part of the country, and on one of the great rail highways.

The Manor House is situated on the slope of a hill half a mile from Dowthwaite; it stands in its own park, famous in those parts for the magnificence of its trees, where trees are rather scarce, and overlooks the village. It is all very still just now, only the wood-pigeons coo, and bees hum loudly, and Aunt Hannah's knitting-needles click, as her fingers move rapidly in the common work of most north-country folk. She is watching the young people without seeming to do so, and wondering how the great battle of life will go with them, whether they will be worsted in the fight, or whether they will be victorious.

Presently upon the still air comes the sound of the gong.

"The dressing-bell," says Ursula; "I had no idea we were so late. We shall get no tennis, Lily; but it is very hot, and we will have an early game in the morning if George can come."

George signifies his willingness to do so, and the trio, arms linked, Ursula in the middle, George and Lily on either side, walk to the house, followed by Aunt Hannah.

It is useless to ask George to stay to dinner; he has read nothing at all that day; he must go home. He does so accordingly, and as far as their ways lie, he and Lilian go together. Down the long avenue they walked, and as they went they talked gaily of tennis, and balls, and what not. When they parted, George held Lilian's hand in his own rather longer than was needful for the careless good-bye which he uttered, and which she returned, and then they separated.

General Beauchamp was in the garden waiting for his daughter, having just returned from magisterial duties in the county town. Lilian greeted him with much affection; they were sincerely attached to one another, and Lilian as the only girl in a large family of boys, all out in the world, was much valued by her father. She told him she would soon be down to dinner, and tripped gaily up to her bedroom, where she sat down in a low chair, and, wonderful to relate, presently burst into tears. This piece of behaviour on Miss Beauchamp's part was surprising, to say the least of it, but the reason was not far to seek. He—the reason was a he—was at that moment sitting at ease in his so-called study, enjoying the fragrance

of his cigarette—not very worthy, I should say; but somehow girls think little of worthiness in the object of their affection, and in graceless George two girls had centred their foolish adoration. Lillian certainly did not love him as Ursula did; she lacked the fervour of her friend. And then, of course, she knew that her love was hopeless, and that was why she wept; but he had pressed her hand tenderly, and though she would die rather than take him from Ursula, she thought he, too, was not quite contented.

But then, she reflected, he ought to be; nowhere was there a better, dearer, nobler girl than Ursula, and she cast about in her own mind after severe cogitation and much reproach directed towards herself, how she could see less of George and Ursula, not in a way that should be noticeable, but wisely and generously. She thought, and very sensibly, that if such a course could be taken, her own peace of mind would be ensured, as far as might be, by the knowledge that she had never worked her friend woe, and perhaps in time she should overcome her love. She had read in books that this was very possible. Thus did she reason with herself.

Ursula passed the evening very peacefully, and, unruffled by any thought of trouble, she sang to Aunt Hannah:

“Our life, our life is like a curious play.”

And Aunt Hannah, as was her wont, knitted, and thought, and wondered how her niece's life would turn, for in her she saw herself, only more intense and more absorbed in the love which surely would live away.

It must have been in answer to Lillian's resolve that next morning she fell and sprained her ankle, just after breakfast, when she was running to open the windows for her pet pigeons.

“This,” she thought, “will save me, because, of course, I shall have to keep very quietly in my room for some time; that is what the doctor will surely say.”

But she was mistaken; the words the doctor did use when he had succeeded in reassuring General Beauchamp, who was very apt to rush at melancholy conclusions, and had given it as his opinion that she would not be able to set her foot to the ground for at least three months, were the following comforting ones:

“You will do very well now, Miss Beauchamp. Plenty of cheerful society and judicious care will see you as right as ever in less than a month.”

So the general sent forthwith to Ursula and Miss Morris, begging them to repair at once to the sufferer's couch side. Through the park sped Ursula, treading lightly, looking a very vision of loveliness in her white morning-gown, her dark hair gently wafted by the breeze. She bore in her arms the great German dictionary. To her mind it would help to amuse poor Lillian to look out the words for next week's translation, and of course Herr Schultz would give the lesson at the Hall instead of at the Manor House, and so the sooner the books were transplanted thither the better it would be.

“Lily, my pet!” she cried as she entered the morning-room, and knelt by the poor little maiden with ankle bound and swathed, “I am so sorry. General, all your parquetry must come up. Who knows that I may not be its next victim? Don't fret, my flower,” she continued, “you shall not waste your sweetness on the desert air; though you are to lie still, we will make the time pass as quickly as may be.”

“How?” asked Lily, smiling rather anxiously.

“Don't look so piteous, my dear. Why, easily. We will reverse the order of things, that is all. George and I will have tennis here, and you shall laugh at our bad play and applaud our good; it will be better here than on my lawn. Then he shall read to us while we work, just as he does there, and Herr Schultz shall come here for our lessons. We shall be very happy, at least as happy as we can be with you laid by, and if General Beauchamp does not like our so disturbing him, he shall retire to quiet and Aunt Hannah at the House.”

General Beauchamp was profuse in his protestations of delight at the programme; Lily shrugged her shoulders prettily at mention of the German, and vouchsafed no comment on the George arrangement.

“You have made the best of this sad accident, my dear Miss Lascelles, with your usual thoughtful kindness,” said the general with old-fashioned gallantry; “nothing could be better than the plans you have just proposed.”

Miss Morris soon afterwards arrived, full of sympathy for the invalid, over whom she mounted guard, for the child's head and ankle were so painful that entire rest for the time was in reality a necessity. But the next day she was much better, and that and many days following it, passed as Ursula had decreed. Every day she came, and as she came of course George came also, nothing loth. In the long sweet twilight Ursula sang the songs which Lillian loved; nothing melancholy, nor even sad, for such brought tears to the sweet blue eyes, and so were to be avoided; but she sang the old English ballads and some Scottish ones that are ever welcome, though so hackneyed and well known.

George, standing half in, half out of the long French window, gazed down unseen upon Lillian, and meditated. His agitation when he heard of her accident had been unfeignedly real, but no one witnessed his (to anyone else) unaccountably anxious dismay, for he was in his study when the note arrived from Ursula. Much as he loved, or fancied he loved Ursula, an entirely new feeling had crept up within him with regard to Lillian, a feeling which he certainly fostered.

Aye, wakin'! O! wakin', aye, and wearie;  
Sleep I canna get for thinkin' o' my dearie;  
When I sleep I dream, when I wake I'm eerie,  
Rest I canna get for thinkin' o' my dearie.  
Aye, wakin', O!

Thus sang Ursula, but Lillian moved restlessly, so she chose another song, and George quietly passed out of the room into the dusk of the evening. He paced the quiet garden, lighted only by the light of stars, and mechanically entered the little arbour in the rosery, where he sat and meditated, wondering aimlessly what could possibly happen to smooth his path, which now was becoming rather tortuous. He was forced to admit to himself that he loved Lillian more, and in a very different manner to that in which he loved Ursula, and as well, he had the proper feeling to acknowledge that under these circumstances he could not marry the one, loving the other. But he did not see his way out of his troubles.

Finally, and after severe thought, he determined that he would seek an interview with Lillian, and to her unfold his grief, firstly, however, discovering from her whether she reciprocated his affection.

Lonely night comes on, all the lave are sleepin',  
I think on my bonnie lad, an' blear my een wi' greetin'.

Lillian Beauchamp certainly did not gain much rest that night, for George, before he escorted Ursula home, contrived to give her a little note, in which he begged her to grant him a short private interview the next morning. It was over this note of his that she “bleared her een wi' greetin'.” “Aye, wakin', O!” the plaintive melody sounded still in her ears, while she thought and thought again of George, “her bonnie lad.” But still her resolve remained unshaken. She determined that she would so show him the error of his ways that he would soon return to his faithful Ursula.

Early on the following morning, after breakfast, and soon after Lillian had been settled on her couch near the window, he came, and was ushered into the morning-room. The servant stayed to arrange the outside blinds in order that the sun should not shine with too great strength on his mistress's eyes, and, as he lingered, George remarked to Lillian that Ursula and her aunt were driving into Penryn that morning, and would be glad to execute any commissions that she might have. Lily replied that she would think about it, but that just then she really thought she wanted nothing. When the door closed behind the servant, her heart beat fast, for George, moving to the sofa, bent over her, and said:

“I think you must know, Lillian, why I have asked you to see me this morning. Do you not?” he added, as she did not speak. “Then I will tell you why. I can sum up my whole tale in three or four words. I love one woman with all my heart, and I am engaged to marry another. Oh yes,” he continued as she looked up at him half-frightened, “and I am sure you must know, my darling, that it is your own sweet self whom I love. I cannot keep up this wretched farce any longer. I don't know whether you care for me, but whether you do or not, I cannot endure the present state of things with Ursula. Ah, Lily, do help me,” he cried; “you must love me; do you, dearest?” Here he paused for her to speak, and she, ignoring his last appeal, replied, her voice trembling with nervousness, but still true to her purpose:

“George, you say you cannot keep up this state of things with Ursula, but you must do so. Don't you know, cannot you see how deeply she loves you, how all her life has been wrapped up in you, since she lost her father? I will not let you say one more word to me. I am sorry I have heard so much, but you have asked me to help you, and that I will do to the best of my power. You will be going back soon to college. Let us say no more of this miserable matter. Go back; you have been too long amongst us women-kind, and when you return at Christmas you will love her; you will have thought of her, and remembered how good she is, and how much you are to her, and you will grow to feel that she is the same to you.”

Hopeful words, and spoken by a true friend, but unfortunately not very practical, for love is blind and goes very much where it lists, often without any apparent rhyme or reason. George looked very melancholy as he listened to Lillian's speech, and thought to himself that after all she could not care for him; but soon, being of a pliable nature, he reflected that perhaps he had not done well, and that he had better try to return to his former allegiance. The consequence was that Lillian with her stronger will prevailed, and when Ursula returned from her drive, she was greeted with the news that Mr. George was waiting for her. He spent the

evening at the house, and was so attentive, and even loving, that Ursula's cup of joy well-nigh overflowed.

After another week, during which, when not engaged in reading, he accompanied Ursula in her rides and walks, and went, as before, to see Lillian, George departed south to stay with friends before his return to Oxford. It was a hard week for Lillian, but she had done her duty, and that was much.

The days passed by very slowly after George went away, the bracken cloth of gold upon the mountains rusted, and the leaves fell thick and fast, and the days were dark and dreary. Then the first fall of snow came, and the summer was a thing of the past, and the winter had set in in earnest.

But Lillian did not get much stronger, and Ursula began, by very slow degrees, to understand.

From George's letters all she should have gathered was a new tenderness, increased from that of former days. Indeed, this very tenderness surprised her, for she did not look for any increase of affection in him who had so satisfied her before, and she began to have a sort of dim consciousness that this access of love was not for her. Slowly she put two and two together: Lillian's prolonged weakness and languor; the weariness she displayed in their talks, which naturally savoured much of George; and again, and most conclusively, her feverish anxiety to leave Dowthwaite for some months. This last subject was one which filled their minds very much at the present time. Lillian was very desirous of going abroad; the general did not care to leave England, because such of his boys who could came to spend the Christmas time at the Hall; Ursula and Miss Morris were loud in their protestations of dismay. Christmas would not be Christmas with the Hall closed; surely with care Lillian might at least wait until the festive season was over, and then go from home.

But this was just what Lillian did not want; her sole object in going was that she would be spared the pain of seeing George when he returned, and though she could not employ this plea, she gained the kind offices of her friend, the doctor, who told the general that his daughter's state of health was so far from satisfactory, that he thought that a sojourn in a warmer climate was not only desirable but necessary for her welfare. And so they departed.

When the farewells were over, and Ursula had got used to being without her companion, she grew to think that it was for the best that Lily had gone, and tried to persuade herself, and almost succeeded in doing so, that after all this proved that George was nothing to her—in fact, that she did not like him, or else how could she have gone when it wanted only a fortnight to his return?

The fact of the matter was that the poor child longed to feel that she was as much to George as before she had believed herself to be. Hers was a nature which naturally shrank from pain, and rather than face what she feared to be the truth, she temporised, and hugged to herself the thought that after all it was she who had been fanciful, he had been faithful. And then she blamed herself, and wrote him a long letter, in which she told him how glad she would be to see him home again. She told him, too, that he would not see Lillian, because she and her father had gone to winter in Rome.

George, when he heard this piece of news, felt very angry. Indeed, he never remembered to have felt so angry in all his life; but his pride was flattered when he reflected that if Lillian had really cared nothing for him she would not have left Dowthwaite when she knew he was coming.

He thought to himself that he would not hurry to go home, and as a most opportune invitation from a college-friend arrived, asking him to make one of a party of six men to keep Christmas together in a bachelor house in the country, he accepted it, and wrote home to his father to tell him that he could not come home for Christmas, but would be there at the New Year.

The rector took the news very calmly; it never entered his head that anything was going wrong. Ursula and George were engaged, and in due time would be married; that was sufficient for him; and though in his young days he would not have given up his Christmas with his lady-love for any amount of bachelor parties, yet men were different in these days. Ursula was woefully disappointed, yet she managed to put on a cheerful air, and made up her mind to wait as patiently as might be for the New Year. Then she would see how George seemed, and would have time enough to think what course she should take, if she did not find, as most probably she would, that all this time she had been troubling herself unnecessarily. Only Miss Morris was really anxious; the light of her own experience had taught her what to expect, and she could not help fearing that as she had fared so would her niece, and she trembled for her. All were busy with Christmas preparations, school-festivities, prize-giving, tea-drinking, and the like, and Ursula and Miss Morris were foremost amongst the workers.

Entering the school-house abruptly one wintry afternoon, Ursula found the mistress conversing with the eldest pupil-teacher about herself. She only heard two sentences, but they were enough,

and instead of entering the room she turned and went home again, sick at heart and wounded.

Said Miss Smith, the teacher, to Miss Brown, the pupil-teacher: "Doesn't look as if Mr. George were very much in love with Miss Ursula, does it, Annie?"

And to this Miss Brown replied to Miss Smith:

"No, that it doesn't; it's Miss Beauchamp, I think," as who should say, "We know all about that." And then they laughed.

Sick at heart and wounded Ursula returned home; sick at heart when she looked into the future, and saw herself without her lover, wounded to think that the village had seen what she would not. She went about her work with a heavy heart within her, but with the outward serenity and cheerful bearing which were two of her chief characteristics. Her mind was now quite made up, and all she had to do was to await George's arrival.

When we are expecting and looking forward to some hard trial of our strength, the faster the days go, and the nearer the inevitable time comes, the more do we shrink from it, and wish it were not so close upon us.

The days between Christmas-time and the New Year were rapidly passing by, and the eve of the New Year brought George Dacre home.

The same evening, after he had greeted his father, and received from him the usual parental welcome, he walked through the bare cold wood to the Manor.

It was all very still, and the cold moonlight made the trees look weird, and threw black shadows round. All looked sadly changed from that summer-time when he and Lillian walked through the happy sunshine.

Miss Morris welcomed him. Ursula was not well enough to come downstairs; she had suffered all day with a bad headache, and had to keep very quiet; but in the morning she would like to see George as soon after breakfast as it pleased him, "would be very glad," Aunt Hannah added, thinking that the young man would naturally be disappointed.

And so he went back home again.

It is curious how much people think of the change of the year, how they have a sort of blind hope, and, indeed, a superstitious belief, that the new year will alter what has been untoward in the old, and begin a fresh era of happiness and hope in their lives. Only one day merging into another, and yet between December 31st and January 1st there seems to be a great gulf fixed, and we watch the one going out and the other coming in with regret for the happy days which have died with the old, and, if the heart be young, a vivid hope for the happiness of the new. Even to the careworn and heavy-laden the season brings some hope, and gives them fresh courage to bear their burdens—yes, and to fancy them lighter to bear.

It had been a weary time to Ursula, but she greeted the new year, and determined that now all should be new, and that she would bravely grapple with the change that had come in her life.

Once more in the morning George came through the wood, came unwittingly to receive his freedom. Ursula met him at the great hall door, where she stood with Aunt Hannah looking out upon the baby year. Good wishes passed between them, and he took her hand and kissed her, then Aunt Hannah said that she must run away, and they were left alone. Ursula led the way into the small drawing-room.

"It is very cold out there," she said, "let us sit by the fire and talk; it is a long while since we had a talk, George, and there is so much to say."

To tell truth, he rather expected a lecture, but Ursula did not often lecture, and her voice sounded pleasant, so he was reassured, particularly when, giving him an easy-chair and taking one herself in a darker corner, she drew from her pocket a letter, and handing it to him, said:

"This came this morning from Lillian. You may read it if you like."

He took it carelessly and read it through; it was only a short letter, and when he had finished it he passed it back to her, remarking that she seemed to be enjoying herself.

Now had come the time for Ursula to speak.

"I don't know," she said musingly; "I think she would enjoy herself more if you were there, George."

She spoke so quietly, with so much meditation in her voice, that, startling though the words were, he made no sign of surprise, only looked at her. She still gazed at the fire as if she were calmly speculating on the effect George's presence in Rome would have upon Lillian's enjoyment.

Under this calm exterior her heart was beating wildly.

"Could I have said more?" she thought; "would he need more if he really loved me, to make him say so?"

But he did not speak, and she continued:

"It was a stupid arrangement to make, George, the one our fathers made when we were children—a very stupid arrangement; and

I am glad I have the sense to see it, and to prevent its being a miserable one as well. George," she continued wearily, still looking at the tire, "I wish you'd go to Rome—go as a free man, and tell Lillian that it is she you love. Ah, do not contradict me," she added, for the young man sprang to his feet and advanced towards her, as if to remonstrate. "I know you love her, George. Be good to her, and always love her as you love her now."

For some minutes he did not speak, then he said with a nervous tremor in his voice, which he could not control:

"You have taken me quite by surprise, Ursula; but, as you say, it is as well that we should part if you believe that our fathers' arrangement will turn out a miserable one. I wonder," he continued, looking a trifle scared, "I wonder what my father will say to the change?"

His look of consternation was so unfeigned that Ursula's womanly pity arose, and rising, she went to him and put her hand on his shoulder with such a tender graciousness, that he felt with a thrill a little of what he had lost.

Now that she knew he was glad to be free, the rest was comparatively easy to her.

"Dear George," she said, "I will arrange all that. You have only to do with Lillian; make her understand that I have sent you, that I love her as dearly as ever, and that I hope you may always be happy together. Tell her, though," she added with a little laugh, "that I will not absolve her from her German lessons. Directly she comes back, we will begin again; we were so dreadfully lazy for long before she went."

"You are very good, Ursula," said George. Faintly he understood her goodness, but he said to himself, "She is very glad to get rid of me."

Ursula kept her word. She told Mr. Dacre, and told him so that the old man recognised her devotion, and could not help but feel that his son was not worthy of her. From all but one she hid the bitterness through which she had passed, but from Aunt Hannah, good faithful soul, she could hide little. Few were the words which passed between them on the subject, but they had both been through the same suffering, and so their sympathy was as a solemn bond. The opinion in the village was unanimous: "Indeed, he was not half good enough for her," they said. But all the same, to her he had been very, very dear.

## At Last.

CARELESSLY he said "Good-bye,"  
Coldly touched her hand with his,  
Heeded not her gentle sigh,  
Guessed not anything amiss.  
"Ah, he loves me not," she thought,  
Sighing low with eyes grown dim;  
So the months went by, but brought  
Never news from him.

He is coming home, they said,  
And her heart leapt as she heard,  
Quick her cheek flushed rosy-red  
At the soul-reviving word:  
Then, as morning light is killed  
By the dim returning rain,  
Suddenly her joy was stilled,  
By the old, old pain.

"He will meet me as before,  
In the same cold, careless way,  
Touch my hand with his, no more,  
Have no loving word to say." . . .  
But he took her hand again,  
Held it long and closely pressed;  
"Darling, I have tried in vain  
Not to love you best."

## His Own Guest.

(A SERIAL STORY.)

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

COLONEL SKOOTER had, he imagined, the whole game in his hands. As he had once remarked to Mr. Pennington, his business was to pry into other people's business, and, on the whole, he found it a profitable one. Ever since he had been in the neighbourhood of Meredith Court he had been on the look-out for some means of trading on the foibles or weaknesses of his neighbours, and when he met Gordon he thought he had found his man.

The fact of his being under a false name was enough to show

that he had something to conceal. But the colonel also had something to conceal; and, unfortunately for him, Gordon knew of it. So the advantage to be derived in this particular instance was a negative one.

But none the less valuable. If Gordon and he played their separate games with a mutual understanding, each could benefit the other.

This mutual understanding, which existed only in the colonel's imagination, had been overstepped at every opportunity by Gordon. The colonel could stand a good deal, but when he discovered that his supposed partner was the means of preventing Mr. Pennington from listening favourably to his prospectuses, the wrath of the American was of the bitterest. Since then he had only been waiting for a good opportunity for avenging himself.

The opportunity was now come. Messrs. Ridge's cablegram left no doubt that Gordon and Thomas Meredith were one.

Of course Skooter was ignorant of the fact that his enemy was also in communication with Ridge and Co. What Gordon's motive for concealing his identity might be Skooter knew not, but he was keen enough to guess that it must be a powerful and, therefore, necessary one. To put Lady Meredith on her guard would be to ensure her lasting gratitude, and would also render necessary Gordon's speedy departure from the Court, if not from the country.

However, it was not to Lady Meredith that chance determined that the colonel should make his disclosure. Lady Meredith took advantage of the colonel's message to leave Gordon, as she felt too agitated to remain with him longer, but she had no intention of seeking an interview with Skooter. Sending for Charles, she asked him to be good enough to see what the colonel wanted.

Charles obeyed willingly. Colonel Skooter did not seem too well pleased at first to see a substitute, but resolved not to postpone his business. After all, Sir Charles was, perhaps, the proper person to receive his communication.

"I say, Sir Charles, you haven't seen anything strange going on in this house lately, I suppose?"

Charles could have answered in the affirmative without difficulty. Had not everything been going strangely lately? But he only asked:

"To what do you refer?"

"How about that chap Gordon?" queried the colonel. "Nothing strange about him, I suppose?"

"There is nothing strange about him except his generosity and kindness," replied Charles a little stiffly.

"Well, when you come to think it over in a calm mood, doesn't it ever strike you that his generosity and kindness are a little strange? Do folks go about the country making friends of men they have never seen before?"

"Really, Colonel Skooter," said Sir Charles, "unless you intend speaking with more directness I don't see the use of continuing this interview."

He spoke rather sharply, for his conscience smote him as he thought over the way in which he had returned his friend's kindness. He had stolen from him the hand of the girl he loved. It was true that Gordon seemed in no way disconcerted at finding that Edith was engaged to another; that, however, was merely one more mystery added to the many with which the unhappy young baronet was surrounded.

"Praps I had better speak plainly," said the colonel, "though I want you to understand that I am going to tell you what I am solely from friendship for you."

"Will you come to the point?" demanded Sir Charles.

"Don't be in a hurry, Sir Charles. It may be news to you that I used to know this Gordon some years ago out in Mexico."

"Then why have you not confessed it before this?"

"I never force myself on those who don't seem to want to renew old friendships," replied the colonel evasively. "What I want to tell you now is, that this Gordon isn't Gordon at all."

"Who is he?"

"I guess you had better not press that question for a minute or two, Sir Charles."

A sudden thought struck the colonel. Surely he must have been blind not to see it before. Here he was in possession of information sufficient to turn the baronet into a simple younger brother, with no estate, no property of any kind. Instead of telling him who Gordon was, and simply succeeding in having the real heir got rid of, why should he not first look after his own profit, and make terms with the present holder? His silence ought to be worth purchasing on any terms.

"I'm getting a fool," was the colonel's mental remark, as he saw how near he had been to spoiling the best chance he might have for years. "I'll make this young swell pay for what I'm going to tell him, and pay well too. It will be worth some thousands a year to him, he ought to come down heavily."

"Who is Mr. Gordon?" again demanded Sir Charles.

"When I knew him his name was Smith," said Skooter. "That's a common name for a Britisher, I'm told, and there's more under it in America than here, I calculate, for a good many take it when they find it necessary to hide their heads in a cloud for a time."

There was a decided accusation here, and Sir Charles could not overlook it. Gordon, to whom he was under such obligations, was not the man he pretended to be.

"What is your motive for telling me this now?" asked Sir Charles.

"Friendship for you," replied the colonel offensively. "And perhaps something besides."

"We will talk further of that presently," said the baronet. "Excuse me now, please."

"Wait, Sir Charles, stop a minute!" cried Skooter, as his companion opened the door.

But Sir Charles did not obey.

He made his way to the library and rang the bell. Watts appeared.

"Ask Mr. Gordon to step this way," said Sir Charles, "and Mr. Pennington too," he added.

He paced the room angrily, then threw himself into a chair. What was the meaning of all this mystery which grew every day? How was it that within the last month his life, which had been tranquility itself, had become full of anxiety and trouble? He was in the dark, and more than that, was the only one in that position. Evidently his mother, Mr. Pennington, and Skooter were all possessed of some knowledge affecting him, of which he, the owner of the whole place, was kept in ignorance.

However, he determined now that he would know all before the evening passed. He was getting thoroughly angry, even the kindness with which Mary had treated him that morning had only tended to make him more so, by adding to the atmosphere of deception in which he now existed.

He was in the midst of his unpleasant reverie when Mr. Pennington entered.

"Ah, Sir Charles, we shall have good news for you before the day is out, I hope."

"I hope so, indeed," replied Charles bitterly.

"What do you want to say to me?"

"Something which I never thought to have to say to you," was the retort. "I have discovered that Gordon is staying in this house under a false name."

Mr. Pennington began to look uncomfortable.

"You introduced him to me," continued Sir Charles.

"I confess I did, practically, though not actually."

"What is the distinction?"

"I believe Edith actually made the introduction."

"This is mere trifling," exclaimed Charles angrily, "and I wonder you can descend to it. This is a serious matter, and I beg you will treat it as such. Did you know when you caused him to be introduced to me, that he was not what he represented himself to be?"

The situation was becoming very painful to the elder man. How could he answer such direct questions without incriminating himself and Gordon?

"I did not know it at first," he replied hesitatingly.

"But you knew it before the introduction?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Pennington in a low voice.

Sir Charles looked keenly at him.

"Mr. Pennington," he said slowly, "you were a valued friend of my father's; you have acted the part of a true friend to both my mother and myself all my life. Am I to understand that you have knowingly introduced into this house an adventurer under a false name, and allowed me to place myself under obligations to him?"

"No, no; you do us both wrong," burst out Mr. Pennington. Then he stopped suddenly.

"Will you kindly explain what you mean?"

But Mr. Pennington was silent.

"Have you nothing to say?"

"No, nothing. Why not ask Gordon himself?" he added suddenly.

"I am about to do so," was the reply. "I have already sent for him, and expect him every moment. Sit down."

Mr. Pennington dropped into a chair. Sir Charles stood leaning against the mantelpiece, waiting. At last he was on the verge of discovering the mystery, though it seemed likely to cost him the friendship of his oldest friend.

It must be remembered that Sir Charles had had no opportunity whatever of discovering the truth. He had never seen Ridge's advertisement, he had not been near when Watts made his avowal. He had been brought up from childhood to believe his brother dead; it is no matter for wonder that even at this stage he had no idea that the man whom he had discovered to be passing under a false name, was anything more than an adventurer.

With Mary false, and his best friends proved faithless, was it any wonder that he felt as if all the foundations of his being were being sapped?

The door opened, and Gordon entered.

Since Lady Meredith left the room, under the pretence of seeing Skooter, his time had been spent in wondering what was about to happen. At any rate, he had shown his hand now; there was no more doubt as to the course he must pursue.

"Mr. Gordon," said Sir Charles as he entered, "I am obliged to ask you a question or two. Is your real name Gordon?"

"No," was the instant reply.

"Is it Smith?"

"No."

"What is it, then?"

Gordon glanced at Mr. Pennington as if about to ask how much he had told. Sir Charles caught the glance, and continued:

"I have already asked Mr. Pennington. He refuses to tell me. I demand it of you."

"I can tell you now," said Gordon. "I only wish I could have told you earlier. I must first beg your pardon for having deceived you so long; it was a necessity."

He hesitated. Mr. Pennington rose excitedly. He had not seen Gordon since the arrival of the telegram, and was ignorant of its contents.

"Why do you hesitate?" demanded Sir Charles.

"Because I am about to do a most unkind action, at least it must seem so to you. But I can assure you it has been forced upon me by circumstances, which I will explain later. I can promise I will do my best to neutralise my seeming unkindness. Will you have the goodness to ask Lady Meredith to join us? The deception I have practised on you should be acknowledged before everyone."

Sir Charles rang the bell, a servant appeared to whom he entrusted the message.

"What do you intend doing?" whispered Pennington to Gordon.

"Wait a moment, and you will see," was his answer.

The three men waited in silence for Lady Meredith's entrance. The moment she came into the room she saw that the crisis had come.

"What have you done?" she demanded of Gordon. "I have you told him?"

"Not yet."

"What is that?" she exclaimed, as the handle of the door was violently shaken. A moment afterwards old Watts tottered into the room. He staggered up to Gordon, held out to him a letter, and fell on his knees, grasping his hand.

"I forgot all about it, Mr. Tom. Forgive me," he stammered. "It came years ago, and I took it and kept it safe for you, but my poor old head has been so bad I never thought of it till I heard you talking about it this evening."

Gordon raised the old man to his feet, and tore open the envelope. It was the missing letter from Fletcher, confessing that he was guilty of the crime of which Tom Meredith had been suspected. He handed it in silence to Lady Meredith.

"What does all this mean?" asked Sir Charles with a tremor in his voice. "Mother—Mr. Pennington—who is this?"

"I can tell you now," said the latter; "this is your brother, Sir Thomas Meredith."

Charles stepped back in amazement. His brother? He had been dead for years!

"Is it true, mother?" he demanded.

"Yes, my poor boy!"

Charles pressed his hand to his brow. After a moment's pause he stepped forward and held out his hand to Gordon.

"Can you offer me your hand," asked the latter, "knowing that I come to deprive you of what you thought your birthright?"

"Why have you kept me in ignorance so long?" was the reply.

"Did you think I would have wished for a moment to keep you out of that which is yours?"

"You overcome me with your goodness," said Gordon; "but I hope some day I may have the opportunity of repaying you for your welcome. Do not imagine I intend to act the part of a Jacob, and turn you out of your inheritance. Fortunately, I have no need to demand anything from you. I only hope that, with my assistance, your prospects may be considerably brightened."

He turned towards Lady Meredith.

"Can you not forgive me?" he asked. "I have wronged you more than anyone. We have been enemies too long. Can we not be friends now? Tom Gordon, who has deceived you so, no longer exists; let all remembrance of what is unpleasant die with him. And remember," he added in a whisper, "it is not only I who ought to be willing to let bygones be bygones."

Lady Meredith could not bear up against his appeal. What was there left for her to do but accept his proffered friendship? It would be best for her son. She placed her hand in his; Tom raised it to his lips.



"And you, my old friend," he said to old Watts, who had remained in the room, "how was it that you remembered me when everyone else had forgotten me?"

Tears were rolling down the old man's cheeks. In a broken voice he murmured:

"Perhaps, Mr. Tom, it was because I held you in my arms when you were a baby—because I loved you the most."

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE worthy colonel all this while was not quite at ease. He hoped Sir Charles would return every minute, but, as he did not, he at last ventured from the room. Meeting Edith, she gave him the information that Charles was with Mr. Pennington, she believed, in the library. The colonel had not quite enough assurance to force his way in, so he waited in the hope of being able to finish his interview with Sir Charles before long.

The opportunity soon came. He met him as he left the library and drew him aside.

"You sloped so quick just now, Sir Charles, I hadn't quite time to say all I wanted to."

"I don't think you need trouble to say any more," replied Charles gaily.

"Wait a minute or two till you know what I've got to say. I told you that Gordon wasn't Gordon; I will tell you now who he is. He is your elder brother, who was supposed to be dead."

The news did not have the startling effect anticipated. Sir Charles merely replied:

"Well, what business is that of yours?"

"It's yours chiefly, I s'pose, but it's mine as well. Look here, sir. I'm the only man that knows this. If I tell what I know, it may turn out awkward for you. It seems he can't make himself known for some reason which you may be more acquainted with than I am. Why not let him keep his incog., and continue to be the baronet yourself? I'm open to an offer. You won't find me unreasonable. I owe your brother a grudge, and sha'n't mind letting you off easy to pay him out. Now, what do you say?"

Anyone less obtuse than the colonel must have seen that it was with difficulty Charles could restrain himself. But Skooter, though keen enough in many things, was at a disadvantage when brought into contact with a thoroughly honest man. He fancied everyone was actuated by as unworthy motives as himself, and so often failed to judge men correctly.

However, he was soon undeceived, for Charles imitated him in plainness of speech.

"Colonel Skooter, you tell me that this house is not mine. I confess I am sorry it is not for a few moments more, in order that I might enjoy the pleasure of turning you out of it. I may tell you, for your satisfaction, that I am perfectly aware that Mr. Gordon is my brother; that everyone in the house is aware of it; that there is not the slightest reason why he should not take possession of the title and property; and that I should be the last man to keep him out of them, even were I able."

So saying Charles opened the door and walked out, but meeting Tom just outside he told him in a few words what had happened. They returned together to the colonel, who lost no time in showing that he perfectly understood the situation.

"You have had the best of it, you Gordon, or Smith, or Meredith, or whatever your name is, but you bet I'll have my turn some day."

"Very well," replied Tom, turning on his heel. "He isn't worth having a row with," he added to his brother.

When the colonel had departed, Tom turned to his brother.

"We shall have lots to talk about, Charlie, during the next day or two, but we may as well get over one or two points now. Of course you and Lady Meredith will continue to live here, that goes without saying; we can all find room easily enough, especially if we build the new wing that my father intended adding. I'm afraid, though, that you will be living in town half the year now that you're going into Parliament."

"I don't know about that now. It's your place as the eldest son to represent the family."

"Oh, bosh! I've something better to do with my time than listen to a lot of people talking about what they don't understand. Besides, if you lose three letters from before your name through me, it's only right you should have a couple to stick on at the end."

"I shall prize them a great deal more, Tom. It's always been my ambition to have a seat."

"That's all right; you'll be Prime Minister one of these days, and in the meantime you must let me be your Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I can promise you there shall be no lack of ways and means. And when I'm married—"

"When you are married?" repeated Charles.

Tom smiled.

"Oh yes, I forgot you didn't know. I'm afraid we have been playing at cross-purposes lately. Suppose we go into the drawing-room?"

Charles acquiesced. They found Edith and Mary talking together excitedly, and Mr. Pennington, standing with his back to the fire, beaming benevolently.

Tom went up to Edith and took her hand, oblivious of the fact that she was engaged to his brother. Charles looked on in amazement.

"Come, Charlie," said Edith mischievously, "you mustn't be jealous if your brother acts as a brother should."

"I'm quite in the dark," replied Charlie, "but as I have been so for a month past, I am getting accustomed to it. However, my eyes are not so blinded but that I can see that jealousy would be out of place."

"On your side it would," retorted Edith. "I don't pity you a bit, Charlie, and you must confess that you deserve everything that you have suffered for your conduct to me. When I——"

"Accepted me," put in Charles as she hesitated.

"Did I? I don't remember."

"Did you not?"

"I only recollect saying I would never marry except to become Lady Meredith. Shall I ever marry?" she whispered to Tom.

"As soon as you will, my darling," was his low response.

"Then I am free?" exclaimed Charles.

"Yes, you are," retorted Edith, "and I wish you would not say so in so exulting a tone; it is far from complimentary to me. And now that you are free I only hope you will use your freedom as you ought," she added, giving a meaning glance in the direction of Mary.

"I say, Edie," put in Tom, "has the post gone yet? I want to send off a letter or two."

"Ah, so do I," remarked Mr. Pennington.

"I don't think it has gone," replied Edith; "we will go and see."

The three moved towards the door, Edith whispering to her lover:

"I never saw more stupid creatures than you men are. If you had given me a moment I would have taken you out of the room with some dignity, instead of running away in this stupid fashion to try and catch a post that everyone knows went hours ago."

"Mary," said Charles when the door had closed, "can you ever forgive me? I will not excuse myself, I will only throw myself on your mercy. You refused me once because of what you called the difference in our prospects—that plea cannot avail you now. If you refuse me this time it must be because you do not love me. Do you?"

Mary did not reply. But she allowed him to take her hand, to pass his arm around her, and give her a lover's kiss. Then she threw her arms round him, and fell sobbing on his breast.

"Oh, Charlie, if you knew how miserable I have been!"

"It was my fault, my darling. I have been wretched, too. But it is all over now, nothing can separate us. We have found it impossible to live apart, and we shall love each other all the more for having known the misery of separation."

What more they said can be imagined; there were mutual explanations to be made, mutual misunderstandings to be excused. At last the tolling of the great clock made them conscious that time had flown all too fast, and that they must no longer monopolise the drawing-room.

They found Mr. Pennington rambling aimlessly about the Hall; he was "rather out of it," as he remarked with a smile. Edith and Tom were in the billiard-room, though no billiards were played. But where was Lady Meredith?

She was in no fit mood for any company but her own. Seated in a low armchair in her own room she gave herself up to a reverie. She saw herself as she was when a penniless governess, striving to win the heart of her late husband. She had succeeded, and was happy. She remembered the joy of finding herself a mother—a joy that brought in its train misery directly she gave herself up to plotting injustice to Tom to benefit her own son. What had been her reward for all her sacrifice and devotion, her devices and schemings? She had lost the respect of those who knew her best; she had lent herself to fraud and imposture; and all to find herself defeated, her aims thwarted, her son disinherited!

She had no idea how long she had been alone when a quiet knock at the door roused her.

"Who's there?" she asked.

"It's I, mother. May I come in?"

"Yes, my boy."

Charles entered; he went up to his mother and bending over her kissed her.

"My boy!" she murmured softly.

"Mother," he whispered.

"Can you forgive me, Charlie?"  
 "For what, mother? What you have done has been for my sake. We shall all be happy together yet."  
 "No, no; I cannot stay here and meet him I have done so much to injure."

"You wrong him, mother. Tom is incapable of harbouring an ungenerous thought. He insists on our staying here. If you have done him a wrong, you must give yourself an opportunity of atoning for it." Another knock at the door. This time it opened to Tom and the two girls. Before they left, Lady Meredith no longer felt forgotten and almost despised. She found she had not lost her son, but only gained another one.

As had been anticipated, Charles's return to Parliament was unopposed, his rival finding his influence too strong. But before February came round, rendering a removal to London necessary, the parish church had witnessed the grandest wedding within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Sir Thomas's speech at the breakfast was a great success, but no part of it elicited more applause than that in which he stated that he hoped he might long be able to give to his friends as kind and hearty a welcome as he himself had received when he came amongst them as a stranger, to be for a time

HIS OWN GUEST.

(Concluded.—Commenced in No. 123.)

## Never Alone.

(A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.)

### CHAPTER II.

I DID not fail to go up to Bewleigh on Thursday. What Mr. Muncastle had told me had scarcely been out of my mind in the interim. It was one of those confidences of which I could not speak even to my sister. Barbara could see that there was something on my mind, and doubtless wondered what it was, but bided her time in silence.

Mr. Muncastle greeted me with a smile and a friendly grasp of the hand. We found our way to the terrace as usual.

"Poor Ephraim Strong's successor arrived this morning," said Mr. Muncastle. "He has been recommended to me by a friend in London, and seems a quiet, sensible sort of man. I hope I may be able to retain him, but, as you know, the duties are peculiar."

We took a few turns in the sunshine, then Mr. Muncastle said:

"I am about to make a confession that I have never yet made to any living being. Why I should make it to you, whom I have known for so short a time, rather than to one of my older friends, I hardly know. It may be that the kindness and attention you showed poor Strong have drawn me towards you; it certainly is not the hope of benefiting by your professional experience that induces me to make you my confidant. My case is one that no remedy can touch, save the last great remedy of all."

"My profession has made me the depository of many strange secrets in my time. Yours, Mr. Muncastle, will only be one more added to the number."

"Such confidences would make my life a nightmare," replied my companion. "But to come to my own case."

He still seemed to hesitate and hang back a little. I could only wait in silence till he was ready to speak.

At length he began somewhat abruptly:

"My tutor, before going to college, was the Rev. Andrew Aylmer. I had not seen him for sixteen years, when I one day met him accidentally in Piccadilly. We knew each other in a moment. Mr. Aylmer was now the well-to-do rector of a large parish in Yorkshire. He gave me a pressing invitation to run down and see him, which I, having nothing better to do, was not slow to accept.

"The rector was a widower, and had only one child, a daughter. It gave me a certain shock of surprise, simply because I had never thought about the matter, when in place of the Laura Aylmer whom I had last seen as a chubby-faced child with a skipping-rope and hoop, a young lady presented herself, tall, stately, and gracious. I had reached five-and-thirty years of age without ever having been in love, or experiencing any desire to be so. But I fell in love with Laura Aylmer at first sight. I was fifteen years older than she was, a world-worn man, who had lived in every capital in Europe. I had no good looks to recommend me, but I was rich. Such unions are too common in Society to excite surprise. The easy-going rector threw no difficulties in the way of my suit, so I set myself with all my might to win the heart of Laura. Whether or not in the long run I should have succeeded, I cannot say. That she liked and respected me I had ample proofs, and sometimes I think that in time she might have learned to love me. But it was not to be.

"One day there presented himself at the rectory a young man, Ronald Deane by name.

"He proved to be a nephew of an old college friend of the rector, and had come into the neighbourhood on a fishing expedition, that part of the country being famous for its trout-streams. He was young, handsome, attractive, and sufficiently well-to-do.

"It was soon clear to everyone that he was drawn towards Laura even as I had been drawn towards her, while my eyes, sharpened by jealousy, could see just as plainly that she was losing her heart to him hopelessly and irretrievably. My house of cards had collapsed at a breath.

"I need not dwell upon my feelings, my misery, my despair. I loved the girl with all the strength of my nature, and I was now forced to recognise that she could never be mine. Her heart was given to young Deane; no other man could ever be more to her than a friend. When I could blind my eyes no longer, when I recognised the fact that my suit was utterly hopeless, I pleaded some excuse and fled.

"Three months later I read the account of Laura's marriage, and I vowed in my heart that should the opportunity ever come to me, my vengeance should be as bitter as my love had been deep. I little thought when or in what way that opportunity would arise.

"After Laura's wedding I set out on a tour through some of the remoter parts of Asia, but wherever I went her image accompanied me. At the end of three years I found myself in England again, my wound still unhealed.

"If I could only forget her!" was what I said every day of my life; but that was just what I could not do. Merely to find myself once more in the same country that held her was enough to thrill me with a delicious pain. I went nowhere, I saw nobody; I shut myself up in a gloomy old house that I owned in London, and seldom stirred abroad till after nightfall.

"At length the hot stifling days of early autumn became unbearable in town. Without caring much whither I went, I came by-and-by to Windermere, a spot that I had visited several times before. I took private lodgings near the lake, and hired a boat for my own use. I was fond of the water, and rowing was my favourite exercise. Every afternoon I stepped into my boat and went out alone on the lake, generally staying out till the hills were shrouded in darkness, and finding my way back home by the light of the stars.

"On a certain afternoon, never to be forgotten by me, I set out in my boat as usual. The sun was shining brightly, and a soft breeze fanned my cheek as I left the landing-place; but I did not like the look of the clouds, nor the strange, weird shadows that lurked among the folds of the hills. It seemed to me that a tempest was brewing somewhere among those purple peaks, but for that I cared little. I had been out on the lake in bad weather more than once, and I was quite prepared to run the risk again.

"Only those who are acquainted with that most treacherous of lakes know with what almost magical suddenness sunshine and summer breezes will sometimes give place to a storm of wind and rain almost tropical in its fury while it lasts. This it is that makes Windermere so dangerous to strangers who are not acquainted with its peculiarities, and whose sole knowledge of boating has probably been picked up on some quiet Norfolk broad or among the sunny reaches of the upper Thames.

"I pulled up the lake in a leisurely fashion in the direction of Waterhead, resting on my oars every now and then, and turning to gaze at the fantastic and ever-changing cloud-shapes that veiled the mountain peaks beyond the head of the lake. By-and-by, being at that time nearly opposite the Lowood Hotel, I shipped my oars, took out my pipe, lighted it, and bringing forth my pocket Horace, settled myself for half an hour's quiet enjoyment. I read on till my pipe had burnt itself out, and then I shut up my book and looked round. The sunshine had vanished as if such a thing had never been, and in its place was a black curtain of cloud, freighted with thunder and rain. A faint moaning made itself heard among the gullies of the hills—it was the forerunner of the coming wind.

"I buttoned my pilot-jacket, pulled my cap more firmly over my brows, turned my boat's head to the point from which I judged the wind would blow, and awaited with equanimity whatever might happen. Five minutes later the storm was upon me in all its fury—wind, rain, lightning, and bursts of thunder that seemed to rive the hidden hearts of the hills. It was a scene to exult in while it lasted, and to bring back to memory in time to come. I felt as if I were the one living being left amid a world that was reverting to its primitive elements.

"Suddenly, while this feeling was still upon me, there shot past me, like some living thing flying affrighted before the tempest, a frail skiff with its canvas all spread as if it were sailing on some summer sea. As it swept ahead I had just time to see that there was one man in it. I shouted a warning cry, but my voice was lost in the roaring of the wind.

"What a madman!" I thought to myself, "or what an ignorant fool!"

"I was still straining my eyes through the blinding rain when I saw that the head of the skiff was being put about as if with the intention of making for the Lowood side of the lake. Whoever the man inside her might be, he was throwing away his last chance of safety. And so it proved. Scarcely had the little craft got her head in a line for the shore when a stronger burst of wind than we had yet had, catching the full spread of her canvas, blew her clean over and left her lying like a half-drowned creature on the seething waters of the lake.

"What had become of the man I had seen inside her? I got my boat's head round and pulled towards the scene of the accident. When within a short distance of the capsized skiff I stopped and peered round. Suddenly, within a dozen yards of me, the head and shoulders of a man came into view, rising from the depths of the lake. His face was turned towards me. Great Heaven! It was the face of Ronald Deane—the face of my rival—of the man who had stolen from me the heart of the woman I loved! For a moment his eyes met mine, and then he disappeared as if drawn downward from below.

"I sat staring like a man stunned by some sudden blow, unable to think or stir. My boat was half full of water, but I heeded it not; wind and rain were forgotten. But a few seconds could have elapsed, although to me they seemed like as many minutes, before that white, despairing face, framed by the inky waters, came into view for the second time. Again the eyes met mine, and I knew that they recognised me. In them I read the mute, agonised appeal for help of a dying man. I read the look, but if my life had been the forfeit I could not have responded to it. It was as though I were held back by some invisible power, which for the time being paralysed my every limb. I was a strong swimmer, and could have saved him although at some little risk to myself, and yet I stirred neither hand nor foot to help him. Suddenly there came a flash of lightning that for the moment half blinded me. When I looked again there was nothing but the wind and the rain, and the black waste of waters. Of a surety I was avenged, but after what a fashion!

"Six hours later I was in the express train on my way to London. I felt that I must flee from that black lake and its dreadful secret, or I should go mad. Three days afterwards I read that the body of Roland Deane had been found. He and his wife and child had been staying at the Lowood Hotel when he met with his untimely fate. And now, Dr. Bland, you know my secret."

He ceased, and for a little while we walked on in silence. Then I said:

"I presume that the appearance which you have seen, or imagined that you have seen at various times, is that of the Mr. Ronald Deane of whom you have been speaking?"

He bowed his head gravely.

"And you never see it except when you are alone?"

"At no other times. But if the person who watches at my side were to fall asleep at his post, I should see it just the same as if he were not there."

I knew that it would seem like a mockery to my unhappy companion to tell him that I looked upon his case as nothing more than one of hallucination of a somewhat singular type, brought on in the first instance, and aggravated afterwards, by his morbid habit of mind and his persistent seclusion of himself from all the interests and occupations of everyday life. We cannot separate ourselves from our fellows, and shut ourselves up in the narrow range of our own thoughts and feelings, as in a darkened room, without paying the penalty of our selfishness in one form or another.

Had Mr. Muncastle been a poor man, compelled to earn his bread by his own exertions, the probability is that he would never have been troubled with any such delusion as that of which he had made me his confidant.

But these were thoughts which I was bound to keep to myself. It was as well, perhaps, that the mere fact of being able to open his mind to some one, and the comfort he apparently derived from having had the courage to do so, was all that he seemed to care for. He craved neither advice nor any attempt at consolation. What consolation, indeed, could I have proffered him? Who can minister to a mind diseased?

Almost without knowing it I got into the way of driving round by Bewleigh twice or three times a week, more for the sake of half an hour's talk with Mr. Muncastle than for any other reason, seeing that he persistently declined to allow me to prescribe for any of his bodily ailments. In all other respects life at the Hall went on precisely as it had gone on before I set foot within its doors. Its master remained as much a recluse as ever he had been. I was the only visitor from the outside world that ever crossed his threshold.

After having eased his mind to some extent by the confession he had made, Mr. Muncastle seemed to shun all further allusion to the

subject, which, to my mind, was one of the wisest things he could have done. No good, but only additional harm could ensue from perpetually harping on the same morbid string. The one object I had in view in visiting him was to lift him out of himself; to induce him to forget for a little while the dark shadow that brooded over his life; to arouse some interest in him, faint though it might be, with regard to what the world was doing in politics, science, or letters. My only reward, and I asked no other, was his evident liking for my society, and the increased cheerfulness of spirits observable in him at the close of each of my visits.

Upon calling upon him one day about three months after the memorable confession, I saw at once that something out of the ordinary way had happened since my last visit. There was a look on his face such as I had rarely seen there before. Knowing his moods, however, I took no notice. If he had anything special to tell me I would gladly listen to it; if not, it was not in my province to question him. In a little while it appeared that he had something special to say to me.

We had been talking on various indifferent topics, when he turned abruptly, and fixing his eyes full upon me, said:

"I had a visit from It last evening."

I knew in a moment to what he referred. "The difficulty was to know what to say in reply."

"Is not that somewhat surprising," I asked, after an instant of hesitation, "in view of the precautions you take to protect yourself from anything so unpleasant?"

"When I tell you the circumstances, you will not think it surprising. Laura and I had been out riding; we went farther than we ought to have done, considering the heat of the weather; and when we got back home she was somewhat fatigued. When she had taken off her riding-habit she came downstairs, and relieved Jared Strong, who had been on guard during her absence. Then she took up her usual position on a favourite couch near one of the windows, I, meanwhile, being engaged on some letters at the opposite end of the room. Once or twice I glanced at her, but as she seemed deep in one of the magazines, I did not disturb her.

"Perhaps a quarter of an hour had passed thus, when suddenly an icy shiver shot through me from head to foot, and I knew that Laura and I were no longer alone. A hand of iron seemed to grip me round the heart. I started to my feet, knowing well what I should see when I turned my head. Yes, there it—he—was, in every particular as I had seen him before, with his blue serge jacket, his sailor's tie, his wide turn-down collar, and his fair hair and chestnut beard dripping with water, while in the eyes he bent on me was that same never-to-be-forgotten look which will be the last thing I shall see when I am dying.

"Of how I passed that awful figure and reached the other side of the room I have no knowledge. I remember touching Laura on the shoulder and calling her by name, but there came no response, and on looking more closely, I saw that she had fainted. The heat and fatigue had overcome her. A bell was within reach; I rang it violently, and almost before the sound had died away Jared Strong was in the room. Where the figure had been standing a moment before there was now nothing."

Not wishing to encourage him to dwell at too great length on these strange fancies, I made no observation when Mr. Muncastle had finished speaking. We took two or three turns on the trimly-kept lawn; then I said:

"Would it not be advisable for me to see Mrs. Dare while I am here this afternoon? It will never do for her to go off in fainting-fits in the way you describe."

"The very thing I was about to ask you to do. If Laura were taken ill, or were obliged to leave me, I know not what I should do."

"She must be invaluable to you, Mr. Muncastle."

"You have hit on the exact word, doctor. She is invaluable to me. It is now five years since she first came to me. How, during that time, she has devoted herself to me, and lightened the weary burden of my life, you, although you have only known her for a short period, could tell better than most men. She is more than a niece to me—she is like a very dear daughter."

"From the first she impressed me as being a woman who has gone through some great trouble."

"You are alluding to her snow-white hair?"

"Not so much to that, perhaps, as to the general expression of her countenance when in a state of repose—when not lighted up by conversation. At such times it bears the impress of a profound melancholy."

"And well it may do. Poor Laura! her story is a sad one. I can tell it you in a few words—as most of life's tragedies can be told. She was married at an early age to the man of her choice. No two people could have been more devoted to each other than she and her husband. Dare had estates in the West Indies, and they went out there to live. At the end of four years, business affairs

required Dare's presence at home. He sailed, accompanied by his wife and child. The vessel was wrecked, and passengers and crew had to take to the boats. They were at sea nearly a fortnight, and suffered incredible hardships before they were picked up by a passing ship. In the course of that fortnight the child died, and then Dare himself succumbed, while she, the frail and delicate woman, lived through it all; but when she and the rest who were left alive were rescued, Laura's hair had changed to what you see it now. No wonder that you scarcely ever see her smile. And now let us go indoors and look for her. Of course she will tell you there's nothing the matter with her, but you ought to be the best judge of that."

It made me very glad to find that there was nothing seriously the matter with Mrs. Dare. Her constitution was naturally a delicate one, and a little care and attention soon brought it back to its normal condition.

Weeks and months sped uneventfully away, as they have a habit of doing in quiet rural neighbourhoods like ours. Summer had faded into autumn, and autumn had deepened into winter, and mid-December was here, when on a certain snowy night, a little before twelve o'clock, I was roused from my first sleep by a loud summons at my night-bell. With a mild anathema I struggled from between the blankets, inducted myself into my dressing-gown, flung open the window, and demanded to know who was there. Even while in the act of asking the question my heart sank within me. By the dim light of the overcast moon I recognised the groom from Bewleigh.

"If you please, sir, you're wanted up at the Hall at once," said the man, not without a tremor in his voice. "I'm afraid it's all over with poor master."

For a moment or two I could not speak. I had left Mr. Muncastle the day before, no better and no worse in health, to all appearance, than usual. And now—

"I will be down in three minutes," I called out to the man, and with that I dressed as quickly as possible.

It was no time for questions.

"Let me have your horse," I said to the groom. "You can drive back in my gig, which my servant will have ready in a few minutes." Two minutes later I was galloping over the snowy road in the direction of the Hall.

I was shown into the library, where Mrs. Dare joined me at once.

"Too late, too late!" she exclaimed through her tears, as I held her hand for a moment in mine.

"It may be as well that I should see him at once," I said. "You can tell me what I shall want to know later on."

She rang the bell, and I followed the servant without a word.

The man conducted me to Mr. Muncastle's bedroom, a large but sparsely-furnished apartment. Two tall candles were burning on the dressing-table. On a camp-bedstead at the upper end of the room lay stretched the master of Bewleigh. His form was shrouded by a snow-white sheet, a delicate cambric handkerchief covered his face.

I drew the handkerchief aside. The eyes were glazed and half open, but one glance was sufficient to tell me that no light born of this world would ever shine out of those orbs again. But what shall I say of the expression that had fixed itself for ever on those immovable features as though cut in lines of marble? It was an expression of mingled horror and surprise. It was as though while in the act of gazing at some sight too awful for mortal eyes to dwell upon, the pulses of life had suddenly ceased to beat and had left there, fixed indelibly, the last earthly look which those still features would wear.

I covered up the face again, feeling very sad at heart, and after giving a few directions to the man, I quitted the room with hushed footsteps.

I found Mrs. Dare waiting for me in the library.

"Oh, doctor, was it not awfully sudden?" she wailed.

"Awfully sudden indeed. I have long known that Mr. Muncastle's heart was affected, but I had no prevision that the end was so near. Would you mind telling me all that you know about this terrible business, or would you prefer that I should see you in the morning?"

"No, no; I will tell you now, if you please. There is something so inexplicable about it that I must tell you."

Her tears began to flow afresh, and for a little while she could not speak.

"I had parted from my uncle about half-past ten," she began, "kissing him and bidding him good-night as usual. I saw no apparent change in him, in fact he seemed to me more cheerful than he had been for some days previously. I retired to my dressing-room, and had been sitting for some time over the fire with a book,

when all at once I started to my feet with the impression that I had heard my uncle call me by name. Next moment I sat down again, and told myself that I must have been dreaming. The distance from my uncle's room to mine is too great to allow of my hearing his voice, however loudly he might call. So I took up my book, but had hardly found my place, when I heard my uncle call me again. 'Laura,' he cried, not loudly, but clearly and distinctly, as though he were no farther away than the next room, and then again 'Laura.' I thrilled from head to foot as the sound rang through my brain.

"Hesitating no longer, I opened the door of my room, sped through the corridors, and burst into my uncle's room without ceremony. The first thing I saw was Thompson asleep in his wicker-chair by the fire. Taking no heed of him, I crossed the room to my uncle's bedside. The moment my eyes fell on him I knew that he was either dying or dead. I bent over him, I took him by the hand, I called him by name. But there came no response. A faint flicker stirred his eyelids for a second or two, a faint sigh broke from his lips, and then something told me that all was over. My heart gave a great gasp, as though it would burst. I reached the bell-rope somehow, and after that I remember nothing more till I found my maid trying to bring me round with sal volatile."

I waited till Mrs. Dare had in some measure recovered her calmness, then I said:

"If you have no objection, I should like to have a few words with the man Thompson. He appears to have been the last person who saw your uncle alive."

Thompson was accordingly summoned, and Mrs. Dare left us together.

He was a quiet respectable-looking man of forty, a worthy successor, to all appearance, to Ephraim Strong.

"Did your master seem as well as usual when he went to bed last evening?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, I didn't see a bit of difference in him. He had the one glass of sherry he always has the last thing, and then he bade me good-night in the kindly way he always did."

"I am informed that when Mrs. Dare entered your master's room she found you asleep. Why was that, Thompson? You know what strict injunctions were given you never to sleep at your post."

The man hung his head.

"I know, sir, I know," he said penitently. "I never did it afore, and I can't think how I came to do it last night. For one thing, sir, I'm a teetotaler, so that it couldn't have been through drink. I felt it coming on, sir."

"You felt what coming on?"

"The sleepy feeling—the drowsiness, sir. I did my best to fight against it, but it was no use. My limbs felt like lead, my brain seemed all of a muddle, and, do what I would, I couldn't keep my eyes open. I hope never to have such a feeling again."

"It is a pity—a very great pity, indeed, Thompson, that you allowed yourself to be so overcome. I suppose you did not hear your master when he called out for Mrs. Dare?"

"Did he call out for her, sir? If he did, I didn't hear him. I heard nothing till Mrs. Dare rang the bell, and then I woke all in a daze like."

I had enough to occupy my thoughts as I drove home under the frosty stars.

Remembering what Mr. Muncastle had told me, and bearing in mind the expression that rested on his features after death, I could not help wondering whether in that last supreme moment he saw, or believed that he saw, the figure of Ronald Deane standing before him? and if such were the case, would the figure have appeared to him if Thompson had not fallen asleep? There was another question that might be asked, but that could never be answered in this world: If Thompson had remained awake at his post, would Mr. Muncastle have been still alive?

Then there was Mrs. Dare's strange assertion that she distinctly heard her uncle call her by name, once, if not twice, and yet, if he did so call her, their rooms were so far apart that it was impossible she should have heard him. On the other hand, what more natural or likely than that he should call her when he felt himself sinking, helpless and alone, into the depths of the great unknown? If that were so, did her spirit respond to the summons through some finer intuition than she herself had any cognisance of? Who shall say that such things may not be?

These are problems that have a singular fascination for my sister and myself, and we often discuss them over our winter fire, but not for the world would I speak of such matters to Mrs. Denny, or any of the other good people of our little town.

## To the Spirit of Poetry.

LOVE of my youth, the morning hours are gone,  
The noontide drawing on ;  
Hope lights the path no more,  
And where her sunny radiance fell before,  
The gathering shadows slowly darken o'er,  
Life's brightest time is past ;  
The fruit has lost its bloom, the flowers are fading fast.  
Yet as I sought thee through the vanished years,  
All dimmed with doubts and fears,  
So now I seek thy shrine,  
The heart thou once hast won is ever thine,  
And waits expectant of thy smile divine,  
Nor other charm can own,  
But longs to hear thy voice, and lives for thee alone.  
Come to me ! come ! for life is dark and sad,  
And thou canst make it glad.  
Come from thy home afar,  
In that fair region where the Immortals are ;  
Flash on my wearied spirit, as a star  
In silver splendour gleams,  
And cheer my waking hours, and mingle with my dreams.

## No Preferment.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

THE seasons' changes were almost the only ones that had been known in Marley for many a year. The same parson preached to the rising generation in the old church on the hill-top, as had preached to the grandparents of the young, and the parents of the middle-aged. The same doctor healed and mended them now, as had done so a quarter of a century ago. The same sort of little high-teas and suppers were given by the village "upper ten" as had been given before the young people who met and flirted at them now were born. The same sombre "Kinder Scout," the loftiest point of the grand Peak-district, looked down in unchanging gloom upon the smiling country which is the border-land between Derbyshire and Cheshire. And the same intolerable sense of his own absolute importance and superiority to the majority of things in the scale of humanity, filled the heart and inflated the manner of the present owner of the old black and white house, known as Cratcliff Hall, as had filled the hearts and inflated the manners of the long line of Squire Eldridges, his ancestors.

But in this unchangeableness were peace and poetry for such as had the heart to appreciate the former, and the soul to feel the latter.

It was a sweet, simple, healthy life that of Marley, and Robina Ward (familiarily called "Poppy"), the doctor's eldest daughter, had lived it for twenty years with perfect contentment and satisfaction. Being the eldest daughter a good deal of responsibility concerning the younger ones devolved upon her, for though Dr. Ward had a wide practice, it was not a largely remunerative one, and servants were not numerous in his house. Added to this, the mother of the family had been nearly worn out in her youth by domestic worries and want of money, and in her maturity she looked to her eldest daughter to relieve her of the active part of the housekeeping. So that the fulfilling of the mere daily round of duty occupied a good deal of Poppy's time.

For amusement she had what seemed to her in these days an endless and brilliant variety.

A pony to ride, which was always and absolutely at her own disposal, when his services were not required for professional purposes by her father ; a garden full of luxuriantly growing flowers, vegetables, and weeds, from the ever-recurring stores of which she could always deck the house and her own fair person with grace and beauty ; a few dear friends in the village who were always ready to ride or drive, or come to tea with her ; "a pretty taste" for singing and painting, according to her doting parents ; a wholesome love of reading, and a good supply of magazines and novels from Manchester, within an hour's run by rail of Marley ; and such a power of taking intense, bright-hearted pleasure in all these things, as the majority of London-stimulated girls would give much to possess, were they not as a rule ignorant of its very existence.

Miss Poppy and her nut-brown hair, her shapely, tall figure, and fair face, was a familiar object in and around Marley. She had been liked for the sake of her parents when she was a bonny baby, and as she grew on through childhood to girlhood, she had been loved and admired for her own sweet self. But rather to the chagrin of that portion of the parish whose pet she was, she had not had a real lover, or a regular offer of marriage yet.

It was well-known that the rector, Mr. Holt, hoped to have her for his daughter-in-law. He unwisely made no secret of the hope, but proclaimed it in a semi-confidential way to several people. Hearing of it Poppy was very critical when Frank Holt came home from college for the last time before taking orders, and when he presented himself, not as a lover, but merely as an old friend, the young lady—it was merely self-defence—surveyed him collectedly, and allowed the poor mortified fellow to see that he did not meet with her approval.

It was injudicious on his part, and on his father's too, to have presented himself before Poppy at this time. If his mother had been alive the fine maternal instinct would have held him back till he was at his best. But Mr. Holt, in his hurry for Frank to begin his wooing of the prettiest Poppy in Cheshire, would brook no delay. So he sent his son forth to dazzle his lady-love, with an air of being weak and over-done enveloping him like a garment.

The lad—he was little more, being only Poppy's senior by a year or two—had been paying a heavy price for this attenuated appearance of his. By day and night he had laboured to become what he was now—a scholar whose scholarship was honoured and rewarded. But Poppy merely saw in him a weak-limbed, bent-backed young man, with no *savoir faire*, and an unmanageable amount of gush about him at the first moment of meeting.

"What a delightful face Frank Holt's is," Mrs. Ward said to her daughter when the visitor had gone.

"Do you think so, mother ? Well, if his is a delightful face, I am glad none of our boys have 'delightful faces.' He looks so timid. Now a man oughtn't to look that, ought he ?"

"I only thought he looked gentle, and that look of gentleness, combined with power, is very beautiful, I think."

"You always thought a good deal of Frank, didn't you ?" Poppy remarked carelessly. "I never did, you know. Laurence Eldridge is different, isn't he ?"

"Very different," Mrs. Ward said curtly, magnanimously refraining from saying how inferior she thought him.

"Why don't we know more of the Eldridges, mother ?" Poppy said presently ; "they are so nice, so very, very much nicer than other people here, and we never seem to get to know them. Why don't we, mother ?"

Mrs. Ward tried to smile as if she saw a joke in her daughter's question as she answered :

"Because we are the 'doctor's family,' and they are 'the Eldridges.'"

"And the Eldridges are ever so much above us—do you mean that, mother ?"

"No, indeed—the Eldridges above us!—above you ! No ; but they have got into the habit of holding themselves aloof, and why shouldn't we suffer them to indulge in that habit without let or hindrance from us ? We've got on very well all these years without knowing them. Why should we risk discomfiture by trying to know them now ?"

This question apparently demanded serious consideration before Poppy could answer it, for she sat in a cogitative attitude for some moments.

Then she spoke :

"Do you want me to try not to know them, mother ?"

"My dear child, no—a dozen times, no ! Feuds are out of fashion. Moreover, there never has been one between the Eldridges and ourselves—for one reason, perhaps they are scarcely conscious of our existence."

"They are, mother !" Poppy cried, blushing furiously ; "Mrs. Eldridge has been saying lately that she looked for an opportunity of meeting me and knowing me ; she is quite sorry that the families have never got to know one another ; it's not her fault, and it's not Laurence's fault, that you don't visit at Cratcliff Hall."

"Who has been your informant on this point, Poppy ?" Mrs. Ward asked, with a slight sense of amusement, and a deep one of anxiety.

"Laurence Eldridge himself, mother dear ; you see I met him at the Holts' last evening, and to-day he came over again while I was there. He says it's such a pity that his sisters and I don't fraternise, and when I told him I didn't even know them to speak to, he said 'that wasn't their fault,' in a way that made me think it might be ours."

"I've lived in Marley twenty-one years, Poppy, and during that time Mr. Eldridge has spoken to me, on an average, about twice a year. When I came here a bride, fresh from a home that had been in our family as long as Cratcliff has been in the Eldridges, and that is held in as high account in our county as Cratcliff is in Cheshire, Mrs. Eldridge drove up to the garden-gate one morning, and sent her servant in to ask me to go out and speak to her. I went, knowing all the while that she was being guilty of a grossly unladylike action. Still, I thought, two wrongs never made a right yet. So I went. We were both young women in those days—



twenty-one years ago, and I had this advantage over her, that I had been born and bred in the sphere into which she had only married, and that recently. My people were county people, her father was a newly rich Manchester man, and her mother had been a factory hand. She, in her new position, was ashamed of the parents whose industry and money had won it for her, and she felt that I knew this and despised her for it. So she tried to treat me as she did the wives of the better-class *employés* on her husband's estate, and just called at the gate occasionally to send in a basket of vegetables, and a request that if I wanted anything in the way of jelly or wine I would send to Cratcliff for it. But she never met me on terms of equality, and she was careful to tell everyone that she only employed the village practitioner, Mr. Ward, in the cases of her servants' illness. Her newly-developed desire to know you is altogether unaccountable. But I think, dear Poppy, you can understand easily that I am not very desirous of gratifying it."

Poppy looked perplexed and discomfited.

"I can never like her now that I hear how she treated you," she said presently. Then after a pause she added ruefully: "What a pity she should be so different—so very different to her son! You would like him if you knew him, mother, but I suppose, after the way Mrs. Eldridge has treated you, it's hopeless to think we shall ever know him—any of them, I mean."

"How serious you are about it, Poppy."

"It does seem to me to be a serious thing to live at odds with one's neighbours instead of being in love and charity with them," Poppy said thoughtfully.

And then Mrs. Ward was very well satisfied to let the subject drop. No good could come of a discussion as to the merits of the Eldridges. All Mrs. Ward asked of fate and circumstances respecting them, was that she might hear nothing, and Poppy think little, about them.

Her aspiration was a vain one. After one or two more meetings at the Holts'—meetings which it was Frank's heart's desire to avert—between Laurence Eldridge and Poppy, the squire's son called on Mr. Ward on some transparent pretext, and having once obtained an entrance maintained his power to use it. And Poppy was undisguisedly delighted at his doing so.

He, like Frank Holt, was destined for the Church, but unlike Frank Holt he had not distinguished himself at college, nor had he come home with a bent back and a generally weak-looking physique. He was a stalwart, muscular young Christian in these days, gay hearted and mannered, with the prospect of a good family living falling to his lot as soon as he could hold it. This living was in the gift of a bachelor uncle, who, like his father, had married cotton, and invested the money he had married in buying an old family place and Church patronage.

Summer weather is very conducive to the growth of the tender passion everywhere. It seemed to be especially so at Marley this year. Never had the rushing rivers and waving woods, which make this borderland of Derbyshire and Cheshire luxuriantly lovely, seemed to respectively gurgle and whisper such fair promise of love, and hope, and joy to the young people whose fortunes are being traced here.

Poppy and Mr. Laurence Eldridge, the squire's second son, were happy and hopeful because they were a great deal together, and each had come to the pass of feeling that the world held nothing higher than the presence of the other. Though words of love and promise had not been actually spoken, yet the girl knew that the man looked upon her as his future wife, and the man knew that the girl regarded him as her future husband. For the present summer weather this was enough for them, though ways and means of compassing this desirable end were not apparent yet.

It is true that Laurence did not meet with anything like the encouragement from the family of his pretty sweetheart that the latter thought was his right and proper due. Dr. Ward, from a business point of view, thought young Eldridge an undesirable suitor for his daughter, for the Eldridges had lived extravagantly beyond their income, and the eldest son had not the reputation of being one who would be likely to recoup the fortunes of the house if they were failing, as he passed more of his time beside the green tables of Monaco than in the green woods of Cratcliff. However, with him we have nothing to do. Our sole interest in the Eldridge family is confined to his younger brother, who had never given father, mother, or any human being connected with him any anxiety as to his future yet.

Mrs. Ward, for her part, disliked the probability of his marrying her daughter, and suffered him to see that she did so, because he was the son of his mother.

The young Wards, Poppy's brothers, were unflatteringly indifferent to him, "because he was going to be a parson;" their ideas of parsons having been formed from a former curate of Mr. Holt's, who had been a rather severe tutor to them.

Poppy was happy because she loved and was beloved, and he was sure to come to see her every day.

Frank Holt was happy because in the intensity of her own new-born love, and hope, and joy, Poppy was always kind and sweet to him, treating him more as the old friend and playfellow he had been, and not at all as the lover into which he had developed. But he was not quick to mark the subtle distinction, and so was happy in the mere fact of being shone upon by the sun of his life.

He had recovered from that look of being weary and overwrought which had impressed Poppy unfavourably on his first return from college, but he still remained a slender, pallid, rather weak-looking man by the side of strong, upright, manly, bright-looking Laurence Eldridge. Frank Holt's face was fair as well as pale, his hair was nearly yellow, straight, and as a rule too long to coincide with Poppy's notions on the subject of close-cropping. His eyes were of that light blue into which shadows rarely come, but fire does, when anything stirs the souls of their owners. He was, if not "slow," unquestionably very deliberate of speech, and his voice was, if not sweet, certainly one that constrained and held the attention of his hearers. Laurence Eldridge, whose tones were strong and high, and whose laughter was loud and full, said he felt himself to be a boisterous bull, roaring, if he spoke immediately after Frank's soft subdued strain.

He chose his language and rounded his sentences with more scholarly precision, too, than fervent force. Not that his manner of expressing himself was strained or laboured—far from this, but it was more polished and accurate than the easy colloquial style which is chiefly in favour. If Laurence Eldridge felt like a "boisterous bull" when following Frank Holt conversationally, no less assuredly did Poppy Ward fancy that she was speaking untidily and a little roughly if she were his successor.

At length, after a happy, irresponsible summer, came the happier day for Frank, when he got a title to orders, and a curacy in the cathedral town, Wexminster. And here, under the influence of the shadow of the sacred fane, in the atmosphere of cloistered seclusion, a revived feeling of Churchmanship, and the eye of the bishop, he commenced his labours, and we part with him for a time. But previous to commencing those labours, he had played out his part in the romance of Poppy's life.

Frankly he had told her that he loved her, and wanted her to love him in return—had declared his poverty and his anticipations of its sticking to him closer than a friend through life. With equal frankness he assured her that anyone who loved him, and shrank from enduring that poverty with him, would be despicable in his eyes. Then he waited for her to answer him, and she, dreading the sound of her own voice, and trembling for the construction of her sentences, did it rather falteringly, little knowing how musically her voice sounded in his ears.

"It's not that—it's not poverty I dread, Frank, you must know that; but—I care for someone else in the way you want me to care for you."

He felt himself chilling as she spoke—chilling with disappointment. A mild afterglow came immediately, for was he not entirely right, and she entirely mistaken? That was the harshest term he permitted himself to apply to her conduct.

He was too much of a gentleman to worry her with a request for the name of his rival to be delivered up to him, and he had himself too well under control to weary her with vain repetitions of his suit. But he was disappointed, and he let her see it, and her kind heart was pained.

"You're not angry with me, Frank?" she asked, and all the while she was longing for him to go, for she heard Laurence Eldridge's jubilant voice in the garden enquiring of one of her brothers where "they all were," "they all" meaning herself.

"I can never be angry with you, it would not be possible for me to be anything but what I am already with regard to you," he said quietly, but there came a clear, bright light into his eyes that showed Poppy this subdued, self-restrained man could feel—aye, and that strongly too!

He got up to go away, and Poppy, in all the after years, never forgot how he looked then, drooping and shambling in figure and gait, with an indescribable mixture of weakness and strength about him—the girl didn't know then that the weakness was physical merely, or that the mental strength, which even she was dimly cognisant of now, would develop into something that would make her wonder that she had ever been so conscious of the physical weakness. The present did not teach her this truth. The future may!

Again she broke the silence, this time with a quick coming colour, and a flurried disregard of the way in which her words tumbled out of her mouth; for she heard Laurence Eldridge's voice approaching the house.

"Will you promise always to be friendly with me, Frank, whatever happens?"

"Certainly; not that my friendship can ever be of avail to you," he said, looking at her as coolly and steadily as if her refusal to marry him had not wounded him to the core. Then he shook hands with her in a way that made her feel that she had undesignedly done him an injury, and got himself away out of the house, meeting Laurence Eldridge as he went.

"So you've cut me out, old fellow," the latter cried heartily, referring to the fact of Frank's having got a title to orders before he, Laurence, had been so fortunate.

"You're mistaken," Frank said icily, thinking only of Poppy Ward.

Then he went on his way to his curacy in Wexminster; and Laurence Eldridge went in to his love.

Matters came to a climax very shortly after this. Laurence was ordained deacon to a London curacy in the East End, and thither he went, and served a sharp probation. He went into it with no particular views, and he came out of it under the influence of one of the hardest-working vicars and best Churchmen in London, an excellent parish-priest of the "Young High" school.

Opportunely, about this time—after two years of real work in London—the incumbent of the living which was in the gift of Laurence's uncle died, and the uncle wrote, saying that it had always been his intention to give him this living, but that rumours had reached him which made him desirous of seeing his nephew before he made the offer formally.

"Poppy and I will have to stand to our guns now," he said with a whistle as he read this.

But he did not attach any serious importance to the reference to the "rumours" till he got to Gaylight and interviewed his uncle.

"Your mother tells me that before you were ordained there was some idle folly going on between you and some girl in the village. Is that true?"

"It is not true," Laurence said sternly.

The idea of his true love for Poppy, and Poppy's true love for him, being described as "idle folly" struck him as being utterly false.

"Then there is no entanglement—nothing to interfere with your carrying out my views?"

"It depends on what your views are. If they're confined to giving me Gaylight, there's nothing in the world to interfere with them."

"They extend beyond that. Your aunt and I, having no children of our own, have come to regard Bessie as our daughter. To have her settled close to us at the vicarage has been our dream for the last few years—ever since you determined on going into the Church, in fact."

Now, Bessie was a girl whom the Robert Eldridges had adopted, and for whom Laurence Eldridge had not even a liking.

"I'm sorry for that, because she certainly will never be settled there with me," said Laurence stoutly.

"Nonsense! Why not? Where will you find a better or a nicer girl?"

"I've found one already," Laurence laughed.

But he soon found that it was no laughing matter when his uncle said:

"Then you have deceived me bitterly. You told me two minutes ago that there was no entanglement—nothing to interfere with your carrying out my views."

"Nor is there," Laurence began explaining; "the young lady to whom I am engaged is worthy of the position I offer her—worthy of the best position any man could offer her. She'll be a much greater boon to you, and a far greater acquisition to Gaylight than——"

"Who is this young lady who has entered into an engagement with you unknown to your family?"

"It's known to my family by this time. I only proposed to her formally four days ago; directly I got her letter accepting me, I wrote off to my mother telling her of it, and asking her to call on my future wife. You asked who she is. Her father's a doctor in Marley."

"Indeed!" Mr. Robert Eldridge said savagely; "spare yourself the trouble of giving me any further information. You reject the hand of my adopted daughter, and in doing that you reject Gaylight. I wash my hands of you."

Laurence thanked his uncle for the dismissal, and went his way back to his London curacy. On his way he married Robina Ward, and was cut by his whole family in consequence.

Years passed away. Mrs. Laurence Eldridge became the mother of many children, and sympathised more than ever with the many monetary troubles which had beset her mother in her own youth. The children sickened, and some of them died in the low localities in which they were compelled to live in London on account of her husband's work. The exigencies of circumstances compelled him to rove from diocese to diocese, and still "suitable preferment" was

never found for the hard-working, earnest man who went on doing his Master's work through poverty, privation, and ill-health. In common with the majority of the underpaid, overworked, poor clergymen of the Established Church of England, he failed to establish a claim on any bishop, dean and chapter, or private patron. A curacy of a hundred and twenty pounds a year, and pious recommendations from men better placed than himself to "wait patiently till there was a distinct call" to a position that would make the possibility of living from day to day less problematical than it was at present, was all to which Laurence Eldridge had attained at the end of twenty years' unremitting labour.

There had been a hope in Laurence Eldridge's heart once of being so placed that he would be enabled to do his work untrammelled by the ignoble difficulties about filthy lucre which were for ever checking, blighting, and thwarting. This was when, after several years of unremitting toil amidst cruel circumstances, his health broke down, and while he was in a pitiable plight of poverty and pain, his vicar, a man of immense social, political, and Church influence, promised him, Laurence Eldridge, the first living which it was in his, the vicar's, power to get.

But that hope, nurtured in ignorance of the real character of the man who raised it, soon gave way to despair in Laurence Eldridge's breast. His late vicar was not the one to ask for preferment for the men who had done his work. His part it was graciously and gracefully to further the claims of men whose feet were sure to climb, whether he aided them or not. It looked so disinterested, it read so well, that he should warmly advocate a winning cause. It showed such a noble lack of acrid jealousy; it brought his name so unobjectionably, yet so prominently forward. It enabled him to be noble, and magnanimous, and generous, and unselfish, at such a cheap rate.

There had been another gleam of sunshine on Laurence Eldridge, besides these fallacious promises.

Once, when, broken down in body, purse, heart, and soul, he had sought cheap retirement in an almost unknown spot in these realms, he had been accidentally unearthed by the bishop of the diocese.

The great man, having discovered in the unfortunate Laurence something which he felt in his episcopal mind would supplement some ideas of his own concerning a parish under his supervision, swooped upon the down-trodden curate with all the force of his—the bishop's own—recently-developed power and suavity. He swooped with the offer of a locum-tenency in a remote seaside place, in his episcopal talons; he spoke the words bishops soon learn to speak concerning the interesting nature of the work and the salubrity of the climate, and he succeeded in landing our poor hero, with a wife and family, in a half-furnished house, on a hundred pounds a year.

But he—the lord bishop—did not succeed in doing this until in answer to his prey's plaint: "My lord, if I accept this at your request, it is with the understanding that at the expiration of my locum-tenency I may claim preferment at your hands?" he (the bishop) had replied with smiling suavity:

"That will be a question for after consideration, of course."

Laurence Eldridge, being generous-natured, did not fairly balance the words against the mere smiling suavity.

Once again there came a glimmer of hope's ever-lighted lantern.

Mrs. Laurence Eldridge read in one of the few newspapers which she saw in the wilds in which she was condemned to live or perish, that her old friend, Frank Holt, had been appointed chaplain to the Bishop of Wexminster. Later on she saw that he had married one of the bishop's daughters.

"He will help Laurence," she thought. And having some friends in the far-off county in which Wexminster was situated, she wrote to them, and asked them to take her in for a few days.

They gladly promised to take her in, at the same time warning her that her chances of an interview with the bishop's private chaplain and son-in-law were few, unless she could get him to make an appointment.

But Mrs. Laurence Eldridge could not forget that she had been Poppy Ward; further, she did not forget that as Poppy Ward, she had been the heart's desire of the bishop's chaplain.

So she went in hopeful confidence to the palace, where the bishop's chaplain and his wife, the bishop's daughter, had excellent quarters, and sent in her card to Mr. Holt.

Unfortunately Mr. Holt happened to be crossing the hall as the servant, in some doubt where he was to put "the person," was hesitatingly about to show Mrs. Eldridge into a little waiting-room, and, stepping forward, Mrs. Eldridge made the mistake of exclaiming:

"Mr. Holt, surely you know me!"

He turned towards her with that air of superficial courtliness which seems to be a growing attribute of successful divines. There was no recognition in his clear, light-blue, unflinching eyes, but

Mrs. Eldridge could have taken her oath that not only did he know her, but that he was uncommonly ill-pleased to see her.

There was no trace left in this smooth-mannered, suavely-courteous gentleman with the self-possessed, easy, condescending air, of the shambling, stooping, slightly awkward lover of her youth. Instinctively, just as she felt sure that he knew her, did she also feel sure that he put her on a lower level, and her spirit rose in indignation when in reply to her question, "Mr. Holt, surely you know me?" he replied, "I have not that pleasure, but shall be most happy to do so."

"I doubt that," she said calmly, "but you hold my card in your hand."

He glanced at it as she said this, and affected to recall her identity with a slight effort.

"Mrs. Eldridge—I had the pleasure of knowing you as Miss Ward—pray walk into my study."

He ushered her in with elaborate politeness, placed a chair for her, and seated himself at his writing-table, whereon a pile of unopened letters were lying.

"I regret that I can only give you a few minutes. The bishop has such a mass of correspondence that it could never be got through were I not to give my undivided attention to it. Will you tell me to what I am indebted to the honour of this visit?"

"To my hope that success and prosperity had not entirely obliterated from your heart all kindly feeling for two old friends. To my belief that you would, if I asked you, use your great influence with the bishop to get a living for my husband, Laurence Eldridge, who is nearly broken down with poverty and ill health."

He shook his head gently and deprecatingly.

"Your husband is at present in the diocese of Oldtowers, I believe?"

She assented.

"And previous to his going there he was in London. It is on the bishops of these two dioceses that he has a claim, if on anyone. For my own part I have made it a rule never to back an application from any man for preferment, and I always lament it when I see a restless craving for a fresh sphere of labour developing itself in any priest. If a direct call is made upon him, it is distinctly a man's duty to obey it. But unless this is the case, I cannot conscientiously advocate the cause of one who is desirous of turning away from the labour that is close to his hand."

"The direct calls to livings that men can live on, are only made to those men who have interest or money," she said bitterly.

He gently shrugged his shoulders, and took up one of the letters.

"But I will not ask you to act against the dictates of your conscience, Frank Holt. I am glad to hear that you have one, and sorry that it has expanded to such dimensions as to crush out your heart and humanity. 'Direct calls' to higher places than the one you fill now will surely come to you, for you'll never lose an inch of ground by stepping aside to help save the 'hindmost' from his proverbial fate."

With that she left him; he smiling softly, and congratulating himself inwardly on having rid himself of so possibly troublesome an applicant with so little trouble, and such perfect tact.

At the present time he has, after a little becoming hesitation, and a few exquisitely worded doubts as to whether the "call" is sufficiently strong to "justify him in quitting his present sphere of labour," accepted a certain deanery, which has always been a sure step to a bishopric. Laurence Eldridge is in receipt of an offer of a living value one hundred and twenty pounds per annum, and two acres of glebe. He is also hesitating as to whether he shall accept this "call" or not. But his hesitation is due to the fact of his doubting whether or not he and his family would not die of stagnation and starvation upon the "living" in the course of a few weeks.

## The Editor's Note Book.

If the Government had really decided upon an early evacuation of Egypt, the destruction of Hicks Pasha's army was very inconvenient for their policy, but it is fortunate for them and for us that the Mahdi's victory occurred before, and not after, the departure of our troops. It seems certain that but for the moral and material support of British bayonets, the Khedive's position would have been by this time untenable, and that our troops would scarcely have reached home, before they would have had to return, with a task before them compared to which the suppression of Arabi was mere child's play.

DIFFERENT people, the old adage tells us, have different opinions, and I have, myself, the greatest respect for people who, having strong opinions of their own, have the courage to avow them, even if the

avowal is not likely to be very popular. But I think my readers will agree with me that Mr. Labouchere, in his cynical statement in *Truth*, that he rejoiced at the news of the destruction of Hicks Pasha's army, oversteps the line of decency. I should be very sorry if my political views permitted me to "rejoice" at the deaths of the gallant band of Englishmen who composed Colonel Hicks's staff.

WAR between France and China is even less likely to do anybody good than war in general, and I shall be surprised if France does not come out of it worse than anybody else. It is nearly a quarter of a century since China had a stand-up fight with England and France—and a very good fight she made of it at the Peiho Forts—and a great many things have happened since then.

NATIONS like the Chinese have now very different ideas about the organisation, armament, and equipment of troops to those which obtained in 1860, and although it may be granted that a French army might be safely trusted to beat a Chinese one of much greater strength, it must not be forgotten that the French army has first of all to be sent all the way to China, an undertaking the difficulties of which it is impossible to over-estimate.

AND it must also be remembered that the French Government is heavily handicapped at home, firstly, by the terrible condition of the national finances, and secondly, by the very uncertain state of the national temper. The people could barely support any considerable increase of taxation, and French ministers fight, metaphorically speaking, with ropes round their necks. Failure would at once lead to their ignominious dismissal, and, even if they succeed, there will be a very *mauvais quart d'heure* for everybody when the bill comes to be paid.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Standard* having unkindly suggested that Mr. William Morris, if he wished to be consistent, ought to divide the contents of his factory with his workmen, the new Apostle of Socialism has written to the Editor to explain that he is not in a position to do anything of the kind, and that, in fact, it is not possible for individual capitalists to cast aside their positions and "take rank with the proletariat," until "the immense chain of the terrible organisation of competitive commerce," of which capitalists are but minute links, is completely unriveted.

THIS, being translated into plain English, simply means that Mr. Morris's Socialism is altogether absurd and unpractical, and that he knows it; and that the mischief that teaching such as his may do is not even atoned for by pure and simple faith on the part of the teacher.

It is not uninteresting to note what Mr. Morris says he thinks will follow when the unrivetting of the links of the immense chain has enabled capitalists to abandon their positions. Let me give his exact words.

"THE sacrifice of that position, I believe, will not seem heavy to us; because, if we are right in our estimate of the good which a state of Social Order would bring the world, we should receive in return gifts which no money can buy: to see an end of poverty as well as of riches, of aqualor as well as of luxury; to find leisure, pleasure, and refinement common among those who do the rough work of the world; to see genuine healthy art growing spontaneously from this happiness; to see our well-loved islands freed from all sordid disfigurement, the tokens of a degrading struggle for existence and riches—is anything which money can now buy worth the pleasure of being part of such a life as this, and of feeling that each one of us has a share in upholding it?"

THIS is, indeed, a charming picture, and will probably be realised at about the time of the Greek Kalends, or when three Sundays come together in a week, or during the later years of the Millennium. Seriously, it is intolerable that the real work and progress of the world should be hindered, even for a moment, by such vain imaginings as these.

It appears that there is to be a great strike in the cotton trade against a proposal of the masters to make a reduction of five per cent. in the wages of weavers, and the colliers also propose to "go out" unless the masters will consent to increase wages fifteen per cent. It is to be hoped that wiser counsels will prevail, and I think that if each weaver were to work out a simple little sum in arithmetic by himself, a strike would not be so probable as it seems to be at present. Thus, a reduction of five per cent. in the case of a man earning thirty shillings a week, means £3 18s. in the course of twelve months, whereas a man who "goes out" and stops out only six weeks, makes a dead loss of £9, which it will take him a very considerable time to recover. No doubt strikes are organised on the supposition that the masters must speedily give way, but the men have been beaten before now after struggles which have lasted very much longer than six weeks.

THE position of the colliers is stronger than that of most other workmen, seeing that we cannot get coal except from our own mines; but the Lancashire weavers would do well to remember that manufacturing industries have occasionally not only been paralysed, but absolutely killed by injudicious strikes. The transfer of the iron ship-building trade almost bodily from the Thames to the Clyde is a case strictly in point.

TWELVE years' penal servitude is a severe sentence, but not too severe for such a man as Warden, who, being in the enjoyment of a very handsome salary, and implicitly trusted by his employers, robbed them deliberately and mercilessly. But I think that some distinction ought to have been drawn between the case of this man and that of the other convict, Watters.

WITHOUT altogether believing the statement of Warden—certainly not evidence one would be inclined implicitly to trust—it is no doubt true that, if Watters did not absolutely know of Warden's robberies, he must have had a fair idea of what was going on, and deserves punishment as a receiver of stolen property. There seems to me, however, to be a marked difference between the crimes of which these men were respectively guilty, and if the sentence upon Warden was a just one, of which there can be no doubt, I cannot help thinking that Watters's fate is unduly severe.

MR. JUSTICE HANNEN's decision that it is not sufficient in law for a husband, who finds it impossible to live on friendly terms with his wife, to provide her with a suitable residence and income, and that he can be compelled to live under the same roof with her, or go to prison, will come as a surprise to most people. Mr. Justice Hannen expressed a strong opinion that such a state of things ought not to be permitted to continue, and there can be no doubt that in process of time there will be an alteration in the law. Meanwhile, the position of the defendant in the case in question is a hard one.

LORD COLERIDGE and Mr. Justice Mathew, sitting in banc, have decided that Sir Percy Shelley, in the matter of his theatre at Chelsea, acted, no doubt with the best possible intentions, against the law, and that the conviction which was obtained against him in the police-court must stand. I do not see how any other result could have been expected, and in the public interest no other could have been desired.

SIR PERCY's theatre would have been practically under the control of no authority whatever, and the door would have been opened to all sorts of evasions of the law on the part of people of very different position to that of Sir Percy Shelley, which might have been in no way conducive either to the public morality or public health.

THE case of *Day versus Foster*, in which the proprietor of a school was sued by one of his assistant masters, is not of great public interest, except for its bearing on the question of public as against private schools, although it has served as the text of several newspaper articles on the subject. The case does not seem, however, very relevant to that issue, seeing that the boys at the school in question numbered about one hundred and forty, a number considerably greater than is to be found at many so-called public schools, and far in excess, I think, of that which can be safely entrusted to the care of the practically irresponsible proprietor of a private school.

I WONDER what the drink of the future will be, after all. Sir Henry Thompson and other distinguished doctors, not to mention people like Sir Wilfrid Lawson, warn us against alcoholic liquors; if we drink milk, we are in appreciable danger of typhoid fever; and water, in its native state, is not without danger of its own. A correspondent of the *Times* now suggests hot, almost boiling, water, as a cheerful and wholesome dinner drink. Probably a considerable time will elapse before the kettle takes its place as part of the necessary equipment of the dinner-table.

A DIFFICULTY, which excited a good deal of temper at some of the cricket matches of last season, has now assumed such proportions as to threaten the prosperity of the national game. That the delivery of certain professional bowlers could not be called fair has long been obvious, as was also the fact that umpires, who belong to the same class as the offenders, were not particularly anxious to put a stop to the objectionable practice. Matters have now been brought to an issue by the fact that the Nottingham County Club has refused to meet Lancashire, against two of whose bowlers complaint was specially made.

THE rivalry of counties is the backbone of cricket, and it is to be hoped that the Marylebone Club will be able to find some way out of the present difficulty. There can be no doubt that the big gate-money matches, of which we have of late years had so many, have done the game a great deal of harm, and if the M.C.C. does not insist on strict fairness and rigid adherence to its rules, the result will very speedily be one which all lovers of cricket must deplore. C. P.

## Spiders.

SPIDERS are the most murderous animals in creation. They have nets and traps, caves, fangs, hooks, and poison bags—all the paraphernalia, in short, of robbers or assassins. When a spider attacks a hapless fly, he plunges his two buried fangs downwards into it, pouring out his poison into the wound, whereby he soon kills his miserable victim. The fangs shut up like a knife-blade into its case when not used or wanted, and open and erect themselves when the creature is savage and wants to use them. His eight eyes are like globes of polished diamond, and curiously follow the necessities of his situations. When the creature lives at the end of long tubes, or underground, they are clustered forward on his forehead, for he only wants to look straight and intently before him; and when he lives in short tubes, terminating in a large web exposed to the open air, they are more separated and give him a wider range; when he lives in the centre of an open web they are more divergent still, and set in slight prominences so as to have a freer axis; and when he is of the wandering tribe, they are scattered so that he can see every way and all round at once. The nocturnal species have no dark pigment like the rest, but have, instead, a curtain which reflects a brilliant metallic lustre, so that their eyes shine like cats' eyes in the dark.

Spiders' webs are made of two kinds of silk; the one forming the cables and radii, simple and innocuous, the other forming the concentric or spiral threads, closely studded with minute globules of fluid, like small drops of dew. These globules are intensely viscid, and by them alone are retained the fly, the bee, the gnat, and the moth. A fat old spider, basking half asleep in the middle of his treacherous net, yet never so asleep as not to be on the alert if but the wind shake its moorings too roughly, is more like one of Bunyan's giants than anything else; he is the tyrant of the garden, the butcher, the assassin, the oppressor of the weak, the wily circumventor of the strong.

One variety of spiders make showers. On one hot day in June, while seated on a bench on the esplanade at Brighton, I saw spiders flying in a way which I could not have believed possible. Some half-score pairs of spiders alighted upon the coats of myself and of two gentlemen with whom I was in conversation. They were of a sort I had never seen before—small, with black bodies and grey abdomens. I caught several of them, because I was surprised to see them pass from my coat-sleeves to the coats of the gentlemen who were to leeward of me as easily as house-flies or ladybirds might have done. When I caught them, they let themselves down from my finger by spinning threads very rapidly, as other sorts of spiders had done under similar circumstances. But the very lively black-and-grey spiders showed me tricks I had never before seen or heard of. I expected them to do as other spiders, and let themselves down to the ground before unloosing their rope. They escaped in a far cleverer way. When the pendent thread was some eight inches long, its course changed from vertical to horizontal, for the spider rose on the current of the breeze until it was on a level with my finger, the line lengthening all the while. When it became about ten inches long, the spider, by some means, detached the string at its point of juncture with my finger, and sailed away upon the stream of air. I caught three of these spiders, and each of them performed this feat, to the astonishment of myself and of the gentlemen sitting beside me. It must have been accomplished by means of special faculties. This spider must be possessed of the knack by means of which boys attach and detach leather suckers from stones. Moreover, they must possess a far more extraordinary faculty; they must know how to adjust their own specific gravity to the current of air upon which they float. Dr. Lister said long ago that spiders have a power of coiling and thickening their webs in the air, and this power has been deemed by some the explanation of the gossamer showers. But the whole cause is not understood, for no one knows why, on particular days, flakes of gossamer should fall so fast upon trees and hedges, that a diligent collector might gather basketfuls.

Amongst the most curious of the many curious facts recorded by Mr. Walter Bates, who lived for many years on the borders of the River Amazon, hunting for all manner of living creatures, is the existence of the bird-catching spider, *Mygale avicularia*, so long unbelieved in, but now established beyond all doubt, Mr. Bates having seen with his own eyes what he has related. He saw a large hairy spider, nearly two inches in length of body, and with legs expanding to the length of seven inches, both body and legs being covered with coarse grey and reddish hairs. He saw this monster crouching on the body of a finch, which, smeared with a filthy liquor, but not quite dead, still palpitated beneath the fangs of the horrid brute. Another finch lay on the bole, dead; and the dense white web, stretched across a crevice in the tree, but now broken, and with birds entangled in the pieces, told the story of the capture. The mygales are called crab-spiders by the natives, and if touched, shed their hair, causing a peculiar and almost maddening irritation. They are sometimes of immense size, and Mr. Bates asserts that he saw one of them with a cord round its waist, led about the house by some Indian children, as if it were a dog. Many of the spiders of the country are of exquisite colour, and some, which double themselves up at the base of leaf-stalks, deceive their prey by thus looking like flower-buds. One species has two curved, bronze-coloured spines, an inch and a half in length, proceeding from the tip of its abdomen. It spins a large web, its



spines, so far as can be seen, neither hindering nor helping in the work. As for the webs, some are like silk, and some like fine muslin. Some of the dens are broad, slanting galleries, two feet long, burrowed in the ground; others are nests built in trees, or hammocks slung across the angle of a room, or hung up on the tiles and thatch of the house-tops.

In Suffolk, the people say, that if after sweeping a room the broom is accidentally left up in a corner, strangers will visit the house in the course of that day; while others affirm, in the northern counties, that to sweep dust out of the house by the front door is equivalent to sweeping away the good fortune and happiness of the family. Care should rather be taken to sweep inwards—the dust being carried out in a basket or shovel—and then no harm will happen. Furthermore, the spider, which in daily life is little noticed except for its cobweb, the presence of which in a house generally betokens neglect, is by no means an unfriendly intruder. Although the servant oftentimes ruthlessly sweeps this uncared-for little visitor away from the wall, yet a common proverb reminds us that

If you wish to live and thrive,  
Let the spider run alive;

ill-luck being supposed to quickly overtake those who kill or even so much as injure it. It was a notion formerly prevalent in many parts of Scotland, that should a servant wilfully kill a spider, she would certainly break a piece of crockery or glass before the day was out.

## Teaching at Home.

### ARITHMETIC. PART II.

IT is impossible to fix any age as the one at which children should begin the formal study of arithmetic. One child may be able to begin at five years old; with another it may be hopeless trying to teach him till he is eight. Somewhere midway between six and seven is a frequent time for beginning, but the rule must not be by age, but by the mental condition of the child.

ONE of the first steps, of course, is to teach the child to write the figures. His teacher should let him count up to nine, and then show him how the first three figures are written, and let him copy them over and over again, till he is able to write them without the copy. The child will very likely want to know how the other figures are written, but do not show him more at one time than he will be able to remember permanently. The desire to be shown how to write down 4, 5, and 6 will often stimulate a child to take pains with 1, 2, and 3. Besides, whatever may be the case in eating, the proverb certainly holds good in learning, that "it is best to leave off with an appetite."

WHEN the child has finished writing his figures, you can practise him with a little easy addition and subtraction. "How much do two and three make?" Perhaps the child, instead of answering, looks stupid. "Well, but you have three marbles; how many would you have if you won two from Tommy?" Put in this practical form, the child will probably answer, "Five." Show him that three of your fingers and two of his make five fingers, three of your buttons and two of his make five buttons, and lead him to see that any two and three similar articles make five when added together. Some children will tell you at once, from past experience, what two and three come to; but, whenever a child does not know, do not let him "make shots" at the answer, and call out four, six, three, five, in a random manner. If he does not know, let him find out by the best of all methods—experience. Let him have two pink sweets and three white ones, and see how many sweets that comes to; or let him work his sum with marbles or bits of paper. Show him how he may find out the right answer, and let him feel that it is silly to give wrong ones when he has the materials for forming a right opinion at hand.

THE great use of arithmetic being to encourage accurate thought, take care that your pupil is accurate from the very beginning.

AFTER a child has had some little practice in adding and taking away—the two processes may be taught together—suggest to him one day, that he should add four oranges and five apples. He will probably tell you there are nine. Ask him what he means, whether there are nine oranges or nine apples; and tell him to think about it, and let you know to-morrow which it ought to be. Don't be in a hurry to explain, just let your suggestion wait a little. An idea is like a seed, it must have time to grow in a child's mind, and you need not always be pulling it up to see if it has begun to sprout.

If the answer is not ready next day, you may perhaps help him with another question: "Here are five marbles, take away four sugar-plums from them, and tell me the answer." The child thinks this is very silly, and remarks contemptuously, "You can't." "But you can take four away from five, can't you?" "Oh yes, of course, that leaves one." "Then why can't you take four sugar-plums from five

marbles, and leave one?" It is by such exercises as these that a child gets the idea that numbers represent real things; that only like things can be added to like things, and that you must not attempt in arithmetic, what it would be ridiculous to attempt in life.

WHEN the pupil can make all the figures from 1 to 9, and has been practised verbally in adding and subtracting, you can let him work little sums on paper. Make him write 3 and 4, one below the other, add them up, and write down the answer. Give him all the combinations you can think of, provided their total sum does not exceed nine. Let him see for himself that one number can be made up in several different ways, that nine can be made from 4 + 5, or 2 + 7, etc. Let him at this stage learn the meaning of the signs + and —. You can set his sums for him using the signs, and then let him write the figures under one another, and add or subtract according to the sign given. A week or more will very likely be spent in teaching the child to write down the figures from 1 to 9, and very likely take another week over these little sums, and the use of the two signs. But there is no need to hurry, take more time still, if you need it, and don't go on to a fresh step till your pupil has mastered the preceding one.

WHEN the pupil has got thus far, you have to take a new and very important step, no less than an introduction to the decimal system of notation.

THIS system, we must remember, is an artificial contrivance of an elaborate nature, which, as far as notation was concerned, was unknown to even so civilised and intellectual a people as the ancient Romans. We must, therefore, be prepared to take a great deal of trouble to render it intelligible to the tender intellect of a child. Intelligence, however, is much assisted when stimulated by interest and curiosity, and you must try to excite these feelings in your pupil.

WE will suppose he has gained a certain readiness in working his little sums, and is able to write down the answers with ease and certainty. Now give him a fresh sum; tell him to add two fives together, and let him write them down in the usual way. He will know from his verbal exercises with you that two fives make ten, and will probably tell you so; very likely adding, "But how am I to write it down; how am I to make a ten?" Tell him that you have shown him how to make all the figures that there are, and ask him what he thinks had better be done under the circumstances. He will very often be sharp enough to guess that you hold the key to the enigma, and will object to puzzling his own brains over the matter. He will "give it up," as children do with a riddle, and tease you for the answer. Don't be disappointed at this result; you must not expect your pupils to be like the young Pascal, who reasoned out the elements of geometry for himself.

YOU may be quite satisfied, if you have roused this interest and secured his attention for your explanation, when you tell him that, as there are no more figures, the only thing to be done is to use the old ones over again; that when you want to write ten you must begin afresh with the figure 1, that it is the custom to put some sign after it to show you have "begun over again," and that then the number must be read, not as one, but as one ten; or, as we generally call it, ten.

Now, ask the child to write down ten. He writes down 1, and perhaps hesitates as to what he shall write after it, for you have not told him anything about the cypher, 0. You must encourage him a little.

"Yes, that is quite right for the ten, but you must put something after it; what shall it be?"

Probably he will write down another 1, feeling it does not commit him to so much as the other numbers might do.

"Yes, that is quite right," you will say; "you have turned that first one into a ten by putting a figure after it; only, you see, you have written a 1 down here, so that whole number means ten and one more. How much would that be?"

"Eleven," answers the child.

"Yes; you see you have written down eleven, ten and one more. Now, I'm going to write down ten, and two more; you know how much that will be."

So you go on with the numbers from eleven to nineteen; sometimes writing them down, and getting the child to read them; sometimes getting him to set down the "ten and six more," or the "ten and eight more."

The child will feel encouraged by finding out that he can write some of the numbers without your telling him how to do it; and then you go back again to the ten, and ask him, "But how will you write ten, and no more?"

Then you can make a nought for him, and tell him that that sign is used to express "no more," and that it is called nought, because, in old-fashioned times, when people had no more things, they were said to have nought.

At last the child will be able to write down ten for himself, and though the process may be a long one for all parties, and a tedious one for my readers, the pupil will probably feel interested in his discovery.



and when you resume work next day, he won't distress you by asking on which side of the one he is to put the nought.

It will now be comparatively easy to make the child see that if 1 with a figure after it means ten, 2 with a figure after it means two tens, or twenty; and by the time you want him to write a hundred, there will be a chance of his being able to discover for himself that, as you have used up all the figures a second time, you must begin with a fresh set, and use three figures. Thousands and tens of thousands will fall naturally into their places, though I should recommend that the child be very gradually introduced to them; and when you do bring them to his notice, try and connect them with some familiar object. For instance, you can take three or four books, let him see how many pages there are in each of them, and then add their numbers together. The ordinary three-volumes novel will often contain about a thousand pages; and if a child liked to count them through, he would get a clearer hold of the meaning of the word "thousand" than by any amount of talking and explanation.

It may be said that all these directions have only brought us a little way—not farther than notation; but, as a matter of fact, you have taught a child a good deal when you have taught him to write down numbers correctly, and when he can read off, say 10004 or 20302, without being puzzled by "the noughts in the middle." Besides, arithmetic is essentially a subject where "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*." Lay your foundations well, and the rest will come with ease and certainty; whereas, if you once let your pupil start on a wrong plan, you may never be able to set him right again.

## A Chinese Doctor.

AN article in the *Saturday Review* contained a little while ago, among other amusing matter, the following story:

Among the Celestials it is well known that a doctor is paid according to the rapidity with which he effects a cure. The longer he is about it, the less he will get for his trouble. In regard to the preliminary negotiations as to the sum to be paid in the event of recovery, the system of calculation is rather curious and suggestive of a country where mankind has a remarkable value. A tale is told of a missionary in Tong-King, one of whose catechists fell ill. He was not one of the modern class of medical missionaries, and did not trust himself to prescribe for his convert. Accordingly he called in an Annamese physician. It may be remarked, by the way, that this was one of the most astonishing instances of humility on record. The ordinary European would as soon trust an Indo-Chinese doctor, as he would take to snake-charming. However, this missionary not only summoned the *sayah*, but bargained with him in the regulation way as to the fee to be paid. The doctor, after the usual preliminaries—the feeling of the pulse, and the inconsequent interrogatories, whether the sick man was married, and if he had any children, whether he had ever been in China, why the Christian religion did not enjoin the worship of deceased ancestors, and so on—declared that he was ready to set the patient on his legs again. If his subject had been younger, he could not have consented to cure him for less than one hundred *sapeques*, but seeing that he was a dried-up old atomy of nearly sixty, he would not demand more than twenty, for when the man was cured, he was not much use. This was an agreeable view of the question for the missionary funds, and a bargain was struck immediately.

It is satisfactory to hear that the doctor restored his man to health, and got his stipulated fee.

## Imitation Ground-Glass Engraving.

THERE is a very simple way of producing all the clear and pretty effect of ground-glass engraving on lamp-globes and similar articles at a nominal cost; the outlay merely consists in the purchase of a bottle of varnish and a soft penny brush. White spirit varnish is the best for this purpose, although copal will do very well, but the spirit looks clearest when laid on. This varnish does not look quite white when in the bottle, but in working it will be found to be quite sufficiently so.

It must be premised that any one attempting to decorate ground-glass must know something of designing—colouring he need not be an adept in, as colouring is not required, but he must have an accurate eye and hand, as every touch of the varnish tells, and cannot easily be removed; turpentine will wash off a mistake if applied directly, but it is apt to run into the rest of the design and spoil the whole, so it is best to avoid a mistake altogether.

THIS art, then, merely consists in painting on the rough side of the glass with a brush dipped in varnish; this is all the process, and to one accustomed to drawing is most quickly done; the varnish soon dries and the globe may be used again at once. In working do not

use too much varnish, but lay it on evenly, having a good pointed brush that can be easily guided; one coat is quite sufficient. You will observe that directly you touch the glass with varnish its opaqueness becomes clear and transparent. It is as well not to wash such a globe too often, but when it requires it—as gas globes, especially, frequently do—no difficulty need be apprehended, for the varnish will not wash off or become in any way injured if the water is only slightly warm, such as is generally used for washing glass in.

PATTERNS or designs will suggest themselves to the artist, but we may mention that such a simple design as a few marguerites formed in a careless wreath looks extremely pretty round a globe, and would be a good subject for a first attempt.

PANES of ground-glass such as we often find in hall-doors or staircase-windows may just as easily be decorated, only, as the surface in this case is a fixed perpendicular one, more care is needed in applying the varnish. Unless brushed on very lightly it is sure to run down the pane, or at least when dry be found to have accumulated in a little lump at the bottom of each petal, or whatever the design is; with a small amount of practice, however, this defect can be easily avoided, and panes otherwise stupid and monotonous may be made to become quite an ornament to the house.

It is perhaps superfluous to remark—as no one who lays claim to artistic work would do so in any case—that no previous outline should be drawn either with a pencil or anything else; the marking could never be got out again when once varnished, and the whole effect of engraving would be spoilt. For those who cannot possibly manage a design without some guiding outline, let said design be accurately cut out of white or coloured paper and stuck on to the back of the glass, so as to show through. For a strictly conventional pattern this is not for anyone a bad plan, as to keep regular curves, lines, etc., exactly like one another without a guide is difficult even to a practised hand. The pattern can easily be washed off again when the painting is finished. It is best to use a mahl-stick when painting on the perpendicular surface. Few people possess a hand sufficiently steady to do without this, and if the delicate lines are not drawn firmly, a very home-made effect is produced.

WE should recommend that before attempting one of the staircase-windows or even the lamp-globes, our imitation ground-glass engraver should take some practice on any broken pieces of ground-glass he may find about; those from a child's drawing-slate would be just the thing to try on, or any hopelessly cracked lamp globe. If washed with turpentine directly the varnish is applied the design can be taken off clean, the piece of glass wiped dry, and it will be all ready for more practice. This mode of commencing, except to an acknowledged expert, will be found to be good advice, since it will save the artist the humiliation of being informed that his gummy experiments have made the hall-windows unfit to be seen, and he must send for a glazier!

To keep the brushes in good order, always, after using, cleanse them with turpentine and then wash with hot water and soap. A little soda may be used with advantage.

## A French Duellist.

ONE of the most notorious of French duellists at the period of the restoration of the Bourbons in 1815, when scarcely a day passed without a hostile meeting, was the Count de Larillière, a native of Bordeaux. At the time of this story he was a man of about thirty-five, tall, well-made, and with polished manners; his appearance, indeed, utterly belying the reckless life he was in the habit of leading. One day, as he was walking with a friend in the principal street of Bordeaux, he saw approaching them, on the same side of the way, one of the richest and most respected merchants of the town, with his newly-married wife on his arm. Larillière advanced towards them, hat in hand, and with all the outward semblance of a well-bred man about to make a speech of more than ordinary politeness. "I beg your pardon," said he, addressing himself to the merchant, who, with his wife, had abruptly halted, "but I have just made a bet with my friend, whom I have the honour of presenting to you"—here he introduced his friend in due form—"that I will kiss your wife on your arm"—the merchant, knowing the count's character and reputation, here became ghastly pale—"after having first given you a box on the ear." Saying this, the miscreant stared impudently in the face of the amazed merchant, and, spite of all the resistance he could offer, put both threats in immediate execution. A challenge and a meeting followed, which resulted in the injured party receiving his death-wound, and the aggressor going forth in search of new victims.

In course of time, Larillière had fought upwards of forty duels, and was able to boast of having killed no fewer than eleven individuals. He was now bent upon making up his dozen, after which he proposed to rest, and continue his practice with the new cavalry sabre, to which he had taken a strong fancy. This laudable desire was not destined to be realised, for he was himself killed in a

duel, under strange circumstances, a few days after the death of his eleventh and last victim.

On the evening of a masked ball at the Grand Theatre at Bordeaux, Larillière was seated in the adjoining café. It was about eleven o'clock, and the count, not being in a very quarrelsome humour, was occupied in peacefully imbibing a glass of punch. Suddenly, a tall young man, wearing a black domino and black velvet mask, entered the room and strode up to the table at which the formidable count was quietly seated.

No particular notice was at first taken of the new comer, but no sooner was he observed to be in the close vicinity of Larillière's table, than all eyes were attracted towards him. Without a single preliminary observation, he seized hold of the count's glass, threw away the punch it contained, and ordered the waiter, in a loud voice, to bring a small bottle of orgeat in its place.

Witnesses of the scene say that at this moment, for the first time in their lives, they saw that Larillière had turned pale. It was the common belief in Bordeaux that during all the years this man had been applying himself to the work of destruction, he had never once allowed his countenance to betray the slightest emotion. "Scoundrel!" he exclaimed, "you do not know who I am," at the same time making a vigorous but unsuccessful effort to remove the stranger's mask.

"I know who you are perfectly well," coldly replied the unknown, forcing Larillière violently back into his seat. All present started to their feet, and, without venturing to interfere, anxiously waited the issue of this strange provocation.

"Waiter," exclaimed the stranger, "be quick with that bottle of orgeat." At this second command the bottle was brought, and the masked man, drawing a pistol from his pocket, proceeded to address his adversary thus:

"Unless in the presence of this company and for my own personal satisfaction, you at once swallow this glass of orgeat, I will blow your brains out with less compunction than I would those of a dog. Should you, however, comply with my bidding, I will do you the honour of fighting you to-morrow morning."

"With the sabre?" demanded Larillière, convulsed with rage.

"With what weapon you please," replied the stranger disdainfully.

Whereupon the count swallowed the orgeat, every one present preserving a death-like silence.

The masked man, satisfied with the result, now retired, saying in a tone of voice loud enough to be heard by all in the room:

"To-day I have humbled you sufficiently; to-morrow I intend to take your life. My seconds will wait on you at eight o'clock in the morning. We will fight on the spot where you killed the young Chevalier de C—." This was the name of the count's last victim.

The following morning Larillière found himself in the presence of a man, no longer wearing a mask, and who appeared to be some twenty-five years old, and of calm and dignified but singularly resolute bearing. His seconds were two private soldiers belonging to one of the regiments of the garrison. They had brought weapons with them, but Larillière's seconds took exception to them, at which a scarcely perceptible smile passed over the stranger's face.

On taking his position, Larillière turned towards his seconds and said in a low tone: "For once I believe I've found my equal."

The combat commenced, and at the first passes, the count was convinced that he had to deal with a skilful antagonist. However, his courage did not fail him, though at times he seemed to lose somewhat of his customary composure. Lunges and parryings succeeded each other with rapidity on both sides. Larillière had already tried his usually fatal finishing thrust more than once, but each time only to find his effort turned aside by his adversary's blade. Harassed at finding his efforts unavailing, he insolently remarked to his opponent: "Well, sir, at what hour do you intend to kill me?"

A momentary silence ensued. Then the stranger, who seemed to have profited by that slight interval to assure himself that the advantage lay decidedly with him, quietly replied, "Immediately," and rushing forward thrust the point of his sword through his adversary, who sprang backwards, tottered, and sank into the arms of his nearest second. Putting his right hand on the wound, the count was just able to say: "That, sir, is not a sabre cut, it is a thrust with the point—with the sabre I feared no one," and in a few moments he fell back dead.

The stranger now advanced politely towards the seconds of the man he had slain, and enquired if he was at liberty to depart.

"Will you at least tell us your name?" asked they in reply.

Larillière's opponent proved to be one of the young officers at Blaye, who had determined to avenge the murder, as he considered it, of the count's last victim. When the fact of Larillière's death became generally known at Bordeaux, many mothers of families actually had masses said, in thankfulness for having been delivered from so dreaded a scourge.

alterations may also be required in many gardens; and it is quite certain there are numbers of plots attached to new dwellings out of which gardens have to be made. This is apparent at a glance round the borders of nearly all cities and towns, where fresh fields are ever being invaded by the builder, and rough and barren plots require to be made smooth and fertile, for a home nowadays is not considered worthy of its name without a garden.

#### DRAINING GARDENS.

Both in the formation of new gardens and the renovation of old ones, it is most important to make provision for the free passage through the soil of superfluous water. It is not always possible to drain gardens effectively, for it is no use digging trenches and placing in pipes for taking the water away unless there are outlets for it into a deep existing drain, or where such can be conveniently made; but these outlets provided, no work can be more profitable, where the soil is naturally wet, than that conducted with the object of relieving it of the water with which it is saturated.

#### WATER-LOGGED SOIL.

Nothing is more certain than the fact that hundreds of persons are quite unable to determine whether their gardens need draining or not. It is also a fact that gardens innumerable are practically ruined by the want of drainage.

Where moss abounds on walks, lawns, and the branches of trees in such quantity as to be unsightly, and where the growths of fruit-trees canker and the shoots decay, there can be little doubt that the ground needs draining, and a few trenches cut and pipes laid in them would be far more potent in effecting improvement than any amount of money expended in manure.

In ground intended for gardens, but not yet prepared, the question of drainage can be determined by digging a few holes here and there to the depth of two feet, and leaving them open for a week or two, placing a little soil round them to prevent surface water running in. If water then collects in these miniature trial wells, it will show that the land is too wet to be fertile, and the first work that is done should be to conduct it away.

#### MAKING DRAINS.

The first point to determine is the depth that these should be made, and this depends on the crops that are desired to be grown. In making a walk dry and comfortable, a drain a foot deep under it will suffice; the same depth will also answer for draining ground for a new lawn, or for removing stagnant water from a lawn already existing, and which is soft, mossy, and unsatisfactory. Ground generally that is devoted to or intended for the cultivation of ordinary vegetable crops and flowers should be drained at least two feet deep, while that intended for or occupied with Roses, shrubs, or fruit-trees, should be drained from three to four feet deep.

#### PIPES FOR DRAINS.

For shallow drains two-inch pipes will answer, but they should be a little larger for burying deeper. In all cases they must be laid on a uniformly firm base, having a slight incline. This is imperative, as if the base is unequal in firmness, in one place hard and in another loose or soft, the pipes in the latter part will inevitably sink, and the drain be rendered worthless. By inattention to this simple but very important matter much money has been wasted in the work in question.

#### DRAINING WITH RUBBLE.

Where ground is not very wet, and deep drainage is not required, and at the same time where it is necessary to work economically, much good may be done by digging out trenches, and half-filling them with clinkers, ashes, stones, or hard rubble of any kind, spreading on this a layer of shavings, small sticks, or even straight straw, then levelling in the soil again. This, furthermore, is often a convenient mode of disposing of such matter which is unsightly in heaps and when there are no ready means of otherwise getting rid of it; bury it in the manner indicated, and it will have the same effect on the soil above it as the drainage in a flower-pot has on the compost provided for the sustenance of the plant.

Where the ground is very wet, shallow drains may be eight feet apart, deep drains twice that distance; and if the work is well done, and the water can pass away freely, improvement is sure to follow, as the soil will be rendered decidedly more fertile and distinctly warmer than before, for the heat from the sun cannot penetrate soddened soil; therefore, in making new gardens and improving old ones, let the subject of drainage have the first attention.

#### ARRANGING AND REMODELLING GARDENS.

Where a new garden is being made the arrangement of the surface becomes a matter for serious consideration. No strict rule can be laid down for conducting the work, as different owners or occupiers have different tastes, and each has a right to gratify them within certain limits, the most important being the avoidance of planting trees that may overhang a neighbour's garden, as, in such a case, the neighbour has a right to cut them, and unpleasantness often follows. Some persons like a perfectly even surface, others prefer undulating ground, while others again like examples of both. Then the question of walks and paths is important, and as regards these, individual preferences must not be ignored. One person likes the walks perfectly straight, another covets serpentine paths. Either or both may be had,

## Household Gardening.

FROM the present time onwards, throughout the winter months, work in gardens will be of a more or less heavy character, such as digging and trenching the land preparatory to its satisfactory and productive cropping another year. As has been previously intimated,

and the nature of the plot will usually suggest the most appropriate. Let us look a little more closely into the subjects of ground arrangement and walk formation.

#### GARDEN PATHS AND EDGINGS.

Walks or paths demand the first consideration in making a garden, and their width and disposition must be governed by the size of the enclosure. As a rule the walks should be straight in all gardens that are not more than twenty feet wide. In such a strip as that indicated, a path two and a half feet wide, taken all round at that distance from the fence, will be the most satisfactory and economical method of arrangement, as it affords a narrow border all round for Roses or fruit-trees to be trained to the fence, and also for flowers, while there will be a bed ten feet wide down the centre for growing what may be most desired—flowers, fruits, or vegetables, or all three if the length suffices.

In gardens that exceed the width stated, the walks may be proportionately wider, and, if desired, they may be formed in a series of graceful curves; the outside border will then naturally vary in width, and afford the more scope for the exercise of taste in planting.

In making a walk it is always desirable to dig out the best soil and spread it on the borders, as this makes them deeper and better, while the excavation affords a convenient receptacle for broken bricks, stones, pots, clinkers, or any hard matter of that kind, and this, surfaced with an inch or two of gravel, makes a hard, dry, and comfortable path.

#### EDGINGS FOR WALKS.

The best of all are formed with hard-burnt tiles which are manufactured for the purpose, and made in various patterns; for a serpentine walk the cable pattern is very appropriate, but much less so when the path is straight. These tiles make the most neat and durable of all edgings, but are too costly for many occupiers of gardens.

The cheapest edgings of all are strips of deal, an inch wide and three inches deep, secured firmly to stakes driven into the ground at suitable intervals. If the wood is well painted on the portion within the ground, these plain edgings will last for years.

#### PLANTS FOR EDGINGS.

Many persons prefer a living to a dead margin to their paths. The Dwarf Dutch Box-edging is a general favourite, and, if kept in good condition by trimming yearly, is extremely neat; but if plants that are growing in the borders are permitted to overhang, the Box will soon become patchy and unsightly. Nor does this popular edging-plant last for many years if the soil is quite destitute of lime.

The dwarf grassy-leaved plant, popularly known as Thrift (*Armeria*), is excellent in forming fresh green margins. It is studded in summer with pink double-daisy-like flowers, and has the valuable property of growing well in town gardens. Thrift is a very accommodating, homely plant, and has many admirers.

London Pride (*Saxifraga sarmentosa*) is another dwarf edging-plant that will grow almost anywhere, even in the most smoky districts, and it produces in summer thousands of small, star-like, pinky-white flowers. For town gardens it is the best of all plants for the purpose in question, and rooted offsets inserted an inch apart will soon spread and form a close row that will last for a lifetime, if not overgrown by stronger plants established too near it in the border.

The subject of edgings is one of the most perplexing to amateurs, hence our hints will be useful to many at the time when work of the kind under notice can be successfully accomplished.

#### WINDOW PLANTS.

Special attention is requisite now, both as regards watering and cleanliness. Such favourites as Geraniums, Fuchsias, Cactuses, and succulent plants generally must be kept dry; while others that are flowering, or approaching that stage, must be watered judiciously. The foliage of these must never droop, or a serious check to growth will be given. Every decayed leaf should be promptly removed, whenever it is seen, and large leaves, such as those of Indiarubber-plants will be greatly improved by being carefully rubbed with a damp sponge once a week. This should be done towards midday, in order that the foliage may have time to dry before night.

## Correspondence.

#### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.

4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

#### ANSWERS.

A. K.—Apply at the Trade Marks Registry Office, 25, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane.

DAME DURDEN.—1. Only by the use of phosphor paste, or other of the poisons, to be had at any oil-shop. 2. The Palais Royal is famous for imitation jewellery. See "Dickens's Dictionary of Paris" for interesting particulars. 3. The failure of sight being a misfortune, and having occurred whilst the girl was in your service, we think you should pay the month's wages.

F. A.—"The Boatswain's Song" would exactly suit you. It is published by Stanley Lucas. Also you might get "The Diver," and "Tis Thor's Day."

FLORENTIA.—Staining wicker-work is rarely satisfactory. Paint the chairs with Japan-black, such as is used by coachmakers; no varnish is required. Work carefully, the paint not too thick, or it will clog the crevices of the basket-work. Japan-black can be had at the oil-shops, and costs about 1s. 6d. a pint.

GRPSY.—"Enid," by Walter Macfarren; "Two Tarantelles," by the same composer, one in G and one in F; "The Shepherd Boy's Song" by Wilson; "The Mexican Serenade," by O. Langey; "Cynthia—A Right Merrie Dance," and "Danse Javouri." All these are pretty, light pieces, and sure to be liked. Amongst short classical pieces, there is a Gavotte by Bach, known as the one so much played by Agnes Zimmerman; Serenade in F, by Sterndale Bennett; and Gavotte from "Mignon," published by Schott and Co., 159, Regent Street. H. Stanislaus' compositions are thought very well of by the musical profession. 2. We do not see what there is in the text you mention which requires explanation. We suppose that stress is laid on the exact way the clothes were folded, so as to show that it was the work of a living person and not of a spirit. 3. Pronounce as if spelt Book-a-rest. 4. The Corraline Corsets ought to wear well, as they are made on a very good principle. The Corraline bones give to the figure, and do not snap like whalebone.

JOHN R. W. (Philadelphia).—W. M., writing from Nicolaieff, South Russia, kindly sends the following particulars respecting the poem, "The Nautilus and the Ammonite": "It is in the appendix to the second series of Frank Buckland's 'Curiosities of Natural History,' people's edition, page 337, and there stated to be taken from 'Richardson's Geology.'"

PERPLEXED.—1. We cannot undertake any such task. 2. Lobster-salad is generally handed round alone, as an entrée; having fish in it, it should be eaten alone. Ordinary salad is handed round with the roast. Crescent salad-plates are generally used; failing these, pudding-plates are the best substitute. 3. There is a monthly publication called "Book of Crests," price 2s. We know of no other specially devoted to the subjects you mention. 4. Some lilacs never bloom, and it is better to root them up and replace them with suckers from a flowering shrub. 5. Cotonaster is easily propagated by root divisions, i.e. by dividing the plant at the root. *Weiglia rosea* we have propagated by cuttings after flowering, set under a bell-glass on a moderately warm hot-bed, also by suckers at the root. 6. *Pyrus Japonica* will grow well by seed in heat, or by cuttings treated as above. Layering requires a small incision to be made in the stem layered next to the ground. Both *Weiglia* and *Pyrus J.* will layer, but are not certain.

TOFF.—"Routledge's Comic Reciter" contains a very good selection of pieces which would be suitable for a high-class entertainment.

TRY.—A correspondent kindly sends the following answers to your questions: "1. A fresh tongue steamed in a Captain Warren's cooking-pot till perfectly tender, no steam allowed to get to it, is delicious. All round the tongue on the tin plate should be placed herbs, a fagot of the usual savoury ones, and twenty minutes before the tongue is done put eight tomatoes, stalked, seasoned, and a small piece of butter inserted in each. The herbs must be removed before the tomatoes are put in. Skin the tongue and serve on a dish, with tomatoes dressed as follows: Choose as nearly same size as possible, plunge one minute in boiling water, remove the skin, and cut out a round piece from the stalk end, season with pepper and salt, with an egg-spoon remove the pipe, fill up with forcemeat, and spread it thinly, like a paste, over each tomato. Cover them with fine raspings, and fry in oil for eight minutes over a good fire, or bake ten minutes, and brown with a salamander. 2. The best time for potting butter is a few weeks after the cows have been turned out to grass in the early part of the year. When they are first turned out, the butter is generally strong, and does not keep well. The butter should be cleansed from the buttermilk thoroughly, but not washed, and should, if possible, be of the same churning; for each separate potting salt the butter as usual, and to each pound of butter put half a quarter of an ounce of bicarbonate of soda powdered and mixed with the salt. Press the butter into well-scalded wooden tubs, highly glazed jars, or glass pots, and cover with bladder. The quantity in each should vary according to the needs of the family, as it is better not to have a pot opened too long. Two-pound jars are a useful size."

ZENOBIA.—1. You offer your left arm to a lady, so as to leave your right arm free to protect her if occasion should arise. At dinner she sits at your right hand. 2. See answer to Leonora. 3. "Sunshine and Rain," by Blumenthal, in G; "Kismet," by Molloy, in E flat; and "The Romany Lass," by Stephen Adams, in A flat. These three songs are in exactly the compass you require, and are all published by Boosey and Co., 295, Regent Street. There is also a charming tenor song called, "Tom Waiting," which will suit you if you get it in the lowest key it is published in. 4. We should think either "Blackwood," "Temple Bar," or "Longman's Magazine" would answer the purpose you require. 5. If you wear dress-clothes, of course you wear gloves. 6. There is only one kind of gas that does not affect flowers, and that is called the "Chamberlain light." With ordinary gas, you must take the flowers out of the room directly it is lighted, or you will never save them. 7. With regard to your deafness, we think you should at once consult a specialist. Deafness increases if neglected.

# Puzzles for Prizes.

## RULES.

1. Answers should be written on one side of the paper only, and should be posted so as to reach the office, 24, Great New Street, Fetter Lane, E.C., by the first delivery on the Tuesday after date of publication. Envelopes must be addressed, "The Puzzle Editor," and each answer must bear the *nom de plume* of the writer legibly written on the top of the first sheet.

2. A First Prize of TEN SHILLINGS and a Second Prize of FIVE SHILLINGS will be awarded each week to the best and second-best answers respectively to the two Puzzles set. The Puzzle Editor reserves, however, the right of withholding either the First or Second Prize, or both, if, in his opinion, the answers received should not come up to the required standard of merit.

3. No winner of a First Prize will be eligible for another Prize during the same quarter. A winner of a Second Prize will be eligible for another Second Prize in the same quarter, but not for a First Prize.

4. Every Prize-winner must consent to send his or her name and address for publication.

5. The Puzzle Editor's decision is to be taken as final.

## PUZZLES.

### 1. A Parody.

Write Parody of Hood's "Bridge of Sighs." In writing parodies, the object is to keep as close as possible to the sound of the original while conveying a different meaning; and Hood's poem is one which easily lends itself to this treatment. Any subject may be chosen by the parodists; but the verses sent should not exceed thirty lines in length.

### 2. A Literary Puzzle.

Give the names of the poems from which the following lines are taken:

"Sad is my fate said the heart-broken stranger."  
 "Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride."  
 "Old times were changed, old manners gone,  
 A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne."  
 "Open the temple-gates unto my love."  
 "I see before me the gladiator lie."  
 "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness."  
 "Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is."

### Prize Winners in No. 134.

1st Prize, 10s., "One and All."

2nd Prize, 5s., "Froggie" (Miss Constance Gillespie, Wildcroft, Putney Heath).

"One and All" is requested to send name and address.

### FIVE METAGRAMS.

1. I am a word of letters five,  
 And should the keynote be  
 Of every act and word in life,  
 As when you've guessed you'll see.  
 Change but a letter and you'll find  
 What is too often used,  
 To settle points whereby the weak,  
 Are cheated and abused.  
 Another change; what schoolboys love  
 And Quakers hate, behold;  
 Each page of history, old and new,  
 Fresh tales of this unfold.  
 Replace my head once more, and you  
 A blessing will decry,  
 Without whose aid fair Nature's charms  
 Would all unheeded lie.  
 One final change of head, and that,  
 The gift I named e'en now,  
 Would useless be without this last,  
 I'm sure you will allow.  
*Right, might, fight, sight, light.*
2. Four letters are but few to represent  
 One-third of all this mighty world of ours;  
 Yet well they play their part, no more we need  
 To say where cities stand, where grow the flowers.  
 One letter changed, a thing without whose aid  
 No city e'er was built, no battle fought,  
 Will by that man be easily divined,  
 Who answers this my riddle as he ought.  
 Now wet, now dry, now soft, now hard and firm,  
 Shifting and changing, yet a playroom dear,  
 Where children gambol, and the maiden dreams,  
 My head transposed, this clearly will appear.  
 Once more bestow on me initial new,  
 The nuisance of each seaport town you see,  
 Although the little ones, and nursemaids too,  
 Perchance in this may not agree.  
*Land, hand, sand, band.*
3. Please take a word of letters five,  
 Untouched and undisturbed,  
 Leave the last four, but change the first,  
 By turns to make each word.  
 A baby mountain, if we may,  
 By great names small things call,  
 A friend of man, whose faithfulness  
 Has seldom had a fall.  
 An emblem of eternity,  
 That ends not nor begins,  
 A breath, a moan, a whisper,  
 Sweetest strains, or rudest din.  
 And if these will not content you,  
 A word all men fain would say,  
 Who seek for what escapeth  
 Their researches day by day.  
*Mound, hound, round, sound, found.*

4. Three letters stand, but one we change,  
 Enough to make the meanings range  
 (Of the five words, which thus are found),  
 O'er a wide range of sense and sound.  
 A right joyous friend to the young and gay,  
 But the foe of old age and sad decay;  
 A curse to mankind, but a blessing too;  
 Say which of the twain shall it be to you?  
 A place of safety and shelter sweet,  
 Where the lamb lies down at the shepherd's feet;  
 "Do tell me a story!" the children cry—  
 The past of this verb you may now decry.  
 What I hope neither you nor yours may be,  
 Tho' a ripe old age you should live to see.  
*Cold, gold, fold, told, sold.*

5. These letters four  
 With each new head,  
 May well as follows  
 Right be read.  
 The rich, they eat me  
 Every day;  
 The poor, but seldom,  
 So they say.  
 Men fight for me  
 By word and speech,  
 And stick to me  
 Fast as a leech.  
 If you could walk  
 The world round 'bout,  
 You would do me  
 Without a doubt.  
*Meat, seat, peat, feat.*

ONE AND ALL.

1. I am a word of letters six,  
 And oft a sorry mess,  
 But change my head, and now behold  
 A mildew, I confess.  
 Alter again, and you will find  
 Departure all in haste,  
 Or if you like a change once more,  
 Neglect we often taste.  
*Flight, blight, night, slight.*
2. You'll find me difficult, I fear,  
 And so I'll change my head;  
 Now a district in a town appear,  
 Or part of lock instead.  
 New head again, a poet I,  
 Or if you like it best,  
 And yet another change you'll try,  
 A pasteboard stands confest.  
 A different head, and you will see  
 A sort of fat am I;  
 Or change again, I'll guarantee  
 "A scented plant" you'll cry.  
*Hard, bard, card, lard, nard.*
3. My whole means to tighten up well,  
 Or a double, may be;  
 Fresh head me, and soon it will spell  
 That a mark you can see;  
 Again, I am one, truth to tell  
 Of a most charming three.  
*Brace, trace, grace.*
4. Change your head each time  
 You begin a new line,  
 You'll soon find the rhyme,  
 And the answer's—"divine."  
  1. The front of an army am I;
  2. To be this, all boys try.
  3. Now I'm the name of a brother;
  4. Used in summer by mother.
  5. The god of the shepherds of old;
  6. Edict shuts out in the cold.
  7. This is vessel for containing;
  8. How I went when 'twas raining.

1. Van; 2. Man; 3. Dan; 4. Fan; 5. Pan; 6. Ban; 7. Can; 8. Ran.

5. I am a part of a ship, 'tis true,  
 Until you shall change my head;  
 Then, when you've done as I bid you do,  
 You'll find me enormous instead.  
 Alter once more, I am thrown away,  
 Yet again, the shoemaker's aid;  
 And a final change that you may say,  
 "As tight as it well can be made."  
*Nast, vast, cast, last, fast.*

FROGGIE.

The Metagrams of Vincentius and Zorilla rank next in merit to those sent by the Prize Winners. Vincentius would have been awarded the First Prize if he had given more explicit directions as to the solving of his Puzzles. The incident described in the Historical Mental Picture was the relief of the town of Tergoes by the Spanish veteran Mondragon, and took place in the year 1572. The event is described at length by Motley in his "Rise of the Dutch Republic."

OUT OF THE RUNNING.—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize: No. 123.—1st Prize, "Zyx"; 2nd Prize, "Comus." No. 124.—1st Prize, "Ferdinando"; 2nd Prize, "Ambrosia." No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frensham," "Ryland," "Malblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood"; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan"; 2nd Prize, "Malblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May." No. 130.—1st Prize, "The Arabs"; 2nd Prize, "Alice." No. 132.—1st Prize, "Atlas"; 2nd Prize, "Ethel May." No. 133.—1st Prize, "Syd Gardnor"; 2nd Prize, "Medway." No. 134.—1st Prize, "One and All"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie."

Answers have also been received from—Apollo, Bok, Canada, Ella, E. B., Emma Jane, Gabrielle, J., Jacky J., John Streaks, Lance, Mona, Mary, Nettie, Pericardium, Stella, Tarradiddle, Vernon de Montgomery, Vincentius, Warwickshire Lass, Yorkshirer, Zigzag, Zorilla.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 133 received too late from Old Jib, Rome, J. Dark, Jacky J., Rima.

## Odds and Ends.

"I WAS present at her Majesty's coronation in Westminster Abbey," said Campbell, "and she conducted herself so well during the long and fatiguing ceremony that I shed tears many times. On returning home, out of pure esteem and veneration, I decided to send her a copy of all my works. Accordingly I had them bound up, and went personally with them to Sir Henry Wheatley, who, when he understood my errand, told me that her Majesty made it a rule to decline presents of this kind, as it placed her under obligations which were unpleasant to her. 'Say to her Majesty, Sir Henry,' I replied, 'that there is not a single thing the Queen can touch with her sceptre in any of her dominions which I covet; and I, therefore, entreat you, in your office, to present them with my devotion as a subject.' Sir Henry then promised to comply with my request; but next day they were returned. I hesitated to open the parcel, but on doing so, I found to my inexpressible joy a note enclosed desiring my autograph in them. Having complied with the wish, I again transmitted the books to her Majesty, and in the course of a day or two received in return an elegant engraving, with her Majesty's autograph."

AMONGST no class of people does gambling prevail with more fatal effects than the Chinese. The intensity with which these people will play game after game, staking every possible thing, is wonderful. A recent writer on China gives information which, did we not know the character of the people, would be set down as incredulous. They play not only for their furniture, their clothing, and their pig-tails, in which latter they place so much pride, but for their fingers. A small hatchet and a pot of boiling oil is set on the table, so that when the finger is severed from the hand it can be plunged into the oil and the bleeding stopped. Then the game is continued as before.

How Lord Kinsale acquired the right of wearing his hat in the royal presence was as follows: King John and Philip II. of France agreed to settle a dispute respecting the Duchy of Normandy by single combat. John de Courcy, Earl of Ulster, was the English champion, and no sooner put in his appearance than the French champion put spurs to his horse and fled. The king asked the earl what reward should be given him, and he replied: "Titles and lands I want not; of these I have enough; but in remembrance of this day I beg the boon for myself and successors to remain covered in the presence of your highness and all future sovereigns of the realm."

A VENERABLE Bedford gentleman had never read Shakespeare's plays, and was advised to do so during the winter. In the spring the giver of the advice casually asked if he had read any of the plays. Yes, he had read them all. "Do you like them?" ventured G—, feeling his way anxiously for an opinion. "Like them!" replied the old man, with effusive ardour; "that is not the word, sir. They are glorious, sir; far beyond my expectations. There are not twenty men in Bedford, sir, who could have written those plays!"

NOTES from parents: "Please excuse my boy on Friday being absent as is to be expected as he was buried and it will not occur again." "Please inter my to boys in your skull," was a note recently sent on a Monday morning to a Board schoolmaster in Greenwich. A teacher who had been diligent in teaching animal physiology, received the following from the mother of one of the scholars: "Please do not learn my little girl no more about her inside, because it does her no good and is rude."

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT's liveries were light blue and silver; Lord Alvanley's were the same. His lordship said to Burdett one day: "We're always mistaken for each other; couldn't we hit on a way to prevent it?" "I am willing," replied the baronet, "if I only knew how." "Then I'll tell you," said Alvanley. "Make your people follow your example, and turn their coats; that will do it."

STATISTICS state that there are two million widows in the German empire. It has heretofore been understood that young men leave Germany for this country in order to escape compulsory military service, but after reading the foregoing statement we are in possession of a much better reason for their emigration.

SCENE: Country road; two young women, who are walking, pass the parish doctor. First Young Woman: "That was Dr. Richard. They say he's got an awful wealthy wife." Second Young Woman: "Oo, ay! He married the money, and asked the wife to the wedding."

A PRUDENT man advised his drunken servant to put by his money for a rainy day. In a few weeks his master enquired how much money he had saved. "Faith, none at all," said he; "it rained yesterday, and it all went."

"My dear," said a fond wife, "when we were engaged I always slept with your last letter under my pillow." "And I," murmured her husband, "I often went to sleep over your letters."

"WHAT is the effect of the moon on the tide?" asked the teacher. And the Lewes schoolboy answered that it depended upon what was tied. If it was a dog, it made him howl.

INDIGNATION will fill the breast of every artist when we state that two men were arrested in a timber-yard, the other day, because they were suspected of a design on wood.

Six months after marriage: "Weel, weel, Sandie, how d'ye like the little leddy?" "Ah, weel, Derry, I'll na deny that she ha' fine conversational powers."

SELF-SATISFIED AMATEUR (showing his drawing): "And recollect I'm not in the trade, mind yer. I am a hosiery by profession."

DON'T tell a mother that her little girl is as plump as a partridge; she might think you were making game of her.

A NUPTIAL tie—when husband and wife both marry for money, and neither has got any.

THE land agitation in North Britain is getting very high—Skye high, in fact.

WHAT is a house without a baby? Well, correspondingly quiet. To guard against fits—buy ready-made clothes.

AN extraordinary marriage has taken place in New York, the chief features of which seem to be that the bridegroom was a slim youth of twenty years, who weighs one hundred and twenty pounds, and the bride, a professional fat woman, aged sixteen years, turned the scale at thirty-six stone thirteen pounds. The bride, a New York paper says, wore a red silk dress, a large gold chain, diamond earrings, pink stockings, and a profusion of white flowers in her hair and upon her breast. The marriage took place in a public hall, the charge for admission being ten cents. To add *clat* to the ceremony, the clergyman who performed it, an ex-army-chaplain, came to the building in a state of joyous intoxication, and swore more oaths than he pronounced benedictions. The building was crowded to suffocation by an excited mob, which, in spite of the presence of several policemen, interrupted the ceremony with hisses, groans, and laughter. The proceedings were wound up by the bride being presented with a gold chain a yard long, a cheque for two hundred dollars, and a basket of flowers, with the inscription: "May your shadow never grow less!"

ETIQUETTE in Tunis requires that the man who is to succeed the ruler should be completely ignored. No minister or state officer could visit him or communicate with him without running the risk of losing his office or of being exiled. Even the representatives of foreign governments may not visit the heir, and personally he is quite unknown to them. For a native to show him any mark of attention would be high treason, and such act by a foreign consul would be regarded as evincing a want of respect for the bey, every manifestation of regard for the heir being tantamount to an intentional allusion to the transitory power of the regent and to his eventual death.

AN eminent special pleader was at the theatre, seeing the play of "Macbeth." In the scene where Macbeth, questioning the witches in the cavern, says, "What is't you do?" they answer, "A deed without a name." This phrase struck the ears of the special pleader much more forcibly than the most energetic passage of the play, and he immediately remarked to a friend, "Why, then, it's void."

A PRYING sort of an individual has discovered that the oyster has a trunk. Such a receptacle may be necessary from the fact that the oyster spends the summer by the seaside; but if the bivalve wants to put on as many airs as the fashionable young lady, it must also have a big band-box and a pug-dog.

A PENNSYLVANIA inventor has evolved a new rat-trap, in one end of which is a mirror. This may do for the female rats, says an American editor noted for his convivial habits, but when a male rat notices that the bait looks double, he will think he has had enough and go home.

"I AIM to tell the truth." "Yes," interrupted an acquaintance, "and you are probably the worst shot in England."

WHERE should we look for exacting men? As a general thing, retired actors are ex-acting men.

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# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 123.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## The Sorrowful Sisters.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

ONE spring morning, many years ago, I sat alone in a railway-carriage, about to make my first essay at independence. My sister stood at the window waiting to say farewell at the last moment.

A porter came along, closing the doors. On hearing his "Now, ladies," quite near, she kissed me, and said anxiously:

"If you are not quite happy, be sure and come back."

"Yes, Helen—come home again," said my aunt.

I looked at them as cheerfully as I could, intending to assure them that I should be happy, but my heart sank a little as I lost sight of their dear faces, and felt that I was really starting on a life without them.

My father had been dead six months, my mother many years. As there was no provision for my sister and myself, we went at his death to his sister; but our aunt was a widow, and not wealthy, and it would have been a tax upon her to provide for us both. So I determined to earn my own living.

It was reasonable that my sister should remain with her, because a companion would add to her comfort, but I was simply an encumbrance.

Being weak in music and languages, I determined not to try to be a governess, and gladly accepted a situation brought to my notice by a friend, and was now on my way to become assistant to some middle-aged sisters, who kept a Berlin-wool and fancy shop in a country village. And I was resolved to give them satisfaction, if it was possible to do so by any amount of willingness and patience.

At the country station I got into an omnibus that in about ten minutes put me and my luggage down at the private door of The Bazaar, as the Misses Baxters' shop was called. The door was opened by a scared-looking woman with a black bonnet on, who, without a word, ran away, leaving me standing in the little passage.

Presently a tall stern-looking woman came towards me, saying in a hard voice:

"So you are come, Miss Raymond; I hope you had a pleasant journey. Come upstairs, you may like to wash your hands; dinner will soon be ready."

"Nurse Hamlen," she continued, turning to the person who seemed to me unmistakably a charwoman, "bring up Miss Raymond's boxes shortly."

Near the top of the stairs we turned off into a room over the kitchen that was to be mine. It was clean and neat, and I saw with delight that the window was at the end, and looked over gardens and country.

"It is a comfortable room," said my companion severely, as if I were making complaint.

"Yes," I said; "the view is very pretty."

"Oh, the view is very well," she said with contempt; "I was thinking of the bed and the carpet. I am not sentimental."

"It is very nice, thank you," I answered, trying to rally my failing courage.

"That is well; for I do not see my way to make it better. It is well to begin as we mean to go on, and I am afraid you may have to conform to many things that you are not accustomed to."

I felt her speech a little hard, but replied quietly:

"I will do the best I can."

"No one can do more. Come down when you are ready;" and she left me.

I went to the window to look at the blossoming trees, but the tears were gathering, so I could see but a confused mass of colours, and I made haste to put aside hat and mantle, and bathe my eyes. I had much ado to keep from breaking down, but I managed to enter the parlour with a fair show of composure.

It was a pleasant room, with large French-windows opening into the garden. The light paper on the walls, the light carpet gay with small flowers of many colours, and the very white curtains, made it bright and cheerful. A glass door covered with white muslin and opening into the shop moved as I entered, and a gentle-looking lady came in. She was so many years younger than Miss Baxter that it did not occur to me that she was that lady's sister.

"Good-morning, Miss Raymond," she said in a subdued voice which seemed to me to have a strain of sadness in it, and offering her hand. "I am very glad to see you. I hope we shall be able to make you comfortable."

I was pleased with her at once.

"I am sure you will," I replied confidently, "but I know nothing."

"Oh, Miss Baxter will teach you; she is very clever. I am very slow to learn, but she taught me." Then seeing a look of enquiry and surprise on my face, she said: "My sister, I mean; I am Susan Baxter."

"Oh!" was my foolish exclamation.

"You must want your dinner," she continued; "sit down."

I sat down, so did she, but there was still an empty place.

Observing that I noticed it, she said: "My sister and I do not dine together;" then, with a hesitation that struck me as odd, she added: "There are the customers, you know," and looking at her I saw a blush upon her fair face, and a confusion that made me feel that she was hiding something from me, and was a little ashamed. I looked down demurely into the plate which had just been placed before me, and continued steadily eating my dinner. My plate was emptied and filled again, and still no word was spoken. I began to think that I had come among strange people, but I was so anxious not to give offence lest I should be sent back to my aunt, that I determined to watch and wait, and try to understand them, if need be, in unbroken silence.

When the strange-looking woman had left the room after placing the pudding upon the table, Miss Susan said:

"Nurse Hamlen keeps her bonnet on because she has no cap with her, as she does not generally stay over dinner; but it was such a nice hot joint, it seemed a pity she shouldn't have some."

"You are very kind," I replied.

"Oh no," she said deprecatingly; "but it is very late, we have been slow to-day. I must go," and she passed through the curtained door.

Then Miss Baxter came in, and I was reminded of the two figures on old-fashioned cuckoo-clocks, where one comes out always when the other goes in, and I subsequently found that that was exactly the practice of the sisters, who were never in the parlour together, and in the shop stood at different counters.

Miss Baxter sat down to her dinner in silence, but presently, noticing me apparently by accident, she said:

"It is dull work watching another person eat. Would you like to walk in the garden? I shall be ready for you in a quarter of an hour. You can go out by that door."

"Thank you," I said, and after a little difficulty in opening one side of the French-window, I found myself in the strange garden, "all alone by myself," as the children say, and very happy to be so.

It was a narrow, but very long strip of ground, well cultivated, and gay with laburnums, lilac, and gualder roses. I loved it at once, and in all the time that came after, when I was oppressed by the strangeness and silence indoors, if I could get out into the garden I was happy and light-hearted.

Punctually to the moment as the quarter of an hour was over I stepped in at the glass door. Miss Baxter was just rising from the table.

"I am glad to see that you have some idea of time, Miss Raymond," she said in her cold, hard voice; "nothing is to be done without punctuality, and system, and order. I endeavour to have everything carried on in the strictest regularity, and I think that I succeed."

"No doubt," I assented.

"A resolute will always must succeed."

I answered nothing, because I did not know what to say.

"Come," she continued, "I can give you a little instruction now; it is the dinner-hour for many of our customers, so there is not much doing."

I followed her into the shop, feeling a little bewildered at entering one that way, and when I stood behind the counter, it seemed to me that I had got there by mistake. Miss Baxter gave me a paper on which were the private marks side by side with the figures they were meant to indicate. She showed me the contents of a few drawers, just pointed out that a sort of great bookcase behind me was full of fancy articles, and then was obliged to leave me to attend to a customer, and I had opportunity to observe the sisters critically.

It was a double-fronted shop, and at the opposite counter, with another great bookcase behind her, stood Miss Susan, helping a lady to choose wools. I noticed the rich amber tints of her wavy hair, the delicate pinkish white of her forehead, the pretty curve of the eyebrows; her nose was good, her mouth small, her chin was round, and it seemed to me that if she really laughed, there would be dimples in chin and cheeks. It was a very gentle face, but curiously sad. As she talked to the lady, who seemed very friendly with her, it brightened a little, and I thought how sweetly pretty she would be if she were only cheerful. She was of medium height, with a shapely figure, nicely rounded, and small, plump, white hands.

I looked at Miss Baxter, she was assisting a lady to choose silks, but she would not let her have the ones she desired; she insisted

upon her having a better match, and took much trouble to get it. Even with her customers she was masterful. Her face never changed or softened; it was always composed and stern. Repellent its expression seemed to me, it was so fixed and hard, and the lips closed so firmly after speaking. Yet I was forced to admit that under other conditions she would be a handsome woman. All her features were good. She held her head well up, and it was fairly shaped, but her complexion was pallid, her hair a harsh iron-grey, her face painfully thin, as were her long hands. She was tall, and her figure seemed as little capable of yielding as her face. There were no soft curves; but a demonstrative gauntness that forced itself upon one's attention. Her dress was dark, and straight, and plain to ugliness, and she wore a net cap as neat as that of a Quakeress.

As I watched her I noticed how quick she was without the least appearance of hurry, how readily she understood the complicated wants of her customer, and with what tact she led the lady's uncertain mind to a decision.

"Shall I ever be so clever a woman of business?" I thought sadly, when a bright young girl said, "Show me some silks, please," and when I made excuse and said I was a stranger, said again, "Show me that drawer; I know the price myself;" and as I let her point out what she wanted, she whispered: "I am so glad you served me; she," meaning Miss Baxter, "is so grim and severe that I scarcely seem to have a will of my own with her, and the fun of shopping is following one's own vagaries." She looked at me with a face all smiles.

Miss Baxter, free of the lady, came to attend on my customer; at once she was sedate and serious, and as I moved away, gave me a glance that seemed to say: "See how I am instantly extinguished." And soon I learned that where Miss Baxter came laughter and cheerful speaking ceased. Mirth vanished and minds took a sombre mood in her solemn presence. She walked the world a depressing influence. I do not think that she was conscious of this. She looked like a woman with a lifelong sorrow, and possibly she had forgotten that happiness existed.

Miss Susan and I took tea together. Once during the meal, she said:

"I hope you will not feel dull, but I have lost the habit of talking. I don't seem to have anything to say."

"I am not dull," I answered; "everything is so novel that I have plenty to think of."

"I am glad of it," she said kindly. "Store up plenty to think of for the winter, it is dreadfully dull then."

"That is very far off," I replied.

"Yes, the days creep, but the months fly. I have cried for the dullness. You do not know what it is in the long evenings, and no one coming to the shop, no one to speak to."

"Never any visitors?" I said.

"Never; my sister and I have lived alone for nearly twenty years, and she never speaks to me."

Again was there the crimson, guilty blush in her sad face, and she said no word more.

Miss Baxter came into the room, and Miss Susan left it. I followed her, and stood behind her counter with her.

"Go over to your place," she said nervously; "she may not like it."

"But you can teach me as well as she can," I urged.

"No; she is mistress here, do just as she wishes——"

"Do you not wish the same?" I asked.

"I have no wishes but hers now. Go." And there was such plaintive sadness in her voice that I went at once, lest I should vex her, wondering what singular wishes she had had in the past, that were hers only, and not her sister's.

When the shutters had been put up by an old man who came for the purpose, and the shop goods covered, Miss Susan and I had supper together; Miss Baxter, meanwhile, being busy entering accounts, and making up the day's takings. Then as she sat down to her supper, and I said good-night, Miss Susan said to me that she would go to bed too, for she was tired, and, as she turned away without a word, I saw a sad look pass between the sisters, and a little sigh escaped from Miss Susan. I glanced at Miss Baxter; she was more rigid and severe than usual.

#### CHAPTER II.

SUNDAY came; one sister went to church in the morning, the other in the evening, I went both times. I was surprised to find that Miss Baxter had dined when Miss Susan and I returned.

The following Sunday Miss Baxter and I went to church, and Miss Susan had dined when we returned, and then I understood that, for some reason or other, the sisters never sat down to table together. Each in turn, for a week, was my companion at meals. In time Miss Susan got into the habit of saying a little to me, and I told her little things to amuse her, but Miss Baxter never said an

unnecessary word, and there was something about her that forbade my speaking to her, except upon business.

In a couple of months I had a fair knowledge of my new employment; it was easy to learn, for Miss Baxter gave information very clearly, but she expressed herself pleased with my progress, and Miss Susan told me that she was sure her sister liked me.

"I see it in her eyes," she said. "If only she would look at me as kindly as she does at you, how happy it would make me!"

"Can nothing be done?" I asked. "Speak to her, say that you feel her coldness."

"Oh no, I cannot; it is right, it is just, but I feel it so cruelly sometimes. Oh, I wish I might tell you, it would ease my heart."

"Do, your confidence will be safe with me," I said.

Miss Baxter came in at the moment, Miss Susan rose trembling. She did not lift her eyes, but her sister looked at her with stern condemnation. When she was in the shop I said:

"Tell me all, it will ease you."

"Do not tempt me," she said with piteous pleading.

And I withdrew to my own counter, indignant with Miss Baxter, and feeling, with all my pity for Miss Susan, a little contempt for her excessive submissiveness.

That evening, when Miss Susan and I had about finished supper, the curtained door into the shop opened, and Miss Baxter stood before us, but not in our room, just a step from the doorway.

"Miss Raymond," she said, "you have been with us some months, and have merited our respect and good opinion. I believe some of our proceedings have surprised you, and I think it right, for many reasons, that you should have an explanation of them."

I thought at once that she had overheard her sister's words in the morning.

"I speak in confidence," she continued. "My sister will hear me, and if I say aught in error she can tell it you correctly. Twenty years ago somebody loved me."

The mournful pathos in her words surprised me, and I think it struck upon her own heart too, for in a hard tone she continued:

"Even then my sister and I were two lone women, for we had no men kindred. She was younger than myself, and I looked upon her as my charge. She came home from boarding-school, and when I introduced her to my promised husband, she wiled his love away from me with her soft prettiness and beguiling ways."

"Miss Raymond," said the younger sister, "I did not know that they were actually engaged."

"She knew, Miss Raymond, that we loved each other, and in her pride and belief in the power of her own fascinations, she wilfully endeavoured to win his heart from me. She knows this is so."

"Miss Raymond," said Miss Susan, "it is true. I was vain and foolish, and as I look back, I believe heartless too."

"I learnt her treachery," continued Miss Baxter, "and I made a vow that I would not speak with her as a sister or friend, or sit at table with her so long as I lived, but as the words passed my lips my mind limited the period, and I hold myself bound only to that limitation. Then she was sorry for her evil-doing, dismissed the false lover, and would have left me had I wished it, for she knew there could be little happiness for us together; but people should not evade the consequences of their conduct, but bear them humbly. And we were not cowards, so we have lived on as you have seen, apart yet together, solitary but not asunder. And so we shall continue to do until the end. We must not complain of a burden we have laid upon ourselves. I have spoken that Miss Susan may feel free to accept the comfort of your sympathy, and I believe that you will respect the secret of two unhappy women."

"Certainly I will," I answered, and Miss Baxter went back to her accounts.

Miss Susan was crying softly. I went to her.

"You can tell me anything now," I said, gently stroking her pretty hair.

"He did love me," she said, "and he was so handsome, but it is true. I tried to make him notice me in the beginning. I was piqued that he should think so much more of my old, dark sister than of me; but every moment of my wicked pleasure has been atoned for by days of grief. There must come a time when it may be forgotten, don't you think so?"

"Yes," I answered, "and wicked vows should be broken at once."

"I do not know," she said gravely. "A vow is an awful thing. I could not counsel her to break it. I would rather bear patiently the misery of it."

"I am sure it should be broken," I said confidently.

"Maybe, but everything is so clear to the young. When one is older, one is doubtful, uncertain, and one must not shrink from the burden one has put on one's own back."

"Your sister is so hard, so resolute," I said.

"Yes, but I was timid and afraid to stand alone, so I was glad to stay with her, and she is just, and has cared well for my interest; and to do her will in anything is the least I can do, for I have destroyed her happiness."

"And your own," I said. "But you are still gentle and pretty."

"I have no vow upon my soul," she said. "She is so terribly changed no one would know that thin old woman for the once handsome, proud Miss Baxter."

The curtained door moved, and Miss Susan went out of the parlour as her sister entered. How long is this farce to last? I asked myself in my impatience. But as I looked at Miss Baxter, and saw the great sorrow in her face, I felt that there was something solemn and terrible in the long drawn-out suffering, and the endurance and submission of these two women.

After this, Miss Susan gave me many little confidences. One day she noticed two women dressed exactly alike.

"Ah," she said with a little sigh, "that is how we used to be when we were sisters, but Miss Baxter, after that dreadful day, would not be like me in anything. She would have altered her name if she could, but she always wore dark ugly dresses, and left everything bright and pretty to me."

Another time she told me after a customer had left her:

"That lady, like me, is dependent upon her sister, but she is very mean to her; but mine is always very liberal to me. She gives me more money than I care to spend."

She told me also how her sister had sat up night after night with a neighbour, doing her work in the day as if she had slept as usual. That if she gave a subscription to a charity, Miss Baxter and Miss Susan Baxter were entered with the same sum to each name. And that a traveller told her that Miss Baxter said that they were partners with equal shares in the business.

"And I never had anything," she added pathetically. "All the money was hers."

"She is very kind," I assented.

"She is nobly generous," she said eagerly, "and yet she hates me, and will not let her hatred die."

"You let yourself imagine foolish things," I urged, for I had grown very familiar with her of late.

"You never saw hatred of you in a human face," she answered.

"I have. It flashed upon me from her once, and I thought it was killing me. I see a glimmer of it sometimes when she looks at me, and I tremble; and, yesterday, when I had not left the room quickly enough, her dress touched mine—only her dress—and she drew back from me as if I were a scorpion," and she began to cry.

"It is your fancy," I said, and tried to comfort her.

"No," she said with her gentle persistence, "you do not understand her, she never forgets."

"But she forgives."

"Child," she said impressively, "there is little consolation for the sinner in a forgiveness that does not forget."

The summer passed. Perhaps during all these months I should have been oppressed by the sorrow in the house, but that I had a special happiness of my own. Twice a week letters came to me which I read in the solitude of the garden. They were letters from one I loved, and who loved me, telling me of his doings and hopes and thoughts, and making my heart joyful. Once as I was walking in the twilight, thinking of his goodness and the bright future he was making for me, the possibility of my ever losing his love occurred to me, and in the sadness that came over me at the thought, I felt a deep compassion for the two women who had lost their lover. And as I sat at supper with Miss Baxter a few minutes later, looking at her with new interest and understanding, she said:

"You look sorry for me, Miss Raymond."

"I am indeed," I answered.

"Thank you. You are engaged; be advised by me, and let everyone know. It keeps people from temptation; they fall so easily, and are so subtle at finding excuses for themselves. Let us make the way clear for those we love as far as we can. And keep yourself from the bitter bondage of a vow; it is an awful tyranny. You are a good girl, and I wish you well."

I went to my room more depressed than I had ever been since coming under that roof, but I took out one of my letters, and its honest, hopeful spirit cheered me, and banished my foolish fancies and apprehensions.

A few weeks later Miss Susan, attending to her flowers after dark, when an east wind was blowing, took a chill, and was confined to her room for a few days with a slight attack of bronchitis. She was a little frightened; neither she nor her sister had suffered from anything but a cold for more than twenty years. Nurse Hamlen came to stay in the house altogether, and I saw her without her bonnet for the first time. I then learnt that Hamlen was not at present her name, and that it was twelve years since she had been nurse to the doctor's children; that Miss Baxter had not approved of

her marriage, and had always ignored it, and called her by her old name; that the woman's husband had turned out a most undesirable acquisition; and that she would have had a good chance of starving if Miss Baxter had ceased to befriend her. She had a wondering admiration for that lady's sagacity in having so truly prophesied her misfortune in marriage, and a grateful willingness to do anything to please her, but she was an incapable sort of person, such as I felt sure Miss Baxter could only employ out of kindness.

Mindful of her shortcomings, that lady asked me to superintend matters in her sister's room. She never even came to the door herself, but she was anxious about her, I knew, by the wistful look in her face when I came from the invalid, and I always gave my report without being asked any question.

One morning, as she looked over one of my bills to see if the addition was correct, as was the custom when the amount was large, she said:

"You have mistaken the date, it is the 17th."

I showed her an almanack, it was the 16th.

"Then I have one day more to wait," she muttered with a little sigh. It was a new thing for her to sigh, and I thought she was getting strangely softened.

Miss Susan looked very pale and thin when she came downstairs, and I designedly wrapped a pink shawl around her to heighten the delicacy of her appearance, hoping that it might touch Miss Baxter's heart, and move her to be friendly with her sister. I noticed that she was a little startled, and I heard her mutter, "She is almost as pretty as ever," but she turned away to her employment without a word of greeting.

I saw the pain in Miss Susan's face, and passed over to her to say something kind, but I think she saw the indignation in mine, for she said with a little blush:

"As we sow, we must reap;" and I kissed her and was silent.

### CHAPTER III.

It was autumn, and there was but little business after dark, so sometimes of an evening I read a little of the county paper to Miss Susan, while Miss Baxter was occupied in the shop. Once I was reading an account of a burglary at the house of Mr. Bailey, of Burton. His courage and prowess in defending his house and himself against two ruffians was greatly extolled. And, looking up, I observed great interest and excitement on Miss Susan's face. And as I read out further particulars, I was conscious that Miss Baxter was standing a few paces from the door, listening. I glanced at her, and saw a look of approval in her face, and I guessed at once that the John Bailey I had been reading about was the man who had been so cruel to them both.

Miss Baxter understood my thought, and said:

"Yes, Miss Raymond, John Bailey was always brave physically, but timid in mind."

"He was brave every way," said Miss Susan as her sister turned away. "He would have dared anything for me, but I could not marry the man who ought to have been my sister's husband."

"Of course not," I assented.

"But I am thankful he is not much injured. He is not fifty, and that would be so young to die."

A few days later we read that he had walked to the court to give evidence against the men, so could not have much the matter with him.

Miss Susan took advantage of her recent indisposition to go to bed early, and thus escape the dull, silent evenings.

Miss Baxter and I had been sitting together for an hour without speaking, when she startled me from a happy reverie by saying:

"I believe she still thinks of that man."

"He is probably married," I said, bringing my mind from my sweet fancies as quickly as I could.

"Not he; he told me I had prevented him from ever thinking of women again."

"But he may have changed his views."

"He meant what he said," she answered decidedly. "He is steadfast and stable by nature. To make the one change must have been difficult to him, and will suffice for his life."

I went back to the picture my true-love's words had raised in my mind of the home he was preparing for me across the seas, and again her solemn voice, full of an abiding sorrow, recalled me to the present:

"The days have never passed so slowly. Time moves indeed with heavy, halting feet, as though so weary that he will move no more, and the final pause be come."

"Do you mean death?" I asked.

"I hope not," she replied sadly. "I ought not to trouble you

with my sorrow, but sometimes the heart will speak out of its own bitterness. Good-night."

As I went away, I heard her say to herself: "If only the days would pass!"

After this I observed how very worn and thin she was, and how an eager, restless anxiety alternated with her usual calm composure. It came upon her as soon as she was unoccupied for a few minutes, and flushed her cheeks, and made her eyes glitter. Her hair was much whiter than it had been when I came in the spring, and her eyes were sunken, with a great darkness beneath them.

Miss Susan said to me:

"My sister looks ill"—she had ceased to call her Miss Baxter to me—"and so old. She gave me a kind look yesterday with so much pity in it. You noticed," she continued, touching my hand, "that she said her vow had a limit. Can it be that it is near?"

"Ask her," I suggested.

"You do not know her," she replied, "or you would not say that. Perhaps she would have to renew it, if it were broken. She was always hard upon herself, poor sister."

"And harder upon others," I thought. But I would say no word that might possibly widen the breach between the sisters. I had come to esteem them both; they were both good to me.

As the last days of the month passed, Miss Baxter looked still more haggard and anxious, and Miss Susan took to shedding a few tears at odd moments.

I could but notice how pretty and young she looked now that she was thinner through her illness, and her delicate fair complexion was shown up by the colour of dress and ribbon I carefully selected for her.

Grief made ugly marks upon her face, although she was truly sorrowing, nor did it dim the beauty of her wavy auburn hair. And when I asked her why she was extra sad, she answered:

"It was about this time all the trouble happened, and sometimes I think it is coming to the end of her vow. That possibility has made me nervous, and made me feel more near to the past than in other years."

On the 31st of October, Miss Susan and I had just sat down to supper when the curtained door leading from the shop was opened, and Miss Baxter, coming in, took the place made ready for her at the table, saying in a quiet voice of intense emotion:

"I am come to take supper with you."

"I am very glad," I said quickly.

"Susan, do you give me no welcome?"

"I am thankful," she answered, putting out a hand that trembled.

Miss Baxter grasped it, saying:

"Sister, I am very sorry for my wicked vow, and all the grievous consequences it has brought upon you. I repent the making it, and I ask you to forgive me."

"Do not say that," said Miss Susan, putting up her hands as if to banish even the thought. "It is I who am to be forgiven. Forgive me, and let us be friends, sisters, once more."

The tears rained down her face.

"We will be friends, and we will forgive each other." And kissing her sister, she said: "If only we could forget!" and the despairing sorrow of that wish lingers with me yet.

We tried to eat; we tried to seem as if it was our usual custom to sit happily at table together. I ventured to make a remark, but no one noticed it, and my voice sounded so strange to myself and the words so out of place, that I felt a little ashamed, and in silence we continued our pretence of supping.

Miss Susan's tears flowed quietly, in spite of her efforts to stop them. Miss Baxter slowly and resolutely ate some food, trying not to look at her sister, not to hear her subdued sobs.

I was conscious of the great effort it was to her to repress her impatience and irritation at the persistent weeping, and I was oppressed by the emotion and excitement of the moment.

"Susan," she cried at last, with incisive voice, "cease your crying, for Heaven's sake; your tears reproach me too bitterly. The past is gone; we have no power over it; we could not change it if we gave our life to do so; but the present is ours; we can make of it what we will. I would make it very happy for you; I would give you affection, tenderness, pleasure; I would make your days bright and cheerful, so that a sweet joy and content should grow up in your heart, and banish the memory of the evil that has befallen us. I have resolved and prayed to do this, and you meet me with weak tears."

"Sister," said Miss Susan, and her soft eyes were very earnest, and her tears were stayed at last, "bear with me. I was always weak. I am grieving for my own acts, not in reproach for yours. You have been good to me through all. I will help you to live as sisters should."

"Try hard," said Miss Baxter. "If I see but one smile on your face I shall have faith in your endeavour."

Miss Susan smiled feebly, and an answering brightness in her sister's face revealed to me a depth of love in her nature that reminded me of a fertilising spring breaking from rock-bound earth.

"I take that as an earnest of our coming happiness, Susan, and we must remember that the habit of years cannot be broken through in a day. We must learn to converse with each other, and be intimate as sisters. The familiarity and companionship that come by instinct have so long been laid aside. But we shall regain all, Susie, and in a greater measure, if we truly forgive each other. God bless you; good-night!" And kissing her sister, she moved to leave us. Passing me, she said: "I leave her in your charge. You will soothe her best. I am too strong and too hard, as in the old days."

I took Miss Susan to her room and petted her, as her sister could not have done even if it had been the only way of bringing her back to happiness.

She was soon quite composed, and very thankful that the reconciliation had come, and spoke hopefully of the future. Then her face was overcast again, and in answer to my enquiring look she said:

"My evil-doing looks blacker than ever now. But for that my sister would now be a happy wife and mother."

"Forget the past," I urged; "that is what she wishes, and it is the kindest thing you can do for her."

"I will try," she answered; "but I have not a strong will that can say to my mind, 'Think not of that,' and be obeyed."

I went down to Miss Baxter, she was still standing at a counter looking over a book of accounts.

"Your sister is quite calm, and you have made her very happy," I said.

"Yes, and I have just been looking over figures, and find that we have prospered so well that my sister has a nice little sum of money of her own if she should marry. Do you think that she is too old, Miss Raymond—you are a better judge than I?"

"No," I replied; "she is so fair and pretty."

"And she is clinging and constant, and fit for a life of dependence. Thank you, Miss Raymond. Good-night."

It took some time for the sisters to get accustomed to the new relations between them. It was difficult for people who had not spoken together for twenty years to get into a habit of conversing, and Miss Baxter was a woman who at all times found it hard to speak unless she really had something definite to say, so that occasionally in the autumn evenings we were together for an hour at a time in absolute silence.

The little things that Miss Susan and I could gossip about seemed too trivial to mention in Miss Baxter's presence. She got an inkling of this, and left us more to ourselves, saying that the most lasting friendships were formed between people of divergent tastes, but I think she felt that a certain sternness in herself isolated her from others, and that she would have been glad to be softer and more genial to her sister if she had been able.

It was her custom to make occasional visits to the county town, and even to London to look out for novelties for The Bazaar. One evening she returned from one of these visits much later than usual. "I called upon an old friend," she said in explanation, and the effects of the long years of estrangement were still so powerful over Miss Susan that she never asked on whom.

Half an hour later, as we sat at interminable rug-work, Miss Baxter came in and said:

"Susan, I called at John Bailey's house, and was shown up into a room where he sat eating walnuts and drinking wine at five o'clock in the afternoon, looking quite happy and satisfied with himself. I knew when I saw him drinking wine alone at that hour, that he could not be the John Bailey that I had believed him to be."

I looked at her, standing tall and stern, with a contempt for the solitary wine-drinker in mien and heart, and I understood that, absurd and illogical as the inference might be, his apparent easy enjoyment of the moment, and his early freedom from business, had led her to believe him self-indulgent, and deficient in the energy and earnestness of character which to her were the salt of life.

"And he is not," she continued emphatically. "I gazed at him with scrutiny. There is no power, no ambition, no deep thought in his face, only kindness and benevolence. He is not the man I loved. I made myself an idol and worshipped it, and I thought it was John Bailey. But though he will never be a great man, he is honest and true. When I said to him, 'John Bailey, I am come to say that I forgive you,' he cried out, 'You never mean to say you bore a grudge against me all these years. And that poor thing, your sister, surely you forgave her and were friends!'"

"After twenty years?" I replied.

"His great red face went white."

"You were harder even than I thought," he said. "Cruel woman! is she dead?"

"No," I answered; "she is well and fairly happy; that is her address. Good evening," and I put out my hand.

"Excuse my rudeness," he said eagerly.  
 "I do not mind it," I replied, and came away."

Miss Baxter was perfectly calm as she spoke, but many emotions passed over Miss Susan's face as she listened.

A week later a burly, good-natured man came to the house, and asked for Miss Susan Baxter. I opened the door and showed him into the sitting-room. He seemed so much too big for it that I bethought me to ask him to step into the garden, where Miss Susan was taking a little walk in the midday sunshine.

The two got on so well together that both returned to the house with smiling faces.

He came once a week for some time, and in the spring there was a quiet wedding. And afterwards Miss Baxter and I lived together happily for several years, for the home for me over the seas was longer in making than was expected.

## My Fairest Maid.

TELL me, ye birds, have ye my mistress seen—  
 My lovely Kate, 'mongst other maids a queen?  
 Thus may ye know  
 Where she doth go;  
 When her sweet voice she mingles with her lute,  
 The envious warblers of the grove are mute.  
 Still, must I roam, my wish unsatisfied?  
 Ye flowers, have ye my darling Kate espied?  
 Thus may ye tell  
 Her I love well;  
 None care to view your beauties when she's near,  
 Your fairest blossoms but as weeds appear.  
 Tell me, ye maids, who trip along the mead,  
 Have ye seen her I love in very deed?  
 Nay, nay; a truce  
 To vain excuse,  
 For by this token you may know my queen,  
 The fairest maid is she the world has seen.

## Snowdon House.

(A SHORT SERIAL STORY.)

### PART I.

PROBABLY most of our readers know where lies the town of Bridgeley, even if they have never visited it. In the event of a few not being so well informed, we will just mention that its population is between ten and sixty thousand, and that it lies between the belt or zone comprised between ten and sixty miles from London.

It is not very many years since the town of Bridgeley began to assume the character of a manufacturing town—only to some extent, however, for it was never given up to tall chimneys, clouds of smoke, barren wastes, grimy canals, and piles of slag. All these pleasant accessories, however, were predicted as being of certain and speedy arrival when Shale and Co.'s ironworks were established in the suburbs, and a ruinous depreciation of all Bridgeley property was confidently expected also.

However, the beauty of the country around Bridgeley still survives, and we know that no softer, pleasanter meadows, no greener hedgerows, no statelier elms can be found than are within a mile or two of the town. Yet it cannot be denied that in the suburb of Bull's Mead a good deal of disfigurement did ensue, and that the rents of the villas and farms just about there did fall considerably. But on the other hand, the receipts became much more considerable from that part of the district where the works stood, and where two or three straight streets of monotonous cottages were built also, with the two public-houses, the grocer's, and so forth.

The town itself quickly seemed disposed to stretch out its hand to grasp that of this new neighbour, for on both sides of the road leading to the river at Shaletown—the new name of Bull's Mead—there began to rise up a number of new houses, more being built in one year after the opening of the works than had been built in Bridgeley during any previous seven years; and so, on the whole, no great damage was done to the town.

Nevertheless, as we have admitted, some parts suffered, and rents fell, and this was the case with Snowdon House. This had been a farmhouse, but part of the estate had been sold for the factory site, part for the cottages, while the portion which was left, although extensive enough for some purposes, was not large enough for a farm of its former type, and, indeed, its new surroundings also spoilt it for this purpose. Yet, as no immediate demand was likely to be made in its direction for building, it was advertised as a villa and

pleasure-farm, its name changed from Gribblings's Farm to Snowdon House, the extreme beauty of the adjacent country brought prominently forward, its convenient proximity to the rising town of Bridgeley dwelt upon, as well as the fact that two packs of hounds were within reach, as little said about the ironworks as possible, and a low rent asked for all these advantages.

Several persons came from London, attracted by the advertisement, and more than one rich manufacturer or ironmaster from the Black Country, but the unlucky ironworks sent them all away. Of the two classes, the midland counties people were, perhaps, the more disgusted, telling the agent that if they had wanted a place of that kind, they could have had the real article without stirring from their own doors.

At any rate, Snowdon House remained unlet for more than a year, and its grounds, although defended by various notice-boards, and stout hedges to boot, were often intruded upon by factory hands, their wives and children, for even in its neglected gardens there was a tolerable assortment of fruit-trees and fruit-bushes.

The owner was an invalid, living abroad, so that the disposal of the estate was almost entirely in the hands of Mr. Dockle, the agent, and this gentleman, disgusted with his want of success, began seriously to contemplate throwing the meadows and grounds still left into allotment plots of a quarter of an acre each, which he knew were high in favour with the factory hands and with many of the townspeople also, and were, besides, not easily obtainable.

But while he was debating this step, another intending customer presented himself. This was a gentleman from London, a Mr. Luke Wayre, who wanted such a place for pleasure, not for profit; who liked the country around; and who cared not what his neighbours were, so that he was quiet and retired. The situation of Snowdon House, lying back a quarter of a mile from the little-frequented road, and accessible only through its own grounds, gave fair promise of these latter advantages. He saw the gloomy old house, which was large, certainly, but old, flat, and ugly, and made no objection to it.

In brief, Mr. Wayre became the tenant. He sent in a man and his wife, who appeared to have been in his service previously, engaged a young girl to act under them, on the recommendation of the agent, and said he should come down himself as soon as a few indispensable repairs were completed; and he kept his word.

He came down very quietly; indeed, he had no acquaintances in the town but the agent referred to, and seemed to desire none, for Mr. Dockle's attempts at introducing a friend or two were received in anything but a favourable manner. In accordance with his expressed resolve, the new tenant made a beginning of what was intended to be a dairy and poultry farm. A few cows and pigs were bought, a good many fowls and ducks, while Ezra Crake and his wife—the couple mentioned as having been sent on by Mr. Wayre—were installed in a roomy cottage at the gate, and had superintendence of the labourers who were employed in this experiment.

Mr. Wayre had no experience in such matters. He was rich, apparently, and took pleasure, or sought to find it, in a new way of life. He had hitherto lived in large towns—so much he said readily, but as to what those towns were, or what his life had been, Mr. Dockle could gain no hint. Ezra, the manager, described his master, when he spoke of him, which was not often, as not possessing the temper to be closely questioned with safety. If he wanted a thing, he would have it, and never cared what the expense was; if he wanted his own way—and he always did—he would have that too at any cost, and it had cost him a good deal before now, Ezra said, but would say no more.

The reader sees what sort of a farmer Mr. Wayre was likely to make, and what his preparations were, but these preparations received a check. His health, which had been but indifferent from the first, became worse; he took less pleasure in watching the progress of his alterations and improvements; he had, perhaps, grown rather tired of his toy; and, to his great annoyance and actual injury, with the darker nights of autumn, the trespassing upon the grounds of Snowdon House revived.

The unruly "hands" from the works, and their still more unruly children, did not always wait for the night to set in. Wayre himself had seen them, by twos and threes, breaking through his hedges, climbing his trees, dropping from his walls, and trampling down his bushes. To these, doubtless, was due the stealing of eggs, and ducks, and chickens, which now began.

As Ezra had intimated, the temper of the tenant of Snowdon House was not exactly that which would put up tamely with this treatment, so the local police were "communicated with," to use their own favourite expression; fences were strengthened, railings added, walls heightened, and additional boards, still fiercer in their warnings, were placed around the demesne.

Once Mr. Wayre went so far as to arrest a suspected marauder, but this was a costly failure; identification failed, the accused got off scot-free, and Mr. Wayre, under advice from his own solicitor,



paid the man twenty pounds as compensation. What was a worse consequence, the trespassing increased, and it seemed as though nothing would effectually check it.

This is a little in advance of our story, however, for while these things were being transacted, Mr. Wayre's health became worse, as has just been said, and it was desirable he should see a doctor. The agent, who, besides his solicitor, was almost the only person he knew in Bridgeley, recommended a very respectable physician of the town, and to him Mr. Wayre would doubtless have resorted, but that when he asked his manager, Ezra, if he knew anything of this gentleman, Ezra replied that he had a house in the best part of Bridgeley, and had married Mr. Dockle's sister.

Married Mr. Dockle's sister, had he? This was enough for the suspicious hypochondriac. The agent had been actuated by interested motives, then—was very likely to get a commission on the bill—he would have none of his recommendation.

"Who was the doctor that brought the action against the iron-works company the other day—one of their vans was driven against his horse, you know?" demanded the master.

"Dr. Fulham, of Back Market Street," replied the man; "he has only been here four or five years, and he—"

"Go and fetch him," interrupted Mr. Wayre; "tell him I want him at once—or, stay! Take the chaise, so that he can come back with you if he is at home."

Ezra knew his master too well to argue this or any other matter with him, so went at once, only pausing as he drove through the lodge-gates to say to his wife: "He," indicating whom he meant by a jerk of his head towards the house, "is going to have Dr. Fulham."

"Good job for Fulham too," responded his wife; "he won't have no call to buy half-shoulders o' mutton for Sundays now."

Ezra drove on, but this brief conversation will serve to show that the medical gentleman selected by Mr. Wayre, however skilful he might be, did not hold pre-eminent social rank in Bridgeley. He was, happily, at home and disengaged; indeed, Dr. Fulham's practice was so moderate in its extent, that he was too often at leisure, so he returned promptly with Ezra in the chaise.

Wayre was seated in his easy-chair, looking out of a window which commanded a far-stretching view, even to the hills in the neighbouring county, beyond which the sun had so recently disappeared that there was a faint golden glow in the sky behind them still; although closer at home, and under the influence of a large town, the sky was grey, and twilight seemed closing in. He heard the chaise draw up, but could not see it from where he sat; then the door of his room opened, and the doctor entered.

The penetrating glance with which Wayre greeted the new comer showed a thin, dark, keen-looking man, with well-brushed symmetrical whiskers, but otherwise closely shaven.

"I am glad he does not wear a moustache, that is something in his favour," thought Wayre, then added aloud, "Dr. Fulham, I presume?" and on receiving a reply in the affirmative, went on: "You are called in, doctor, to perform one of your usual impossibilities. A worn-out, broken-down man wants to be made young again. You have been asked to do as much many times, I doubt not."

The keen eyes of the doctor probably read the speaker accurately, and divined what sort of man he was, for he answered brusquely, and with little of the gentleness common to the profession. He asked various questions, and then said:

"Half your ailment, Mr. Wayre, is imaginary. Your mind is responsible, not your body. Rouse yourself more, go out more, take an interest in something, and you will be well. You want cheerfulness more than physic."

Wayre looked at him again very penetratingly while he said this, then broke into a smile as he returned:

"You are right, but you are the first doctor who ever said as much to me. I have tried to take an interest in this place. I thought I should like it, but its dullness has grown hateful to me. I thought I should take an interest in my farm, but it is less mine than others', for the marauding villains of the neighbourhood trespass and rob me every day."

"Factory people, I suppose?" asked Dr. Fulham. "I thought so. They are the bane of the place. I have had some trouble with them myself."

"I know it," said Wayre. "Then you will understand me that it is chiefly through these wretches that my strength has given way."

"Why do you not keep them out?" demanded the doctor. "I would stand none of their trespassing, I warrant you."

"Keep them out!" echoed the other. "I have tried everything in vain. I believe the policemen are bribed, or go shares in the pilfering. Perhaps, indeed, they do some of it themselves."

"Oh, the police are no good!" exclaimed Dr. Fulham. "They are not half sharp enough for such fellows as these."

"Then what am I to do?" naturally asked the patient, who had

perceptibly rallied from his languor, even in this short discussion. "I can keep the children out, and have done so, but what am I to do with systematic thieving?"

"Do!" repeated the doctor. "Why, get a dog—a couple of dogs if one is not enough. Let them be seen a bit, have them accidentally led through Shaletown just as the hands turn out, have them brought home that way. Then let it be known how savage they are—and they should be large and savage both—keep them confined all day, let them out of a night. Be careful that your walls and fences are sound, so that the animals cannot get over, and, take my word for it, you will have much less trouble with your trespassers."

"Egad, the very thing!" cried Mr. Wayre. "I am only sorry I never thought of it earlier. I wish it was possible to have tigers for the business; I would buy them. Now where can I get such dogs? Advertise, I suppose?"

"No, go to the regular men. Do you not know them?" said Fulham. "I do; shall I write about one?"

"I wish you would," replied Wayre. "Write to-night if you can. I shall be for ever obliged to you. Expense is no object. And, doctor, although I dare say you are right in saying my disease is half imaginary, yet I shall not feel safe if you do not come over every day for the present. I shall anxiously look forward to your visits."

It may easily be believed that a promise to this effect was given, and the doctor rose to depart. This, however, he was not suffered to do until he had partaken of a glass of wine with his patient. He certainly prolonged his visit considerably, allowed his patient to talk more than himself, and left him in far better spirits than he had found him.

Dr. Fulham's own spirits were equally improved by the visit, and in this result the old port had but a minor share. The doctor was poor and struggling, and, what was more, unlucky. It is very easy for those who are not in the struggle to say there is no such thing as luck; that every effect has a cause, and so on; but it will be found that few doctors, or lawyers, agree in this opinion.

We repeat that Dr. Fulham had been striving against adverse currents all his life; he was nearly beaten in the struggle, and doubted his ability to hold on much longer, even in his third-rate provincial practice; but now light seemed to break through the clouds, his luck was about to turn, for never before had he gained so important and profitable a patient as Mr. Wayre. Those keen eyes of his, perhaps, saw how such a man might be made more profitable yet.

He duly wrote to his dog-fancying agent in London, and duly attended Mr. Wayre on the next day at Snowdon House, to report progress, to take him his medicine—for, as the doctor candidly said, there was no particular hurry about that—to drink some more of the port, and to have a prolonged gossip with his patient.

On the next day he had the dog fancier's reply to take with him, and from this it appeared that Mr. Kennell—the name of the London tradesman—had such a dog for disposal, that if the creature only deserved half what his vendor said of him, Mr. Wayre might fairly banish all his regret at not being able to press tigers into his service.

The patient was delighted at this; he walked over his demesne with the doctor, which was a greater exertion than he had undertaken for weeks, arranged with him where the walls and fences should be repaired, and gave his new friend *carte blanche* to arrange all this; to the astonishment and chagrin of Ezra, when the latter came to know it. The manager's importance, and profit, possibly, were diminished by this, and his opinion of Dr. Fulham rose no higher in consequence.

During this promenade, and in their discussions within doors, especially over the wine, Dr. Fulham listened to his companion with such appreciative attention, and asked such judicious questions, that a third party, had one been present, might have thought he wished to lead him on. But on his past life Mr. Wayre was silent. He told the doctor, in tolerably plain language, that he was rich; that he was a widower, having lost his wife many years before; but this was about all, nor could the most dexterous questions draw him out further.

A night or two after this, Dr. Fulham was able to announce that the dog would be sent down the next day; he went over with the tidings, and so much improvement had his prescription, or his companionship, wrought in Mr. Wayre, that the latter gentleman actually drove him over to Bridgeley—no great distance, it is true—and was more than cheerful, quite hilarious, indeed, in his conversation.

Dr. Fulham always encouraged this certainly healthful sign, and while in the company of Mr. Wayre was as merry, allowing, of course, for professional decorum, as the tenant of Snowdon House himself, but this hilarity seldom lasted after he left that gentleman. On this particular night the change was very marked. After bidding Mr. Wayre good-night, and standing at his door, his face all wreathed in smiles, so long as the chaise and its driver were visible, he turned

into his sitting-room, and threw himself into his armchair with a widely different expression on his face. The keen eyes were thoughtful, the knitted brow was harsh, and for a long time he sat there alone, ruminating on some problem which was knotty and difficult.

At last his mind seemed made up; he straightened himself in his chair, muttered, "I will do it; it is worth the chance," then drawing writing materials to him, wrote hastily a letter. The result of all this cogitation was not by any means an extremely long epistle, nor was it written to any one who might be considered difficult to address, for it was directed, when finished, to his daughter—for the doctor was also a widower—Miss Agatha Fulham, who was at that time residing with her aunt at a village in Cheshire.

Not many days before the events just narrated, the level rays of the evening sun struck on the single street and scattered outlying houses of a small village in Cheshire, when a man, who was evidently loitering in expectancy at a spot a mile or so from the village—where the lonely cross-road sank in a deep hollow—climbed the slope on the nearer side, and, shading his eyes with his hand, looked in the direction of the houses. This he repeated, and on the second time he saw a female figure turn an angle of the road which led from the village. He lifted his hat by way of signal, and then descended into the hollow again.

The road here was lonely enough in itself, but from this hollow another road, which was a mere waggon-track leading to some farms, branched off through a number of scattered trees which here and there grew together, and made the spot more lonely and retired still. In this little grove the young man waited until a light step was heard, crackling as it came over the dead dry leaves which strewed the ground; then he came forward. It was, as he seemed to expect it would be, the figure he had seen in the distance.

No especial greeting took place, but side by side the pair walked to and fro in the grove.

"I feared you would not be able to come, Agatha," said the young man, "not that you are late, but I feared that some difficulty was in the way."

"Perhaps it would have been as well had it so happened," returned the girl in a low voice. "I need but a single glance, a single look from your eyes, to tell me that I shall not be the happier for our interview. Am I not right, Alfred?"

"Your foreboding is but too correct," returned the other, or Alfred; "my last chance is lost. Mr. George Clayter has absconded, and I am allowed to leave—so end all my hopes."

"But why—" began the girl, who stopped suddenly.

"Speak on, Agatha," said her companion; "I would have everything explained to-day. We meet by your own wish, you know."

"My own wish! Great Heaven!" exclaimed the girl, and as she spoke the tears which had been swimming in her eyes, trickled in large drops down her cheeks. She rallied for a moment, and went on: "Why should you leave because your employer's son has gone—you have done nothing wrong?"

"Nothing wrong in your eyes, my dear Agatha," returned the young man; "nothing wrong in my own; but I have joined Mr. George Clayter in undertakings that the law would deal with, and but for his father being the head of the firm, I should at this moment be in Chester Gaol."

The girl gave a low cry and a shudder at hearing this.

"I thought to benefit myself, of course, and enable us, Agatha, to— Well, that is too painful to be dwelt upon," continued Alfred. "Mr. George Clayter thought to make his fortune. There have been several flagrant cases of mercantile fraud lately, and we should suffer from the indignation aroused. I must leave England directly; that is the condition on which I am allowed to escape."

A pause took place before anything more was said. The girl was unrestrainedly weeping, while Alfred eyed her askance with an air which seemed to reflect trouble and vexation more than the grief under which she laboured.

"Could I not brave a foreign country as well as yourself?" she exclaimed suddenly, turning towards him with a burning face, and eyes for the moment dry. "Why could we not face fortune together? Have I shown faint-heartedness that you should fly from me when trouble comes?"

"Faint-hearted! I wish I had but your courage, Agatha!" returned the young man, and there was something in his tone which rang truer and firmer than any of his preceding speech had done; "I should perhaps have dared my fate more successfully then. But you do not know what you ask. I do not go to any certain living, to any settled home. My clearest idea is to make my way to the extreme West, either of Canada or of the United States, where I hope I may at least live for a while. Should this fail, I must try for some employment on board ship. I cannot—dare not—must not take you with me."

"So you have told me before," said the girl quietly; "I see now

that it is really true. I restore you the packet you sent me as your parting gift. I need no parting gift; I need nothing to remind me of this most unhappy passage in my life."

With this she offered a small packet, but the young man recoiled as if in terror at its sight.

"Unopened!" he cried. "You have not even seen its contents?"

"I did not wish to see them," returned the girl; "I want no parting gift, as I have said, and I cared not what the packet contained. It is yours."

"Keep it, Agatha! keep it!" he exclaimed with something almost approaching to a stifled cry; "you must; it is all I have left—all I can— There are fifty pounds in it, Agatha!" He grasped her hand as he said this, for the first time since their meeting. "I should not have given you any tawdry jewellery, or—"

"Were there fifty times fifty I should give them back to you, as I do now," said the girl; she still spoke calmly, but the slightest glance would have shown the effort by which she did so. "Alfred Dane, I will not accept your gift!"

"You are mad or bitterly cruel to reject it!" he returned; "and I beg—I implore you to keep it. Well, if you will not," he continued, in response to an angry gesture, "there is no help for it; but I dare not leave any address to which you could write should you alter your mind."

The girl laughed here for a brief instant; she had not even smiled since they met, and her laugh now was not a pleasant one.

"We may never meet again, Agatha," he resumed, after a pause which was probably painful to both parties; "I have to ask your forgiveness for all the pain and wretchedness I have caused you. Our fates have indeed been unhappy; mine not less painful, I am sure, than your own."

"Say no more, Alfred," replied the girl; "I know we do not meet again. Have you not told me so already? And I could not wish to renew such—"

She turned slightly from him, and pulled down her veil to hide her face. As she did so a distant clock chimed the hour.

"I must go at once," exclaimed Dane, as she had called him.

"Farewell, Agatha, if this our parting be for ever, try to forgive me when you think of me—at the worst, strive to think of me without bitterness. Good-bye."

He took her passive hand as he spoke, and tried to draw her to him; but she broke away, and through her choking tears, which even her thick veil could not conceal, said:

"No, do not by any pretence increase the agony which the remembrance of this night will bring. Farewell, Alfred, farewell for ever. You know, and I know but too well, that this is indeed a final separation. You say it is unavoidable, I feel that if you think so, so it must be. So it shall be. Farewell."

She moved from him, and, after pausing irresolute for an instant, the young man dashed off in the direction from which he had first come. As his retreating footsteps died away the girl leant against a tree, and for a few moments there were hysterical sobs and catches in her breath which seemed a prelude to a fiercer attack, but by a powerful effort she controlled herself, and walked steadily along the road until she reached the village, on the outskirts of which stood her home.

Miss Fulham, for it was she, looked anxiously at the house, with a relieved expression saw that none of its inmates were in sight, then hurried to a side-door and entered. She hastened to her own room, which she happily reached unnoticed. But scarcely had she taken off her bonnet, and bathed her swollen eyes and tear-stained cheeks, than a rap was heard at her door, and on her answering, the voice of Mary, the servant, was heard saying that Mrs. Gurdon wanted Miss Agatha.

"Tell Mrs. Gurdon that my head is so bad, I must really lie down for a short time," returned Agatha; "I will come down as soon as possible."

The servant departed with this message; Miss Fulham probably knew the temper of the person to whom it was to be delivered, for she at once darkened the chamber, and threw herself upon the bed. Scarcely had she done so when another tap was heard, and then Mrs. Gurdon—the mistress of the house, and Agatha's aunt—entered.

"What is the matter with you this evening, Agatha?" said the lady; "if your head is bad again, you must see Dr. Smith. For this last fortnight you have been fit for nothing; something is always the matter with you."

"I am very sorry; I know I have been of little use to you lately," returned the girl; "but I think I shall be well to-morrow."

"Well to-morrow!" echoed Mrs. Gurdon; "why, I can see even by this light that you look worse than ever. How can you be well to-morrow?"

"I feel I shall be so," answered Agatha; "the—the worst is past now."

"Well, I am sure I hope it has," said Mrs. Gurdon. "Here's a letter from your father, I suppose; I see the Bridgeley postmark on it." She threw a letter upon the pillow as she spoke. "I hope he has made up his mind as to your taking the situation; it is the best thing you can do, I am certain. Pretty news to-day about that Alfred Dane; it is well you had someone to look after you; a fine thing you might have made of it. I gave him my mind, I am thankful to remember, and kept him away from here, luckily. You will not see him again."

"Indeed, why not?" asked the girl; she was obliged to say something as the speaker paused, but the words came very huskily from her lips, and she moved still farther from the dim light of the window.

"Just what everyone expected," returned the mistress of the house; "all the village knew his goings-on could not last. Young Mr. Clayter has gone—obliged to go, too. It is said he has robbed his father of thousands, and our fine Mr. Dane turns out to be just as bad—mixed up with him, in fact, so he is going too. Old Mr. Clayter went down on his knees to his partners, or very near, though he is the head of the firm, to get young Dane off, guaranteeing to pay all the money himself, because if the constables had taken him all must have come out about Master George. Well, if you can't come down to-night, I hope you will be, as you say, well enough to work in the morning."

Without further adieu the loquacious and not too amiable lady departed.

(To be continued.)

## Miss Chrissie's Protégé.

(A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.)

### CHAPTER I.

"It's Seth, I'm sure."

Miss Chrissie was so excited at this moment that she forgot to put her garden-hat on over her efflorescent cap-border and her little, nodding, silvery curls; indeed, she forgot that the sun was shining with all his might as she started off down the short drive that led from the parsonage door to the high-road.

"Poor Seth!" Miss Chrissie kept saying, as she trotted along, panting a little over every short step; "poor Seth! I'm so sorry for him!"

Many a person in Miss Chrissie's place would have been planning a little speech wherewith to open the very difficult conversation she meditated, but the curate's little sister never had any mentor but her own kind heart, which generally told her the right thing to say at the right time.

She was a gentle, rosy, rotund little spinster, with a broad, sweet face that reminded one irresistibly of that of a kitten, and a soft voice and mild, purring ways which carried out the suggestion. But there was a very un-kittenish anxiety in her blue eyes, as she paused beside the iron gate beneath the pair of beeches that formed an arch above her.

"Poor Seth!" she repeated again, this time to give herself courage, for the man she was waiting for was very near her now, approaching with heavy, laggard step between the ill-cut hawthorn hedges.

"Good-evening, Seth." Miss Chrissie had cleared her throat before she spoke, but there was a quiver of dread in her voice all the same.

"Good-evenin'." He did not turn his head as he answered, merely shot towards her from his reddened eyes the furtive glance of some cowed animal.

"I have been watching for you for two days, Seth."

"Aye, well, I'd a'most not be here at all—" He paused involuntarily, and his voice had lost a little of its sullen harshness.

"Why was that? I thought the old home—"

He interrupted her with a gesture of the hand.

"There is no home now, Miss Chrissie, nothing but a grave."

"Are there not the old memories?"

"They seem to make me only lonelier and colder."

"Won't you come indoors, Seth? I have many things to say to you."

"Thank you, miss; but I'd rather not."

"And why not?"

"I don't feel as if I was fit for a decent house yet, and, besides, Mr. Grey mightn't like it."

"Mr. Grey is from home."

"I don't know as that makes any difference, miss; a man's house is his castle, and most folks wouldn't want me for a guest just yet."

His face was sourly smiling, but it had lost the hunted look it had worn when she accosted him.

"Mr. Grey is as much your friend as I. I never do things unknown to him, Seth."

"I didn't think you did," he said hurriedly; "but women have softer hearts than men, and often say a kind word where a man would only think it right to blame."

"You must have forgotten old times, Seth, if you think it is Mr. Grey's way to be hard on any one."

Miss Chrissie spoke with such cold severity as the man had never heard from her lips before.

"I beg pardon if I've offended, and I'll go indoors if you wish."

"Thank you, the sun always makes my head ache," Miss Chrissie said plaintively, as she preceded him towards the house.

It was noteworthy how the man's whole demeanour had changed again, and how the slouching gait and movements had come back.

"This way."

She entered the small parlour before him, and offered him a chair by the square centre table, and pulled up one blind and lowered another to exclude the glaring sun, and all this with the kindly thought of giving him time to come to himself.

The man drew a breath of suffocation, as though the narrow limits of the four green-papered walls oppressed him, and so they did, shutting him in there with old memories.

"I was with your mother when she died, Seth."

Miss Chrissie was sitting opposite him now, with the width of the green and crimson table-cover between them.

"Where did she die?"

He had rested his arm on the table, and his down-dropped eyes were fixed on the glowing arabesques that dazzled them.

"Down at Sally's."

He drew a strangled breath.

"I was afraid it might ha' been in the workhouse."

"Oh no, we took care of that amongst us."

Miss Chrissie heaved the faintest possible sigh as she spoke, the taking care had meant many small sacrifices on her part.

"Not as I'd a minded for my own part," he went on after a pause. "Charity is charity, and whether one takes it from you or the parish don't matter much, one is a pauper all the same. But I think she'd have rather been beholden to friends than to the union."

"Yes, I'm sure she would, and then Sally was very reasonable."

"And she died—how?"

The dreary hoarseness was in his voice again.

"Thinking of you, and praying for you."

"Did she say what she wished me to do?"

"No; she said the Lord would direct you."

He lifted his face from his supporting hand now, and looked at the curate's sister with his bloodshot, pitiful eyes.

"If she had lived, Miss Chrissie, I should have been ever so much braver to have begun anew," he said.

"I don't know, Seth. Perhaps you would have felt so just at the first; but I don't think the Lord ever takes our supports from us till He thinks we are strong enough to walk alone."

The tears were rolling over Miss Chrissie's round cheeks and falling on her pink, dimpled hands as she spoke.

"You see, Miss Chrissie, she believed in me; nobody else ever will now."

"I believe in you." He had risen to his feet, and the little woman rose too, and looked at him with eyes that were kind and true. "Do you think Mr. Grey and I have never talked of you? Do you think we believed all the evil that was told and hinted of you?"

"There was nothing said worse than the truth. I was a coward, an' a fool, an' I might ha' been a murderer." He tried to moisten his lips with his dry tongue as he spoke, twisting his battered cap in his trembling hands. "I understand all about it now, Miss Chrissie. I had so much time to think it out in. It has spoiled my life. I'm a gaol-bird, and men have a right to kick me, an' I've no right to blame them. But that is not the thought I find hardest. It is far worse to remember that if I'd struck him half an inch closer to the face I'd have killed him, an' then through all eternity I could not have altered that."

"Yes, that is awful to think of, Seth. Once death has taken a man, it never gives him back, though we break our hearts in effort or atonement. But, after all, you did not kill him, you see, and there are men who say they would have acted as you did in your place."

"I don't think they would, though it's kind of them to say it. But thinking things over does not mend them. It's just this way, you see. I've no character an' no chance in life. I've spoiled my whole future, an' I'm only twenty-five."

"I've been thinking so much about you, Seth, and finding out all I could for you, since I knew your time was nearly out. Have you

never heard that there are employments any kind of men are put to and no questions asked?"

"Any kind of men—thieves an' worse? Oh, I know all about it! An' I may come to be glad of their company yet—but not just yet, Miss Chrissie, though I'm thankful to you, all the same."

"Could you not emigrate?"

"Yes; but I feel as if I'd have to tell the master in the new country how I was just out of gaol for half killin' the master in the old."

"And I don't suppose you'd tell him what made you do it, or how you had been provoked?"

"I don't think I would, Miss Chrissie."

The curate's little sister stifled a sigh as she looked up at the vast slouching figure, at the dull, heavy face, and furtive, bloodshot eyes which would always cause this man to be misinterpreted, which had already turned a jury against him, and made his sentence for a not uncommon assault doubly severe.

"I was present at your trial, Seth," she said, after a pause, kindly. "Mr. Grey and I were both there. We thought it would keep your heart up to know old friends were near."

"I did not see you."

"No, you never lifted your eyes."

"All that seems so long ago, Miss Chrissie, though it's only two years, that I scarcely mind how things were or what I did. I seem to have been just a lad then an' to be an old man now, an' all the time that has gone between has been so hard and shameful. But I've no right to come whinin' to you, Miss Grey, an' I'm goin' to stop it."

"Don't go yet, Seth," she interposed, for he was turning towards the door. "I have still much to say to you. And, first, will you answer one question? Was it about wages you struck Mr. Jacobs?"

"No, miss." He was standing quite erect now, his face a little flushed, and the half-forgotten manliness gleaming on it again. "I was a coward to strike him at all, for he was so small by the side of me; but I'm not a thief, to assault a man for makin' terms about his own. If he would not pay what I asked, he was quite free to get a man who would do his work for less."

"But it was stated at the trial that you had quarrelled about wages, and you did not contradict it."

"No; an' I never mean to contradict it. What does it matter what folks say?"

His head had fallen forward again, and his whole attitude had resumed its old hopeless droop. Miss Grey looked up at him with a new interest in her gentle eyes.

"Public opinion would not matter, if we did not owe our livelihood to its approval," she said thoughtfully.

He laughed harshly.

"If I'd undersell other men, I'd get work, even if I am a gaol-bird," he said.

"But I would not do that, Seth; it would only gain you more enemies."

"Do it! How could I do it? Where have I the money to start with, Miss Grey? And even if I had, it's not the little fiddling jobs of one neighbour and another that would pay, now that I'm sure to be out of all the big orders from the gentry."

"I have your tools, Seth. I kept them for you, when your mother died."

"Thank you," he said huskily; "it will feel like old times to have my hands on them again."

"And we thought, Mr. Grey and I, that we should try and keep you here at first, unless your mind is set on some other course. You have more friends in the parish than you think, and the worst of them would be ready to give you a helping hand."

"You are very good."

"We cannot offer you much, Seth, for in a way we have as little in our power as anyone; but we thought that if you'd care to stay among the old neighbours, you might fit up our stable for a workshop. We have had no pony for a year past, and the stable is empty, and quite at your service, if you think it worth taking. And then we've been thinking, too, that you could build yourself a boat in your spare hours, and take odd days, when work is slack, at the fishing you were so fond of. The rectory people would gladly buy fish of you, I know, and so would we, and many others. It's a scrappy kind of life I offer you, Seth, not half good enough for a skilled workman like you; but it is the best we can offer, and you must remember that rebuilding is tedious, and not very easy work."

"Yes, I know, and I take you at your word, Miss Chrissie. Heaven bless you for your kind thought!" His face was quite pale, and his lips twitched as he pressed them together. "Where a man has fallen there it seems to me he should rise. But are you sure Mr. Grey means this too—are you sure your good heart has not misled you?"

"Quite sure, Seth; my brother will tell you so, himself to-morrow."

## CHAPTER II.

It was a hot August evening. The sun was ebbing towards the west in a sea of golden light, and the warmth that followed him rolled in slumberous waves over hill and dale and meadow.

"What a long, hot, horrid day it has been," Lucy Grant said to herself pettishly as she stood by the cottage door at home, and looked out over the yellowing landscape.

She could not hear any music in the birds' songs, or see any beauty in the lights and shadows that chased each other over the swaying cornfields, because she was not thinking of these things, or looking at anything but the far-off sheen of the sea, and that only dazzled her eyes, and made her head ache.

A little sparrow peeped at her over the edge of the porch, and said "tweet, tweet," in the friendliest way; a pair of dragon-flies darted past her, their gleaming mail flashing in the sun; and a white butterfly fluttered towards her as though to discover whether her pink gown was not some abnormal kind of magnificent flower.

"Tiresome things!" the girl said impatiently, and went indoors and flung her knitting on the white deal table, and sat down and cried a little.

Lucy could not have told what ailed her, but her father knew. She had one of the tempers that had first shown themselves more than three years before, and had been growing worse of late—more sudden and unaccountable, and more prone to end in rapid, passionate penitence.

"I am sick of everything," the rustic beauty said to herself a score of times daily, and then she would glance up at the old weaver, working away silently at his loom, unobservant of everything apparently but the web before him, and would notice that his face was growing thinner, and sadder, and greyer, week by week, and that the patient lines on brow and lip more rarely melted now before the warmth of a smile.

"I am just a bad girl, that's what I am," she would add with a catching of the breath, and then would bustle about with spasmodic activity, enlivening her work with pathetic heart-breaking snatches of merry singing, whereat the weaver would steal a sidelong glance at her, and then would look away, sighing.

"She never was right since Seth Gavin went to prison," he told himself, and then he sighed again, for she was his only child, and motherless, and how could he find in his heart to be hard on her?

In a way he was to blame that sorrow had come to her, for he had not known how to train her aright, and so she had fallen into those idle, dreamy, flirting ways, to which he had been far too lenient because she stayed at home, and let the lads follow her there. If she had been a gad-about, of course he would have seen the evil of that, and would have been stern enough, but it had not been unpleasant to himself to have the cottage filled with young life when his day's work was over, and to hear the choir practice in which Lucy took an alto, and to see Luke Smith, and Seth Gavin, and John Aldney, and all the most promising young fellows about the place doing homage to his girl as if she had been a queen. His vanity encouraged them to come, if her vanity brought them there, and now he and she had to bear the pain equally when they were left alone. Seth Gavin was just out of prison, and John Aldney was married, and Luke Smith had found a sweetheart with a tongue as glib and a voice as sweet as Lucy's, and the weaver's cottage was forsaken.

"Seems as if too many lovers were worse than too few," the village girls said with derisive laughter, as they passed the cottage-door, making Lucy shrink behind the muslin window-blind. "Seems as if one may fall atween a lot o' stools, and sit on the ground after all;" and then they noticed aloud how the honeysuckle trailed straggling from the porch, how the rustic seat Seth Gavin had built beneath the old apple-tree was falling to decay, and how untidy and untrimmed the flower-borders were.

After they had passed, the girl started to her feet with her face aflame, tied on her muslin sun-bonnet, and went out into the patch of garden, and nailed the climbing plants above the door, and cut the box borders trimly, and then turned determinedly to the rustic seat.

"He never made them one," she said, with an angry pucker on her brow; "and the time was when they'd have torn out my eyes about him, so of course they like to say evil of both of us now." And then a softer mood followed the hard, angry one as she remembered how he had stood there bareheaded four years before, looking down on his finished work and saying: "It's a bonny seat, Lucy, and it will hold two, with a squeeze."

Ah, but that was long ago, so long, before he had been a felon, or she broken-hearted!

"It's only a piece of dead wood, as dead as the old days are," she said sadly. "I wish I could as easily hide them out of my sight."

She pulled the decaying timbers apart, mechanically. She would

not leave them there a ruin, to be a jest and byword; she would burn them and scatter their ashes to the winds as was done with sacrifices in the olden time.

Poor Lucy was unlucky in the moment she had chosen for her work of destruction, but then she was always so unlucky now that it would not have surprised her had she known it.

At that moment a man was coming towards her, over the downs, up from the sea, with a fishing-net over his shoulder, and a string of picked fish in one hand—coming with his heart filled with forgiveness and desire for pardon and reconciliation.

"If she refused John Aldney, and has grown so changed and still, then maybe I misjudged her, maybe she did care and is sorry. Well, it will do no harm to see her again, anyway, and hear the best or the worst."

So he had picked a dozen of the finest fish from that morning's haul, and was taking them as an offering to her father. And in spite of himself his heart was aglow with hope, pulsating to old happy memories.

"I wonder does she mind the evening I made her the wooden chair, when I would have kissed her under the apple-blossoms if I had dared?" he was asking himself with a little smile.

And then he stopped, for the cottage door was in sight, with its stocks and gillyflowers waving in the breeze, and its carnations and roses wafting him a scented message of peace.

But there was no peace in his heart; it seemed to lie like lead in his bosom, for the rustic seat round which so many happy memories clustered was lying in ruins, and Lucy, grown prettier since he had seen her last, was working with flushed, determined face and frowning brow, at its final destruction.

"She wants nothing near her that will ever make her think of me," he said, turning silently away, while the trees rustled above him, and the heavy-headed grasses nodded solemnly.

"Things were righting themselves so fast, that I was almost forgetting what I am. Well, that reminds me, anyhow;" and then he threw the net on the parapet of the rustic bridge, and with his face between his hands, stood looking down on the swirling stream that rushed eagerly towards the sea.

Things had been easier than he deserved, that was it. He had not found the avoidance among his intimates, nor the contemptuous dislike among the gentry that he anticipated. Indeed, had he only known it, his chastisement of one whom the old residents looked on as an upstart libertine had served him with these, though they had shown no public recognition of his service yet.

For Mr. Jacobs, the millowner, was not a gentleman, as the neighbourhood reckoned gentlemanliness, nor popular either with the class he employed, or the class to which he feigned to belong. But this, had he known it, would not have mattered to Seth.

"To show myself a brutal bully to a little bit of a dancin' chap like that, it was very low," he said to himself gravely, conscious now of the cowardice, rather than the criminality of his action. He never could atone for it, and that was the thought that was like a bone in his throat. If he had broken Mr. Jacobs's machinery, or burned his mill, he might have indemnified him by the labour of a lifetime, but that small scar above the rich man's ear would always stand on the debtor side of Seth's moral account, and he hated to owe aught to any man.

And yet, as he stood above the bridge, with his nets beside him, and his fish drying in the light of the setting-sun, he did not think he regretted his blow as much as he had done in other moments. It was but a part of the fatality attending all his intercourse with Lucy Grant.

She had spoiled him and weakened him in those old days, made a fool of him as no woman would who valued self-respect, and all for what? That she might have one more adorer in her train—one other man to flatter and spoil her.

Seth grew very bitter as he remembered all the incidents attendant on that black day in his calendar; how she had mocked and flouted him down there below the mill, till he could not bear it, and then, when she had left him, how he had followed her like the stupid, adoring oaf he was, and how he had seen her stop to answer the millowner, who had seemed to wait for her, and whose notice boded no good to any pretty girl, and how the latter had tried to kiss her before she broke from him, and sped upwards agile as a fawn.

That man might kiss her, when he, after all the years of his honest worship, dared not have touched her hand!

He had stood thinking this, in passionate, sullen anger, while his employer, unconscious apparently of his existence, came towards him, humming and twirling his cane as he walked.

"So, you find this a good place for idling too," the rich man said, addressing with conscious easy condescension the creature he employed and paid.

"Idlin' or killin', it's all one to me," the creature answered savagely, and then, before he knew how or why, a blackness of great darkness had fallen on the elegant Mr. Jacobs, and he lay prone on

the hot earth, while the insects of a day crawled over him and investigated him.

"Mr. Jacobs is lyin' up in the wood; I think he is dead; I struck him. I'm goin' home now," Seth Gavin said to the crowd of rustics who stared at him open-mouthed, and then he went on mechanically towards his own house, and took the supper his mother set before him, and then sat down idly, with his face between his hands, and stared at the smouldering logs.

"There is a crowd of folks comin' up the road, Seth lad, an' police among them; come and see," Mrs. Gavin called excitedly, glad of anything that would rouse her son from his unusual torpor and apathy.

"I suppose so."

He took his cap down from the peg in the wall and waited.

"Seth Gavin, you must come with us," the blue-coated official said, appearing at the door.

"I am ready."

He looked peaceable enough, but he was a big fellow, taller by half a head than any of the crowd, and precautions were always wise, so they handcuffed him.

"What is it—what has my son done?" the old woman shrieked, wringing her hands.

"Murdered Mr. Jacobs. Is that enough?" the man answered gruffly, pushing her aside as her son was led out into the darkness of the coming night.

Then he was dead, the scented popinjay who had always worn a flower in his coat, and yet had such a hard hand over those who served him; dead with the light song warm on his lips, and the rose snatched from a girl's bosom in his hand! It was odd to Seth, at first, to think of him as dead, and hushed into the dignity of eternal rest and silence.

All that night Seth Gavin lay on the cold floor of his cell, with his arms beneath his head, and his face hidden.

"Sullen brute, hanging's too good for him!" the warder muttered, stirring him with his foot that he might rise to eat.

And the long days passed, and at last the day of trial came, and he was led out into the dock, into the daylight that mocked him.

He did not recognise a face in the vast throng that seemed to stare at him with stony eyes, neither that of the mother, who gazed at him through streaming tears, nor that of Mr. Grey, the curate, who had come to give him a character, nor that of Timothy Grant, the weaver, who watched him mournfully from a corner.

The trial which was about to take place had been delayed, the counsel said in his opening address, owing to the dangerous illness of the principal witness. Happily the cause of delay existed no longer. And then Mr. Jacobs stepped into the box.

The whole court surged round the accused, and the voices of the counsel died down to a murmur, and again roared like thunder. But he sat stolidly, making no sign, with his mighty arms locked across his chest, and his face hidden.

He was not a murderer, there was no man's blood on his soul! That thought kept repeating itself over and over like a refrain, while his trial went on, and the jurors, reminded of riots in Birmingham, and strikes in Manchester, grew more and more embittered against him. But he roused himself when the verdict of "Guilty" had been given, and when the judge was about to pronounce sentence.

It was quite time, his lordship said, that an end should be put to the brutal rebellion of animal force against authority; it was quite time the working classes learned that, though they might cheat their employers by defective work, and rob them by dishonest strikes with impunity, the time had not yet arrived for them to assault those who paid them. In spite, therefore, of the prisoner's previous good character, he felt it his duty to sentence Seth Gavin to two years' imprisonment with hard labour.

(To be continued.)

## In the Ruin.

THE Abbey Church stands roofless 'neath the sky,  
The Abbey pavement is but soft green grass,  
Where steps of reverent pilgrims as they pass  
Up to the ruined shrine, fall noiselessly;  
The vagrant breezes as they wander by  
Float unobstructed, where the storied glass  
Jewelled the sunbeams in the time that was;  
The palace built for praise is dumb for aye.  
Nay, where the bluebells and the mosses climb,  
And clothe with lovely life the carven niche,  
The brown thrush builds her nest; as full and rich  
Her music, as the strains of elder time.  
God's priests lie mute, but God's fair creatures' song  
Swells up in praise and prayer the summer long.



# A Bunch of Cyclamens.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

It was a summer evening—not a gentle spiritualised English summer night, but a gorgeous sun-setting time when one looks down upon the rolling vastness of the Roman Campagna.

Two girls and a young man, the brother of one, had walked out from one of the little towns of the hills, and had wandered through the luxuriant woods that clothe those hills. They were gazing and resting. One, a Scotch girl, Mary Moraine, sat upon some ancient broken brickwork, the other girl leaned against the trunk of an old ilex-tree, the young man stood erect. There was a pronounced look of vigorous vitality, of energy, of action about him.

The masses of trees opened where they sat, and from their height the land swept grandly down, bearing on her bosom yellowing maize and wide gardens of trellised vines. Far, far away in the dim distance of the west, where the sun lighted up a silver line of whiteness, lay the sea, and the once great port of Ostia—it was almost like a vision; but still one could say with truth that one saw the sea. Above that visionary shining line rose the sky, flaunting scarlet and orange flames; below it swelled the billowy land of the Campagna, ocean-like, and vague, and vast, but lifeless. Like a dead sea it gave back no answer to those gorgeous wreathings of sunset glory, but seemed to lie and pant, breathless, silent, finished.

Weird, measureless, desolate is the Campagna at all times—at nightfall it grows to an intensity of desolation. One can never tread its wildnesses, nor gather its rank luxuriance of flowers and long grasses, one can never gaze down, as we gaze down now, without the thought of its centuries of buried greatness palling upon one, without, too, a shudder for the living death which stalks ghostlike across its plains and spoils its air with poison.

Mary Moraine and her friends, two young Americans, had wintered in Rome; they and their belongings would have left a week ago had not small nothings come in the way. So strangely powerful are these "nothings"! If we went on our way disregarding them, what events would get unacted! What linkings and what breakings of human lives would miss their very birth-time!

The Americans were two of the family of a Boston physician. Dr. Matthew Greeley had stayed at home while he sent wife and children to see Europe; but he had written a peremptory order to his son, also a doctor, to return home within a month from the date of his letter.

"Go home without seeing the towns of the mountain! not possible, mother!" declared the young man. "I must do them, whatever you and the girls do. You pack up your trunks and go right up to Florence—Rome is too much of a good thing now. I'll come round in a week and meet you, and not be far out of the governor's month, after all."

All very fine; but, however mothers may be controlled by energetic sons, sisters are rarely found so amenable.

The Greeleys went to Albano, and Mary Moraine and her aunt went also—what one section of their *pension* did the other would likewise do. The girls had set up a *camaraderie* before the arrival of the son, doubtless it would last after he went home, for his winter had not been in the genial south but in the stern north, and in hard work of doctoring.

"What idiots we were not to come up here before!" Euphemia, or Phemie Greeley was saying; "one lives here, one cooks down in Rome. I vote we stop a week, instead of tramping on to another place."

"Likely!" was young Mat Greeley's one word.

"And why not?" Phemie had a decision of her own. "You'll get towns, you've seen two or three of them, and they are all alike. Big white houses, yawning giant gateways, stucco in infinite dilapidation, broken stairways, washing hung out from windows at all altitudes, pictures everywhere—natural ones I mean, of course—also dirt everywhere, likewise of course. And where, I'd like to know, will you get such a road as this? Did you ever see such a wood before now? Answer me—answer me, Matthew John Greeley."

"Yes."

He pushed his straw-hat back from off his forehead, and his blue eyes laughed, while after the word of assent he shut his mouth tight.

"And what more?"

"No."

The same tight closing of the mouth.

"You are downright insulting!"

Phemie moved away, crossed the roadway, and climbed the woodland bank on the far side of it. Soon one saw nothing of her beyond a vision of vague whiteness, showing between thick myrtles and syringas, tall grasses and ferns, tree-trunks, and a wilderness of flowers.

"You'll be too severe, Dr. Greeley," said the other girl, Mary Moraine.

There was a soft languor about her attitude and her voice, but these seemed in no wise fitted with the bright and vivid colour of her. The Greeleys were fair to whiteness, she was fair with brilliancy; her hair was of ruddy chestnut, gleaming russet now as, with her hat thrown off, she sat with a stream of sunlight across her. Her eyes were brown, and surely could flash—how was it they were weighed down with that dreamy languor?

"I must sit upon her sometimes, Miss Moraine. Fancy my life with four rampant sisters; one must assert oneself. She's out of hearing, so I will turn confidential. But you are tired?"

"No," she said, "tell me."

All at once a temptation sprang to his tongue; should he indeed tell her a secret? He had a secret. The strong impulse within almost mastered him, but—fate was in that "but"—his eyes fell upon her, nay, more truly they seized that new phase of manner, and the impulse was beaten back.

Was she just tired, or—men in his condition are alert to catch meanings where no meanings exist—was she indeed utterly careless and uncaring about him and his confidences?

He did not cry out his secret, his treasure—no, not at all. He was a strong man, able to wait, and, changing his position, he firmly crossed his arms before him, and walked briskly a few steps away from her. When he turned, he spoke as if his words had been intended all along.

"She's perfectly correct," he said abruptly, "perfectly, there's nothing so exquisite as this Frascati wood. And no doubt the towns will all be alike, still they are down for me to see, and see them I will. But if I were you I'd rest here, you have been doing too much lately."

Lover and doctor in one, might he not be pardoned for a searching glance?

And Mary's cheeks flushed rosy-red for an instant, and the brown eyes flashed.

"Indeed no!" But as suddenly as they had come, did exclamation, and rosiness, and flashing eyes, all disappear. Mary became pale, and serious, and cold. There are moments when a girl must be either cold, or must show a warmth which no girl would show unasked. "Do not look at me professionally," she gave a little laugh; "do you not see that I'll be going in for rural *dolce far niente*?"

Somebody was approaching. A countryman, without doubt, coming home from some trafficking over the hills, for there was the stumbling, shambling tread of a donkey's feet in the loose stones of the hillocky sloping road, and the "Yah, yah!" of the donkey-driver.

He came into sight—not a picturesque Campagna villager at all, but the prince of local guides. Not even ragged to the due picturesque degree, but still nevertheless picturesque. He wore loose, grey, baggy trousers, a loose, blue, short coat, his throat was bare, and his shirt was thrown open; the scarlet wisp of silk he called necktie was knotted in the button-hole of his coat, and was flying over his shoulder as the wind of the evening had caught it; his face was shiny with heat, but the features were—what shall we say?—imperial? Yes, they had the close firm vigour, the classic purity, and delicacy of outline one sees in the old heads of the Cæsars as they stand in the museums of Rome. His eyes had the dark colour and the vivid life which those old marbles cannot give, and his black hair was cropped close in the antique severity. Above rose modernism—a round blue cap with a peak, and above the peak in shining letters, "*Cicerone*."

He was Domenico Saccucci, the guide.

"Ah, signor, and signorine," he cried, doffing his cap and shoving it on again over his left ear, "Fortune is good!"

"I am glad to hear it; she's fickle with some," answered young Greeley. "You have had some foreigners to fleece to-day, I suppose—eh?"

"Signor! No, no; my good fortune is that I see the signor himself again, and now I know there will be a good day, and bread and wine for Domenico."

Phemie heard voices, and made her way back. Her hands were full of flowers—pale syringa blooms, delicate cyclamens blushing from pinkness up to crimson, strong and tiny forget-me-nots, weary heavy-headed poppies—a hundred more.

"What are you talking about?" she cried.

"Domenico is talking blarney," said Mary, rousing from her—laziness shall we say?

The man looked quickly from one to the other girl.

"I do not understand," said he. Then prompt for business, his look of doubt fled, and his eyes were keen and alert. "Does the signorina say she will engage Domenico for to-morrow?—for the next day?—for some day?" Was there anything more cajoling than the air of courtly, graceful, beseeching deference with which he ended?

The donkey made use of leisure by munching contentedly behind his master.

"No," cried Phemie; "the signorina said nothing of the sort—we will have none of you, Domenico. Do you not charge too much—too much? No, we know the ways now—we take care of ourselves."

An intense look of melancholy was the man's sudden expression, and his hands clasped before him, then, after a moment he swiftly changed his tactics, and a laughing face, a face brimming over with fun, rose.

"The signorina is amusing herself. She knows the ways—yes. But does she know the byways, the points from which one gets the one point of beauty which only the good guide knows? No, no; the signorina will come to Domenico for that. To-morrow quite early shall I bring the donkeys to the hotel?"

"Cheek!" muttered Greeley. The young man was a bit sore from what he had taken as a rebuff of Mary's, and he felt combative. The guide would get his sharp words. "Justice all round, my man!" he said decidedly. "At Albano, we take an Albano man; at Tivoli, we take you; at Frascati, we take a Frascati man. You see?"

"I see well, signor. And is not that what I ask? For myself, I am of Tivoli—that is true; but my son is at Frascati, and my son is ill. Ah, signor, he is ill! And what can I do? I come this week, and I leave my own affairs—am I not old, and the world knows me? Tito is young, and he must not lose. If Saccucci is not ready as guide when the foreigners come they will take someone else. I do but guard his occupation for my son."

"You give him the money?" put in Phemie practically.

"Signorina!" He looked hurt. "That is of course. Certainly I give the money to Nina—Nina is Tito's wife—for Tito and for the baby."

He got his order.

By-and-by the three went home. Mary's hands had been full of flowers, like those of Phemie—it certainly was not the girl's natural humour, but that evening she was full of changes and of fancies. She was lazy; she was excited and unnaturally prone to running; then she would fall silent, only to dash out some spasm of gay song; again she would drop behind the other two.

She was behind as she came up to the hotel, and she seemed cautious.

"What folly," she cried, "for us to gather all these things! They live no time. Dr. Greeley," and here came a flush and a reckless dash of her tongue, generally so gentle, "shall I make you a posy of faded flowers?"

The young man looked gravely at her; then he was surprised. But Mary Moraine under any aspect was a charm for him—he did his best to copy her humour.

"Indeed, no," he answered. "I'll condescend to take one, but I'll be content with the freshest and best."

Her gaiety had gone. She separated a bunch of nodding cyclamens from the rest.

"There!" she said. "Are they not a fit emblem of myself—limp and faded? I feel just like that."

Again her face lighted, and with an energy of action that belied her words, she let her arms fall limp on each side of her and hung her head in mimicry of fatigue.

"Thanks," said he quietly.

Then they separated.

On the morrow, six young people went off on donkeys to Tusculum with the guide. Now and then some walked, but never Mary. • Domenico was always at her side, whether because he was wholly captivated by the girl's sweet ways, or whether he felt that she more particularly needed care, we do not pretend to say. However it was, he stuck by her, whether in the starting from the town, or over the rough broken fields, or up the steep path through the wood.

There is always a routine in these journeys when one has a guide, and, arrived at the end of this path, the order was to dismount and to roam about the ruins of Cicero's villa as long as they would. The sun was high, and the scorch and glare of his fire something almost too great to be endured.

Mary alone did not ramble. There was the wild vastness of the Campagna for her eyes to wander over, the white vague patches upon the hills where were the towns, high on the crest of one hill the jagged edge of ancient walls and battlements, the great dome of metallic-blue sky above, and just at her feet the tangled grass and the flaring poppies growing wild over the stones which once had made the entrance to the country-house of one of the world's greatest orators.

Perhaps she saw it all, perhaps she saw none of it. She was dreaming, so she thought.

Alas! there were worse things afloat than dreams! She had dreamed, and laughed, and played too long in the night air of Rome.

Saccucci looked round, and she had fallen prone on the old stones.

"Signorina! carissima!" and he was kneeling by her and lifting her up.

Well, that faintness passed off—we must not multiply details—and she would have Domenico keep it secret.

But the faintness came again on the way home, this time she could not hide it, and they took her into a cottage; it happened to belong to Tito Saccucci, Domenico's son.

On the big bed lay Tito himself, on the floor crawled the baby; Nina, the wife and mother, was at the door spinning; to sit and look at Tito would not make him well. Had she not first made him some drink with freshly-gathered lemons?—cure for all maladies. He had the glass at his hand, and he could drink as he liked. What more could she do? He was not so ill that she need weep! And the baby? he was happy, he was on the floor and he played with the cat; yes, he was as well as could be. So Nina stood against her door-post and span with the end of her distaff leaning upon her hip, and her brown fingers deftly drawing out the yellow threads of flax.

There was an excitement, a confusion for some minutes. The distaff was thrown down, Tito swallowed his lemon-juice at one gulp, the baby cried; the signorina had to be waited on and cured.

Well, it was only a few minutes, she was well again and everyone had gone away.

The donkeys were well ahead, and Domenico was setting the baby down on the floor after a toss in his arms.

"La febbre?" (the fever) said Nina, nodding outwards. "They do not know."

"Yes, yes, poor child!" and the man ran off.

Yes. That was it.

No one suspected it, not even Dr. Greeley himself. Would he, so suspecting, have gone off as he did round the mountains? For he had brought the ladies to be of his mind, and while they stayed for a week at Frascati and then made as quickly as possible for Florence, he went in and out of all the mountain towns, and was to meet them in the lovely City of Flowers.

Two days after he left them, the evil declared itself. Mary Moraine had Roman fever.

Messengers were sent, letters were sent, telegrams were sent, but no Dr. Greeley ever came to Frascati.

In her delirium Mary had called for him; Mat's secret was also Mary's secret. Alas! and alas! Was she going to die? away from her own people, and with love and help so near her, yet missing it all.

Her aunt was distracted; she had thought to give the girl pleasure, and there!—she had given her her death.

Telegrams went off to Scotland, and at last, when not one of the messengers had succeeded in finding Dr. Greeley, his mother telegraphed to the hotel to which he would go in Florence.

Dr. Greeley had altered his plans. When he got to Rocca di Papa he met a friend, and the friend, having seen just nothing, and being of the sort needing a guide, Matthew Greeley had taken charge of him, so to speak, and had gone hither and thither in quite a different course to that he had arranged for himself.

He was two days behind time when he arrived at Florence.

"Mrs. Greeley is here?" he asked in his quick determined way; "my mother? Give me a room near theirs. Let her know I am here, will you?"

The hotel-master was too polite to look surprised. He ventured this:

"Monsieur is mistaken, perhaps. Was it to this hotel——"

"Hotel de la Paix—I do not make such mistakes." The young man could not have told why he spoke so abruptly. "Do you mean they are not here?"

"No, signor—no. Some ladies—is it that?"

"Yes—seven ladies."

"Of one party? No, signor—no. What name did the signor say? There may be letters."

"There must be letters if they are not here. My name is Greeley—Dr. Greeley."

There were no letters, and for the next half-hour Matthew was in his room fuming. Perhaps we use the wrong word. If he had been a paterfamilias or a bachelor of middle-age waiting for his dinner, we might be allowed to say he was fuming; but he was young and a lover.

He did not fume; he at once rushed into infinite anxieties, and the anxieties were for neither mother nor sisters, but for Mary.

He took a small leathern case from the breast-pocket of his coat, and drew out a bunch of cyclamens tied together with a thread of grass.

What did he do with them? Digitized by Google

Just kissed them softly — kissed them, and felt their tender delicate heads.

He shuddered.

Bah! was he superstitious—he, the wise doctor, the determined man of energy?

A feeling had come over him—a feeling and a memory. The memory was of her wild words in which she had likened herself to the faded drooping blooms.

Idle folly! So he contemned himself, and, without waiting for dinner to be announced, he hurried down the wide staircase and took his seat at a little table.

Fortune was kind to him. He would have no crowded *table d'hôte*, for that had been over an hour and more.

He swallowed his soup. It might have been nectar or it might have been water.

The waiter came to take away his plate; another waiter gave the first a letter.

"This has just arrived since monsieur has been at the table."

The plate disappeared, and a telegram was before him in its place.

Involuntarily he pushed back his chair and turned so that his face was hidden.

This is what he read:

"We want you. Come, wherever you are. Mary has fever. Lose no time."

He did not lose any time.

He stood erect and pale when in a moment the waiter came, handing a second course to him.

"Show that to your master and give him that," said he, putting a twenty lire note upon the table. "Have a carriage ready at once; I shall be downstairs with my things in five minutes."

It was another day, and nearly midday. Fight as one will one cannot command trains any more than one can control time or tide.

Slumberous heat made the Campagna misty; all, if one looked out, would have shown vague, and vast, and unreal. But the blinds were closed, and the heat of the room got tempered by the light flying of the mountain air. There was something else than looking out of window to be thought of.

A blue-robed sister was watching, two ladies were watching also—on the little bed there was a girl lying unconscious. Her face was white and still, and on the pillow her radiant hair was tossed in waves. Now and again she moaned, now and again she moved restlessly.

There was a great clatter of wheels tearing along the rough stones of the street. The girl moved more restlessly. Was it that she was not wholly unconscious?

The noise was made by a carriage coming up from the station. Inside was a man all dusty, and pale, and anxious. With a hurried action he had just put something back into his pocket; it was something he had kissed passionately.

In another moment he was flying up the hotel staircase.

"Matthew—my son!"

"She is——"

"Alive—yes."

But the one word suggested a prophecy that the mother's tongue dared not speak.

His glance fell on the bed, and he saw and understood.

The three women drew aside, and for a moment Matthew Greeley knelt by the side of the little bed.

A spasm of restlessness had seized Mary as he had entered the room; now she lay still, and it seemed as if he had changed the restlessness to rest. Her hand was in his, and his face was bowed.

The lover must retire, the doctor must reign. Dr. Greeley lifted his head and stood upright, gazing into the brilliant brown eyes. Alas! alas! they moved, and wandered, and flashed, they had no answer for him, and yet, as he dropped her hand, Mary again moved restlessly.

The blue-robed sister smiled radiantly—perhaps before she donned that blue dress she had had experiences other than of nursing—she spoke quietly:

"Let her feel your touch, sir—she knows—it is the first sign of consciousness."

Dr. Greeley was not at home in Boston within the month, and the old Dr. Greeley was not in consequence angry. "Circumstances alter cases," the old copy-books used to say.

Mary Moraine did not die, and one day she, as well as Dr. Greeley, went across the "herring-pond," and renewed her winter companionship with the four Greeley sisters.

She has a great project that she will grow cyclamens largely up in her northern garden.

## The Editor's Note Book.

M. DE LESSEPS and our principal shipowners have arrived at the terms of an agreement, which, so far as anyone unconnected with the trade can judge, appears to be fair enough from the commercial point of view.

BUT it must not be forgotten that the purely commercial point of view is by no means the only one from which the question must be considered, nor indeed is it by any means the most important. The free navigation of the Suez Canal is of vital importance to our interests, and it is the political aspect of the question which it behoves our Government to bear in mind.

AND it is exactly here that the Leadenhall Street treaty breaks down, for the one point on which M. de Lesseps and the shipowners are not agreed, is the one point which is of national importance, and the one on which the country will surely insist, notwithstanding all the polite things which have been said to and by M. de Lesseps.

M. CHARLES DE LESSEPS, who acted for the Company, cannot agree that the shares held by the British Government should be made to carry adequate voting power at the meetings of the shareholders. Whatever the opinion of the present Government may be on this matter, we have no very accurate means of judging. But I do not think that many months will pass before it is borne in upon M. de Lesseps's mind that the people of this country know perfectly well what is necessary to safeguard our interests in the Egyptian water-way to the East, and are quietly determined to have it.

UNFORTUNATELY for M. de Lesseps he has, in making not very extensive concessions to British shipowners, irritated the French shareholders, some of whom have expressed their dissatisfaction in the emphatic form of infernal machines. M. de Lesseps, like a good many other people, is experiencing the difficulties which attend upon running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

IT is satisfactory to know that the judges, with a single exception, are unanimous in declaring that the bad example set in Mr. Charles Russell's speech in the defence of O'Donnell is not to be admitted as a precedent. It is difficult enough already to keep the minds of jurors fixed upon the circumstance that they have nothing to do with anything but facts, and counsel have already quite enough opportunities of confusing their hearers with ingenious speculation instead of adhering to truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

MR. CHARLES RUSSELL's excuse for the dramatic recital of the story of a series of events which never took place and which was entirely unsupported by any sort of evidence, was that, if the prisoner had been undefended by counsel, he would have been at liberty to make the statement himself. But it is obvious that when such a story is told by counsel an entirely false glamour is thrown over it, and there is serious danger that jurymen may confound the tale with the teller and accept it, as if it were a statement of facts within his own knowledge, instead of being mere sound and fury, signifying little or nothing.

IT is a curious thing that all the action which the Government of the United States has hitherto taken for the suppression of Mormonism in Utah has resulted in failure, and that President Arthur should be obliged to express himself in favour of the repeal of the Act on which the Government of Utah Territory depends, and the assumption by Congress of the entire political control there. That is to say, Utah has successfully defied the United States for many years, and it is found that the only way to abolish polygamy is actually to stamp it out.

THE Whalley will case reads like the plot of a novel by Mr. Wilkie Collins or M. Gaboriau, and is chiefly remarkable for an amount of perjury which would have astonished even a Welsh County Court judge. In the course of the case one more popular belief was declared by experts to be a delusion. There is no such thing, it appears, as "rubbing out" pencil marks with india-rubber. The filaments of the paper are only rubbed over the marks, which are as likely as not to reappear in the course of time, as, indeed, happened in the present case.

IT is not everyone who is a judge of hanging, and it must be left to experts to decide whether the theory of the present or that of the late executioner is the more in accordance with physiological facts, but it is very easy to decide that the employment of a hangman as to whose sobriety there can be the slightest doubt is altogether improper, and that, if he makes a public-house exhibition of himself and the implements of his trade, he ought to be dismissed forthwith.

It would have been pleasant to think that the offer of a peerage to Mr. Alfred Tennyson had been intended simply as an honour to literature, and that it had been accepted as such. The connections of Mr. Tennyson's family with courtly society, and the fact that Mr. Tennyson himself is specially a *persona grata* with the Prime Minister, would, however, in all probability, have had more to do with the matter than any respect for literature, which, unless it is allied with money or rank, does not receive much favour from Court or State in this country. But, as a matter of fact, the offer appears only to have existed in the too fertile brain of a writer for the newspapers.

MANY people will think that Mr. F. C. Burnand is a little too severe, week after week, in *Punch*, on amateur actors and on scions of noble families who take to the stage as a profession whether they have the necessary talent or not. Amateur actors are all very well in their way, and "everybody"—including the genially caustic editor of *Punch* himself—has at some time or another figured in their ranks.

BUT the thing becomes a nuisance and a subject for derision when one finds an entire column of the *Daily Telegraph*, in leader type, devoted to a notice of a performance of "The Merchant of Venice" by a club of Oxford undergraduates. There is no earthly reason why these young gentlemen should not amuse themselves with amateur acting, but that their immature efforts should be treated in a great daily paper with as much detail and as much gush as is commonly devoted to a first-rate performance at a leading London theatre is simply ridiculous.

THE production of "Claudian" at the Princess's Theatre is a remarkably interesting theatrical event, in that it proves that an alliance between the poetical drama and that which concerns itself more immediately with strong situations and sensational effects is not only possible but distinctly advantageous. From almost all points of view, indeed, "Claudian" is an excellent play, and, as it has besides the good fortune to be mounted with that keen appreciation of the artistic and that subtle attention to detail of which Mr. Wilson Barrett is so perfect a master, it seems certain to maintain the hold on popular favour which it deservedly won on the first night.

THE one objection to the play is that, from the very nature of the story, there is a certain similarity between various links in its chain of events, but the main interest is, after all, so strong that the defect is scarcely apparent while the play is in progress, and only assumes any large proportions when colder after-consideration comes to a closer analysis than is possible during the performance itself. Except in the comic scenes, which are even puerile at times, Mr. Will's dialogue is as good as Mr. Herman's construction, and both authors may be congratulated on a well-earned success.

MR. WILSON BARRETT has rarely given the public a more carefully finished or a sounder piece of acting than his "Claudian," which for delicacy, pathos, and sustained power, deserves to rank among the most remarkable performances of our time. Never for one moment does he falter in the execution of a most arduous task; and never for one moment does he lose the hold on the audience which he secures on his first entrance. His natural advantages of feature, voice, and bearing are exactly what are wanted for the part, and a studiously simple but most picturesque costume completes the picture.

THE principal female character is played by Miss Eastlake with many touches of sympathetic art, but with a certain tendency to monotony which impairs its general effect; Miss Emmeline Ormsby is very interesting and effective; Miss Mary Dickens—I quote from the *Standard*—"made a most successful appearance" in a very pretty and pathetic little part; and Miss Helen Bruno delivers her one important speech with considerable force and impressiveness. It is a pity that the authors could not have contrived to provide an adequate part for so sound and capable an actress as Mrs. Huntley.

THE same feeling of regret will also be felt by all who see the play that so little is given to that excellent actor, Mr. E. S. Willard, and that Mr. George Barrett, who is deservedly a favourite with the Princess's audience, absolutely has no chance of making anything of the inane comic lover. Mr. Speakman, on the other hand, has a fair opportunity and makes the most of it, and there is some thoroughly good acting in Mr. Hudson's nefarious Tetrarch. Minor parts are well filled by Mr. Frank Cooper, Mr. Huntley, and Mr. Fulton, and, indeed, as is always the case at this theatre, every part, down to the very smallest, is represented with the utmost care.

SCENERY, dresses, and stage management are all admirable, and the earthquake in the second act is a wonderful piece of stage effect, and I feel sure that the general opinion on the first night, when the play went without a hitch, was that Mr. Wilson Barrett and the little army of workers whom he leads so courageously and so ably may be congratulated on a victory well-earned and well-deserved.

C. D.

## Remarkable Memories.

THE memory for figures, or power of mental calculation, is well-known to all of us, either by its presence or its absence. Jedediah Buxton, George Bidder, and Zerah Colburn, are instances too familiarly known to need detail here. George Watson, the Sussex calculator, could tell the dates of every day since he was a child, and what he was doing on that day; he could show many other strange freaks of memory; but was a heavy, ignorant fellow generally, very vain of his one acquirement.

The memory of languages is quite a distinct faculty, so far as can be judged from recorded instances. Mithridates, we are told, could converse, in their own languages, to the natives of twenty-three countries which were under his sway. Cardinal Mezzofanti appears to have had the faculty in a stronger degree than any other person that ever lived. While educating for the priesthood, he learned Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, French, German, and Swedish. As a professor at some of the Italian universities he constantly added to his store; until, at the age of forty-three, he could read in twenty languages, and converse in eighteen. In 1841, when he was sixty-seven years old, he was as well acquainted with Portuguese, English, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Polish, Bohemian, Servian, Magyar, Turkish, Irish, Welsh, Wallachian, Albanian, Bulgarian, Illyrian, Lettish, Lappish, as with the language he had first learned; while to Arabic he added Persian, Sanscrit, Koordish, Georgian, Syriac, Chaldee, Samaritan, Chinese, Coptic, Ethiopic, Abyssinian, and other Asiatic and African tongues. At the time of his death, in 1849, Mezzofanti could write, and converse fluently, in more than seventy languages.

All the other accounts of memory for words are poor as compared with this; nevertheless, many of them are sufficiently remarkable. John Kemble used to say that he could learn a whole number of the *Morning Post* in four days; and General Christie made a similar assertion; but it is not known how far either of them verified their statements.

Robert Dillon could repeat in the morning six columns of a newspaper which he had read overnight. During the Repeal debate in the House of Commons, now nearly fifty years ago, one of the members wrote out his speech, sent it to the newspapers, and repeated it to the House in the evening; it was found to be verbatim the same as that which he had written out. John Fuller, a land agent in Norfolk, could remember every word of a sermon and write it out correctly when he got home; this was tested by comparing his written account with the clergyman's manuscript. Seneca could repeat two thousand words on hearing them once. Scaliger could repeat a hundred verses or more after having read them a single time. Magliabechi, who had a prodigious memory, was once put to a severe test. A gentleman lent him a manuscript, which was read and returned; the owner some time afterwards, pretending he had lost it, begged Magliabechi to write out as much as he could remember; whereupon the latter, appealing to his memory, wrote out the whole essay. Cyrus, if some of the old historians are to be credited, could remember the name of every soldier in his immense army. There was a Corsican boy who could rehearse forty thousand words, whether sense or nonsense, as they were dictated, and then repeat them in the reversed order without making a single mistake. A physician of Massachusetts, about sixty years ago, could repeat the whole of "Paradise Lost" without a mistake, although he had not read it for twenty years. Euler, the great mathematician, when he became blind, could repeat the whole of Virgil's "Æneid," and could remember the first line and the last line in every page of the particular edition which he had been accustomed to read before he became blind.

One kind of retentive memory may be considered as the result of sheer hard work, a determination towards one particular achievement, without reference either to cultivation, or to memory on other subjects. This is frequently shown by persons in humble life in regard to the Bible. An old beggar-man at Stirling, known about fifty years ago as Blind Alick, afforded an instance of this. He knew the whole of the Bible by heart; inasmuch that if a sentence were read to him, he could name book, chapter, and verse; or if the book, chapter, and verse were named, he could give the exact words. A gentleman, to test him, repeated a verse, purposely making one verbal inaccuracy; Alick hesitated, named the place where the passage is to be found, but at the same time pointed out the verbal error. The same gentleman asked him to repeat the ninetyeth verse of the seventh chapter of the book of Numbers. Alick almost instantly replied: "There is no such verse; that chapter has only eighty-nine verses." Gassendi had acquired by heart six thousand Latin verses, and, in order to give his memory exercise, he was in the habit daily of reciting six hundred verses from different languages. Saunderson, another mathematician, could repeat all Horace's odes, and a great part of the other Latin authors. La Croze, after listening to twelve verses in as many languages, could not only repeat them in the order in which he heard them, but could also transpose them. Pope had an excellent memory, and many persons have amused themselves by looking through his writings, and pointing out how often he had brought it into play. He was able to turn with great readiness to the precise place in a book where he had seen any passages that had struck him. John Lynden had a very peculiar faculty for getting things by rote,

and he could repeat correctly any long, dry document, such as an Act of Parliament, after having heard it read; but if he wanted any single paragraph, he was obliged to begin at the beginning, and proceed with his recital until he came to what he required. There was a French novelist, who, being a printer, composed a volume in type, and thus the book was printed without having been written. Bishop Warburton had a prodigious memory, which he taxed to an extraordinary degree. His "Divine Legation" would lead one to suppose that he had indefatigably collected and noted down the innumerable facts and quotations there introduced; but his only note-book was an old almanack, in which he occasionally jotted down a thought. Scaliger obtained so perfect a knowledge of one Latin book that he offered to repeat any passage with a dagger at his breast, to be used against him in case of a failure of memory.

## Cookery.

### A LITTLE DINNER-PARTY.

AT this time of the year it often happens that people wish to entertain their friends at a little dinner-party, but because of the expense, or because of the difficulty of cooking a dinner of several courses by an ordinary range, they are obliged to forego this pleasure. These questions, however, both of difficulty and of expense, resolve themselves into one of management.

First, then, as to the cost of the dishes given in the bill of fare. It will be seen by the recipe for hare soup, that sufficient for a party of eight or ten persons can be made at little more than the cost of the hare; indeed, if the suggestion is followed to reserve a portion for an *entrée*, it will be less. The price of fish varies so much that it is not possible to estimate it; but sometimes one kind is more moderate than another, and it should always be possible to have a nice dish of fish at a cost not exceeding six shillings. A piece of braised beef is a handsome dish, and as only a portion of it will be consumed by the guests, the cost will be small. The same may be said of a goose, which is now often sold by weight in London at so low a rate as eightpence-halfpenny a pound for prime qualities. Ptarmigan are inexpensive, and as two birds will make the *salmi*, three to four shillings should cover the cost of this dish. The sweet dishes are cheap enough, and can be prepared the day before they are required.

Having thus disposed of the question of expense we come to that which is generally less easy to set aside—that of cooking a dinner of several courses. One cause of failure in quiet little entertainments is that too much strain is often put on the roasting department. An inexperienced housekeeper will arrange for a roast joint, poultry, and game, and although the cook may be on her mettle, and try to accomplish what she is assured is done in other houses, it is ten to one if all the dishes are not injured. It will be seen in our bill of fare that the work for the range is pretty equally divided between boiling, stewing, baking, and roasting, and that some of the dishes can be ready a little beforehand, so that the cook's attention may not be diverted from the fish and roast, which require watching at the last moment. In a kitchen where there is only one pair of hands to do everything, even when these are both clever and experienced, a good deal of management and forethought are required to secure the success of "only a little dinner." Every preparation should be made early in the day, all things bought and sent in certainly before noon. The soup will, of course, be made the day before, and only require to be finished when wanted. The fish on coming in will be treated with vinegar or lemon-juice as directed, and the flavour will thereby be much improved. The goose will be all the better, too, for being stuffed early in the day, and the giblets will require to be well boiled in order to make the gravy rich and of fine flavour. The same must be said of the ptarmigan, which would not suffer by being prepared the day, before if necessary.

No *entrées* are given in this menu, because nearly all the dinner being of made dishes, they are not required as in the case of plain roast and boiled.

### MENU.

Hare Soup.	
Brill à la Crème.	Purée of Endive.
Braised Ribs of Beef.	Chutney Sauce.
Roast Goose.	Salmi of Ptarmigan.
Victoria Pudding.	Orange Cream.
Strawberry Tartlets.	

### HARE SOUP.

Roast a fine hare for a quarter of an hour, and having cut away the meat in long slices from the back bone, put it aside to make an *entrée*, or, if economy is not an object, use the whole of the hare. Cut up the body of the hare, and put it with the gravy which has dripped in roasting into the stock-pot with a slice of lean ham or bacon bones, four onions fried, a carrot, turnip, celery, a small bundle of thyme and parsley, half-a-dozen peppercorns, a blade of mace, and two quarts of stock. When you have skimmed the pot, cover closely, and let it boil gently for three hours; then strain the soup, take off the

fat, and having allowed it to boil up, thicken with French potato and ordinary flour. Stir in a teaspoonful of powdered sugar, add salt if necessary, and a little cayenne-pepper, and when about to serve, a glass of port wine.

This soup is finer if half a pint to a pint of claret is used instead of the same quantity of stock. In this case port wine will not be needed.

### BRILL À LA CRÈME.

Choose a thick and perfectly fresh brill, pass a knife down the backbone so as to detach without removing the flesh or in any way injuring the appearance of the fish. Put two or three spoonfuls of French vinegar in a dish, pass the brill through it on both sides, and having lightly rubbed with salt, let it lie for an hour or two, then press between the bone and the flesh a stuffing made as follows: Soak the crumb of a French roll in cold milk, squeeze it as dry as possible, put it in a stewpan with an ounce of butter, the yolk of an egg, a pinch of salt, and a few grains of cayenne-pepper. Work the mixture over the fire until it is smooth and compact, then take half its weight in fresh lobster, pounded in a mortar, or of preserved lobster, and half a teaspoonful of essence of anchovy. Put this stuffing into the fish. Having done this, lay the fish, black side downwards, in a well buttered tin baking-dish, with a gill of sauterne or other wine of a similar character, a teaspoonful each of French chili, of shalot vinegar, and of essence of anchovy. Bake for about an hour, basting the fish frequently with the liquor, taking care it does not become the least brown. By the time the brill is done have ready a good white sauce made as follows: Mix a dessertspoonful of fine flour in two of cold milk, stir on to it a gill of boiling cream, or of milk which has been reduced from half a pint to a gill by slowly boiling it; stir the sauce over the fire for five minutes, beat in two ounces of fine fresh butter and the yolk of an egg, stir until both are well mixed in, strain the liquor in which the fish was cooked into the sauce, stirring briskly as you do it. Put the brill on a dish, pour the sauce over, and serve very hot.

### BRAISED RIBS OF BEEF.

Choose the long rib, and, having removed the bone, roll the meat round tightly, securing it with bands of broad tape or calico. Put the meat either into the braising-pot with a little minced beef-suet or dripping, and fry quickly until brown on both sides. This done, put the bones, broken up small, a tablespoonful of salt, a dozen peppercorns, two onions lightly fried, a carrot and turnip cut up small, a bundle of sweet herbs, and sufficient broth or water to come half-way up the meat. Let the pot boil rapidly for five minutes, then draw it to the side of the range and let it simmer gently for two hours. Once during the cooking turn the meat, and when it is tender take it out and keep hot whilst you prepare the gravy, which strain, and having taken off all the fat, boil down to half-glaze in a stewpan without a lid. Now put the meat and the gravy, which, if necessary, may be enriched by the addition of a little gelatine, into the pot, and having turned the former about until well glazed, put it on its dish, with a *purée* of endive, prepared as follows:

### PURÉE OF ENDIVE.

Choose a fine white head, wash, pick, and pour boiling water over, let it lie for ten minutes, then squeeze perfectly dry, chop, and put it into a stewpan with a teaspoonful of salt, and a cupful of white broth or milk. Having stewed the endive until tender, add enough potato-flour to make the sauce thick, and when ready to serve stir in a little lemon-juice.

### ROAST GOOSE.

Mix four ounces of onion, put them in a stewpan with an ounce of butter, cover closely, and let them cook gently, without taking the least colour, until they are tender, then mix them with four teaspoonfuls of fresh sage, dried quickly on the hot-plate, and rubbed to a fine powder through a sieve, and season with black pepper and salt. Put this stuffing in the body of the goose some hours before roasting it, and let it lie breast downwards. Roast for an hour and a quarter to an hour and a half, basting frequently, and browning the bird equally.

The gravy for goose should be made of the giblets, and if household stock is at hand will be very good without the addition of beef. Fry the giblets nicely, allow two large onions, also fried, and a small bundle of sweet-herbs, and boil for two hours. Strain, allow the gravy to cool, remove all fat, season to taste, and let it again boil up. If liked, thicken slightly with potato-flour. Gravy, unless in a small quantity by way of garnish, should not be put upon the dish with game or poultry of any kind, as it is apt to cause inconvenience to the carver, and enough of it cannot be given with each serving.

Part of the liver of the goose, after it has been lightly cooked, can be minced, and added to the seasoning, and is a good addition to it.

### CHUTNEY SAUCE.

This is suggested as a change, and perhaps a refinement, on apple-sauce. Chutney is a pickle which should be home-made; although the season is somewhat advanced, it might still be made by the recipe given in the Correspondence Column of HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 125.

Make a gill of claret hot, stir in a teacupful of chutney; then stir both together over a slow fire for three or four minutes, but do not let the sauce boil. It should be both hot, sweet, and rather thick, a little cayenne and sugar being added if necessary.



## SALMI OF PTARMIGAN.

Lightly roast a pair of ptarmigan, let them get cool, cut up into joints, remove the skin, reserve the best pieces for the *salmi*, and use the other portions with the skin for the gravy. Put these trimmings into a stewpan with three gills of plain beef gravy, a gill of claret, two onions lightly fried, a small bundle of sweet-herbs, four peppercorns, two cloves, two shallots, and half a teaspoonful of salt. Boil gently for an hour, or until reduced to half a pint. Having strained and taken off the fat, let the gravy boil up, and thicken it with an ounce of butter and an ounce of flour, which have been worked together over the fire into a smooth paste. Put in the pieces of ptarmigan, let them get hot through, and serve with triangular pieces of fried bread round the dish.

## VICTORIA PUDDING.

A quarter of a pound of breadcrumbs, three ounces of suet shred very finely, a quarter of a pound of apple marmalade, the juice of half a lemon and the peel grated, two ounces of sifted loaf-sugar, one egg, and a small pinch of salt. Mix all together; put the pudding into a buttered mould, and boil for three hours. Make a sauce by mixing two teaspoonfuls of potato-flour in cold water, and a quarter of a pint of boiling water. Stir in a tablespoonful of apple marmalade, a little lemon-juice and flavouring, simmer for five minutes, stir in half an ounce of butter, pour round the pudding, and serve.

## ORANGE CREAM.

Boil the finely-shred peel of three oranges for ten minutes with four ounces of lump-sugar and three gills of milk, strain and dissolve in it half an ounce of gelatine, whip it with the juice of the oranges and that of one lemon; or, if preferred, instead of the last, half a teaspoonful of citric acid dissolved in a little water.

Whipped cream can be added; but the cream will be found excellent without this addition.

## STRAWBERRY TARTLETS.

Fill puff-pastry cases with strawberries preserved whole, and on the top pile whipped cream.

## Books for Presents

AND

## Christmas Cards.

"KEEPSAKES," and "Books of Beauty," and other expensively-got-up forms of Christmas presents, had their day, and a very flourishing day, too, some forty years ago, and were succeeded by gift-books which improved printing and engraving processes made it possible to produce at much more reasonable prices, and now the custom of giving books as Yule-tide presents appears to be rapidly dying out. Except with firms who cater principally for boys and girls there is hardly even the pretence nowadays of making any special effort at this time of the year. Probably Christmas literature has been almost altogether killed by the development of the Christmas Number system, just as magazines generally have exerted a great, and as many people think, a paralyzing, influence on modern English literature as a whole. And it is noticeable that the subject of Christmas is the one subject which appears to be most studiously avoided in the few books which are published at Christmas-time.

IN noticing last year the publications of MESSRS. GRIFFITH AND FARRAN, of St. Paul's Churchyard, we described their selection as being both extensive and varied, and the remark is equally applicable to the very large collection which they have sent this year. The facsimile reproductions of the old-fashioned *Lion's Masquerade*, *Peacock at Home*, *Elephant's Ball*, and *Butterfly's Ball* (1s. each) are curious, and mark the extraordinary difference between what is demanded by our children and what satisfied our fathers, and contrast strangely with the pretty *Holly Series* (6d. each), half-a-dozen books of rhymes with coloured pictures by Ida Waugh, which are sure to be favourably received in the nursery. *The Fool's Paradise* (2s. 6d.) is a selection from Mr. Hotten's two volumes, made up from the funny "Münchener Bilderbogen," the humour of which is specially appropriate to the pantomime season. Of a very different class is Keble's *Evening Hymn*, with illustrations produced, it is to be presumed, in America, to the artists and engravers of which country are also due the numerous illustrations to Mrs. Sandford's *From May to Christmas at Thorne Hill* (5s.), a bright and lively book for children, but perhaps rather too American for our boys and girls. Yet another American production is an illustrated edition of Edgar Poe's ever popular *Raven*, in which the genius of the poet has had but a faint influence upon the artist. *Nora's Trust* (2s. 6d.), by Mrs. Gellie, and *The Count and the Cottage* (3s. 6d.), by Emma Marshall, are illustrated books for girls, and *Growing Up* (2s. 6d.), a story of some West Indian children, by Jennett Humphreys, with sufficiently uninteresting pictures, is described as a story of girls which boys may read. Stronger food for male youth is provided in the other half-dozen or so volumes provided by this firm, the titles of which will show the stirring nature of the subjects with

which they deal. *From Cadet to Captain* (5s.), a tale of Military Life, by J. Percy Groves; *In Time of War* (3s. 6d.), by James F. Cobb; *Middy and Ensign, or, the Jungle Station* (6s.), by G. Manville Fenn, a very ingenious olio of wild adventure and incident; *Paddy Finn, or, the Adventures of a Midshipman* (6s.), by the late W. H. G. Kingston; and *Friends though Divided, a Tale of the Civil War* (5s.), by G. A. Henty, who seems to have taken the place in the affections of English boys, so long occupied by Mr. Kingston. All these books are sound in tone and can be recommended as presents for boys.

MESSRS. BICKERS AND SON, of Leicester Square, have published a series of seven translations, by Professor R. B. Anderson, of the works of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the Norwegian novelist, who is well known among his own people and in the north of Europe generally, but whose stories are perhaps a little too local in their interest to become largely popular amongst the young people of this country, for whom the present issue is presumably intended, and who will be more repelled than attracted by the odd-looking Norwegian names. Messrs. Bickers and Son's other publications have not the charm of novelty, but Southey's *Life of Nelson*, Edgar's *Heroes of England*, and Dr. Kippis's *Voyages of Captain Cook*, will always be attractive to high-spirited boys, and the *Tales from Shakespeare* of Charles and Mary Lamb are always useful as a sort of Shakespearian primer.

MESSRS. FREDERICK WARNE AND CO., of Bedford Street, have, in the "Queen's Gift Series," quite a library of little illustrated books of rather unequal merit, the drawing of the pictures generally being a good deal below the standard required even for children's books nowadays, and it will be a very inexperienced young lady or gentleman indeed who fails to remark the extreme badness of the drawings in *The Birthday Party*. The *Afternoon Tea Painting Book* (1s.), with illustrations by J. G. Sowerby and H. H. Emmerson, contains a large collection of pictures to be coloured by youthful amateurs, which ought to provide plenty of occupation for thousands of little paint-brushes. "Aunt Louisa" is again to the fore for the benefit of her little friends, with a volume of *Ships, Birds, and Wonder Tales*, with twenty-four pages of original illustrations, admirably printed in colours by Kronheim, and Messrs. Warne's collection is completed by two story books for young people, *Only a Child*, by M. A. Ellis, and *Blindman's Holiday*, the latter of which must not be confounded with Mr. W. W. Fenn's collection of stories and essays, which was published some months ago under the same title.

MESSRS. GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, of the Broadway, Ludgate Hill, have had the happy thought of publishing versions of *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Swiss Family Robinson* in words of one syllable, with a copious supply of pictures, coloured and otherwise. The other books comprised in Messrs. Routledge's collection are very varied in character. They are *Nights with Uncle Remus*, another series of stories by Joel Chandler Harris, which will be acceptable to people who have not yet tired of the peculiar humour of Brer Rabbit and Company; *Bacon's Essays*, a volume of Professor Morley's Universal Library; *Old Wives' Fables*, a collection of tales of ogres and witches and all sorts of wonders, by Edward Laboulaye—translations we presume—with any quantity of amusing illustrations; a curiously, and to say truth, not a very pleasantly illustrated *Coloured Bible for the Young*, the value of which, from any point of view, is not quite apparent; the *Children's Christmas*, a set of nine carols and choruses with music; the *Bible Emblem Anniversary Book*, by the compilers of the "Floral Birthday Book," a work which consists of texts for every day, with more or less appropriate illustrations, poetical and pictorial; *Robin Hood*, a collection of poems, songs, and ballads relative to the popular outlaw, edited by J. Ritson; *King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table*, founded on Sir Thomas Malory's history, by Henry Frith; and, by the same author, *Ascents and Adventures*, a series of anecdotes of mountain climbing.

SINCE the above paragraph was in type, we have received another large parcel of books from MESSRS. ROUTLEDGE, the most important of which are a number of illustrated story and poetry books for young readers, typical among them being *Snow Flakes*, and *Little Bird Red and Little Bird Blue*, by M. Betham Edwards; *The Old Farm Gate*, and *Sunday Talks with Mamma*, and *For Very Little People*, by Mrs. Sale Barker. A volume of little drawing-room plays called *Lazarella*, and comprising pieces by such well-known writers as Mr. E. L. Blanchard and Mr. W. Yardley, will be welcome at this season to many a troupe of juvenile comedians. Of the other publications issued from the Broadway, we have only space to mention the re-issues of those popular favourites, *Elizabeth, or, The Exiles of Siberia*; Grimm's *Household Stories*; Hans Christian Andersen's tales; and *Every Boy's Book*; the last named of which has again been revised and brought up to date under the able editorship of Mr. Edmund Routledge, and is as complete an encyclopædia of sports and amusements as any boy can desire.

MESSRS. DEAN AND SON, of 160A, Fleet Street, are inexhaustible caterers for the little ones, and send quite a bewildering assortment of

coloured picture-books at most moderate prices. Among these are *Buckets and Spades*, nursery rhymes with music; *So Happy*, and *At the Mother's Knee* (each 3s. 6d.), verses and pictures; *The Twinkling Eye* series (6d.); the *Graphic Alphabet* series (6d.); *Fresh Gathered*, and *Over the Hills* (each 1s. 6d.), the latter, perhaps, the best of all; *At Home and Abroad*, and *Dotty's Pets* (1s. each); *The Rose and Lily* series (each 6d.); and *The Little Gem* packet (1s.), containing no fewer than twenty-four little books of coloured pictures. Certainly mamma or auntie must be very hard to please if she cannot find suitable presents among Messrs. Dean's publications.

MESSRS. CASSELL AND CO. (LIMITED), of Belle Sauvage Yard, only send *Treasure Island*, a story for boys, constructed on somewhat familiar lines by Robert Louis Stevenson, and *Sunlight and Shade*, being *Poems and Pictures of Life and Nature*, very profusely and beautifully illustrated.

MESSRS. HODDER AND STOUGHTON'S collection comprises a number of story-books of a graver tone than is the case with the Christmas books of most of the other publishers, and may be equally divided into books for girls and books for boys. The former are, *In a Corner of the Vineyard*, a village story by Isaac Pleydell; *Nelly Channell* (3s. 6d.), by Sarah Doudney; *Hermie's Rosebuds*, and *other Stories* (3s. 6d.), by L. T. Meade; and *Busy Hands and Patient Hearts*, and *Seppel* (each 2s. 6d.), translations from the German of Gustav Nieritz. The books for boys are, *A Brave Resolve*, and *The Beggars*, by J. B. Liefde, presumably translations; *A Life of George Washington*, by William M. Thayer; *Grey Hawk*, *Life and Adventures Among the Red Indians*, by Dr. James Macaulay; and *Wild Adventures Round the Pole*, a truly thrilling nautical story, by Dr. Gordon Stables.

ONLY two books have reached us from MESSRS. MACMILLAN, of Bedford Street: *Hannah Tarne*, a story by the author of "Mr. Grey-smith," with illustrations by W. J. Hennessey, which will be found suitable for girls; and *Two Little Waifs*, a pleasantly written tale of two little English children temporarily lost, or rather mislaid, in Paris, from the agreeable pen of Mrs. Molesworth, and illustrated by Walter Crane, which is sure to be popular with younger readers.

In concluding our notices of Books for Presents, we may remark, as we have had occasion to do on previous occasions, on the strange reluctance which publishers appear to have to disclosing the prices of their books. Why the price should not be printed on the title-page it is difficult to understand.

MESSRS. EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, of Great New Street, have issued some very novel and extremely pretty calendars, illustrated with coloured floral subjects in excellent taste, and their collection of Christmas Cards is as varied and attractive as ever. Floral subjects predominate, but there is something suitable to all tastes.

From MESSRS. S. HILDESHEIMER AND CO. comes quite a bewildering selection of cards, executed with all the artistic care and taste for which this firm has gained so distinguished a name. Very pretty and ingenious are the folding cards, which, when opened, disclose bouquets of artificial flowers, and of a similar kind is the group of the Nativity, the latter having the additional advantage of being appropriate to the season, as is also the series of Winter Berries and Leaves, prettily frosted, and also the wreaths of leaves and berries in threefold ornamental colours. The series of half-a-dozen *Etchings Round about Stratford-on-Avon*, by Wilfrid Ball, are also distinguished by much artistic merit. To attempt to enumerate all the subjects with which Messrs. Hildesheimer's artists have dealt would require more space than we can spare, and we must content ourselves with saying that we have come upon nothing which is not in good taste.

MESSRS. HILDESHEIMER AND FAULKNER are also represented by a large assortment of cards, which are quite up to their usual standard of excellence. Among those which may be specially mentioned are some exquisite studies of flowers, by W. J. Muckley; some quaint and novel miniature screens, also decorated with floral subjects, by M. E. Duffield; a set of capital cats, by L. and H. Coudery; the prettily-bound selections from the English poets; and Ernest Wilson's novel landscape arrangements.

MESSRS. RAPHAEL TUCK AND SONS, whose last year's issue of cards, after designs by members of the Royal Academy and other distinguished artists, will, no doubt, be remembered by our readers, have not this year attempted so ambitious a flight, and their cards for this season, although containing many pretty pictures at most reasonable prices, are, for the most part, on familiar lines, and not specially remarkable for novelty of design. It would seem indeed as if Messrs. Tuck and the other first-class publishers of Christmas Cards had already done all that can possibly or reasonably be hoped for.

## Courting in Texas.

THIS is how a fond couple of Texan lovers come to an understanding, according to one who pretends to know.

He sits on one side of the room in a big white rocking-chair; she on the other side in a little white oak rocking-chair. A long-eared deerhound is by his side, a basket of sewing by hers; both the young couple rock incessantly. He sighs heavily, and looks out of a west window at a myrtle-tree; she sings lightly, and gazes out of the east window at a turnip patch. At last he remarks: "This is mighty good weather for cotton-picking." "'Tis that," the lady responds, "if we only had any to pick." The rocking continues. "What's your dog's name?" asked she. "Cooney." Another sigh-broken stillness. "What's he good for?" "What is who good for?" says he abstractedly. "Your dog, Cooney." "For ketching 'possums." Silence for half an hour. "He looks like a deerhound." "Who looks like a deerhound?" "Cooney." "He is; but he's sort of bellowed, an' gettin' old an' slow, an' he ain't no count on a cold trail." In the quiet ten minutes that ensues she takes two stitches in her quilt, a gorgeous affair made after the pattern called "Rose of Sharon." "Your ma raising many chickens?" "Forty odd." Then more rocking, and somehow the big rocking-chair and the little rocking-chair are jammed side by side, and rocking is impossible. "Makin' quilts?" he observes. "Yes," she replies, brightening up, for she is great on quilts. "I've just finished a gorgeous 'Eagle of Brazil,' a 'Setting Sun,' and a 'Nation's Pride.' Have you ever seen the 'Yellow Rose of the Prairie'?" "No." More silence. Then he says: "Do you love cabbage?" "I do that." Presently his hand is accidentally laid on hers, of which she does not seem to be at all aware. Then he suddenly says: "I've a great mind to bite you." "What have you a great mind to bite me for?" "Kase you won't have me." "Kase you ain't axed me." "Well, now I ax you." "Then now I has you." Cooney dreams he hears a sound of kissing, and the next day the young man goes after a marriage-license.

## Household Gardening.

SEVERE weather, even if it is not present, may occur at any time, and owners of cherished window-plants should be on the alert, or the work of a year, or much longer, may be destroyed in a night. While it is impossible that plants that are in a growing state can have too much light, or be placed too close to the glass in mild weather, it is not safe to trust them there during cold nights.

### PLANTS IN ROOMS.

Numbers of plants are killed every year which might have been saved by removing them from the windows to a table or mantelpiece, when frost is imminent. It is obvious they have as much light there after nightfall as if they were left close to the glass, while they have the inestimable advantage of several degrees of higher temperature. During the day, when there are fires in rooms, the plants may be safe enough near the windows, but at night they are often in extreme danger.

### A FROST INDICATOR.

A little water in a saucer placed near the glass, or a damp sponge, will indicate the presence or absence of frost, and if there is the slightest suspicion of the formation of ice remove the plants at once, and stand them in the best position at command for making them safe.

### FROST-BITTEN PLANTS.

Although many persons will prevent their plants being injured by prompt action, others will fail to do so, and will be surprised and annoyed to find that the frost has reached them when they are examined early on some cold morning.

When this is the case it is not uncommon for the plants to be removed and placed near the fire, with the object of thawing them. This is the very worst thing that can be done, and is almost sure to end in killing them.

Frozen plants should certainly be quickly taken from the windows, but they should be stood in a cool, not a warm position; indeed it cannot be too cold, provided they are out of the reach of frost.

The change to a warmer temperature cannot possibly be too gradual, and it is often of great advantage to sprinkle them with cold water, as this, even if apparently "stinging" cold, will, and must be a few degrees warmer than the frosted plants, or it would not retain its fluid state.

Sprinkling plants with warm water would be certain death to them, but the quite cold application has often saved their lives.

### PLANTS IN FRAMES.

Whatever these may be, let them be kept dry during severe weather. When the soil in which a plant is established is quite dry it will endure far more frost than when it is wet.

Auriculas, for instance, those most charming of Alpine plants, that so many people might grow in a box with a glazed roof over it, will need little or no water now. Thousands of the most valuable sorts are regularly wintered in cold frames, and provided they are kept dry, not

one in a thousand is killed, or even injured during a very severe winter.

Carnations of the choicer varieties, and no flowers are more beautiful, are similarly preserved, and no water is given, except when the soil approaches a dry state. When this occurs, water is essential, but it is applied with the greatest care, not a drop being spilt on the foliage. That is a very important precaution, and, however simple it may appear, should never be overlooked in the management of plants in cold frames during the winter months.

#### PLANTS IN WINDOW-BOXES.

Boxes on the outside of window-sills cannot be kept dry, but still as the plants in them are hardy, they are seldom injured if they are not watered in frosty weather. We have known persons give a little warm water to the plants when the soil was crisp. This should never be done, as the practice is decidedly unsafe. A layer of moss or cocoanut-fibre refuse spread on the surface of the soil is often of great benefit, but no water should be given until the frost has left the soil.

#### SNOW AS A PROTECTOR.

When snow falls during frosty weather it should never be removed from plants in the open air, except in some instances when its weight threatens to break them. No material that can be applied is equal to this, and no matter how long the plants may be covered with it, they never suffer through the absence of light. This is evident by the bright green grass which is so refreshing after the snow has melted, even if it has covered the ground for months.

#### COVERING FRAMES.

The fact above noticed demonstrates that plants, when frozen, do not suffer if kept in total darkness, for the grass can have no light when deeply buried in snow. Yet it never blanches, that is, turns a light colour, as it would do if it were not frozen. It is precisely the same with all other plants. We have often kept frames containing half-hardy plants, such as bedding *Calceolarias*, Pansies, Hollyhocks, and other kinds above noticed, thickly covered with straw night and day, for weeks, and when the frost departed the plants were as fresh as ever after their long period of darkness; but we were careful to let them be slightly frosted before covering them. When plants in frames, therefore, are sent to sleep by frost, let them sleep in darkness. Do not remove the covering until a thaw occurs, and then remove it gradually, letting them have light by degrees, and all will be well.

#### BULBS IN POTS.

Examine Hyacinths, Tulips, and other bulbs that were potted and buried a month or more ago, and withdraw them if they have grown more than half an inch, those that have not grown to that extent to be left covered until they have.

The growths made under the covering will be nearly white. In this state it is not advisable to place them in the sun; indeed, they should not for a week be exposed to the full daylight.

There is no better plan than to quite cover the tender-looking crowns with moss, and keep it damp, the moisture being refreshing. In the course of three or four days most of the moss may be removed, and in about a week the crowns will be green, light then being essential.

The pots will now be crowded with white fleshy roots, and these must never be dry. The soil must not be soddened, but must at all times be decidedly moist, and on the very first symptoms of its being otherwise water must be given copiously. Let the plants have all the light possible, being careful to have them out of the reach of frost, and in due time fine spikes and beautiful flowers will be produced.

#### HYACINTHS IN WATER.

The glasses in which the bulbs were placed, and stood in a cool, dark cupboard, must now be brought to the light, at least those that are fairly filled with roots, as these roots will have forced growth from the crowns of the bulbs.

As in the case of Hyacinths that have been covered with ashes, so with these in water that have started into growth under the conditions indicated: they must not at once be taken direct from a dark place and stood in the full sun, but their exposure must be gradual.

If there is, as there will be, an appreciable waste of water in the glasses, add more of the same temperature, so that it nearly, but not quite, touches the bulbs.

It is seldom that the water needs changing, and much injury is often done by withdrawing the roots and sponging them; this should never be attempted unless they become covered with brown filmy matter, and then they must be cleansed with great care, a soft feather being used for that purpose; and so long as the water remains tolerably clear it may be left undisturbed.

If a doubt exists as to whether the water should be changed or not, the safest plan will be to pour say a fourth of it out, without disturbing the plant, and add fresh. Rain-water is the best, but ordinary tap-water will do very well; but, as before observed, it must not be colder than that already in the glasses, nor should it be many degrees warmer, as the roots of plants like an equable temperature.

#### COLEUSES IN WINTER.

A Sheffield correspondent has suggested that notes on the culture and wintering of these plants would be acceptable to many readers besides himself.

Coleuses undoubtedly rank amongst the most beautiful and easily-grown of ornamental-foliaged plants, and in greenhouses and windows in the summer few plants are more effective.

They are equally striking in the winter, provided they can have the requisite heat for keeping them growing, and this is sixty degrees. They will exist in a temperature of fifty-five degrees, but below that they are not safe.

An ordinary greenhouse is too cold for them after September; they are really tropical plants, a fact that is often forgotten when they are seen growing so freely in flower-beds in the summer; but it must be remembered that the heat then exceeds that which we have stated as being necessary for their healthy growth.

There are not many greenhouses that are heated with hot water, in which a small frame or case cannot be fixed in one corner over the hot-water pipes. A layer of slates over these, covered with an inch or two of sawdust, forms a warm floor for small tender plants, and the heat is retained by the glazed light that covers the case.

Cuttings of Coleuses inserted in pots of sandy soil, and kept constantly moist, will strike in a warm frame of the kind mentioned, and form beautiful plants next summer. We have preserved dozens of plants in the manner suggested, but could never keep them alive in a temperature suited for such comparatively hardy flowers as *Pelargoniums*.

The plants under notice are, however, very cheap in the spring, rooted cuttings being purchasable for a few pence, and as they grow rapidly from May onwards, no one need deny himself the pleasure of growing a few richly-coloured Coleuses. At the proper time for obtaining plants we will give the necessary cultural particulars, and make a selection of some of the most handsome varieties.

## Correspondence.

#### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

#### QUESTION.

THE BRAMBLES IVY will be glad if anyone will give him the verse which accompanies "Venetia Valse," beginning "Upwards ascending," etc.

#### ANSWERS.

ANXIOUS MOTHER.—If you could let your boys have the companionship of other boys, you would find all these tastes would come of themselves, and you would not have to trouble yourself to direct them. Theatricals are an excellent way of passing the evening. Let the boys get up some simple farce with a few characters in it, such as "Box and Cox," or "The Area Belle"; you will find a good many instructions in a little book entitled, "Theatricals and Tableaux Vivants for Amateurs," by Charles Harrison, published by L. Upcott Gill. Routledge publishes a very good book of charades, but impromptu charades are better than any you can buy. Boys like bagatelle, and the "game of the race" very much as a rule, and some of them find a lasting amusement in chess. If they are at all artistic they might amuse themselves with making a toy-theatre, or some of those pretty paper-models that you buy in sheets.

BRTA.—1. "Butler's Lives of the Saints," 12 vols., 1s. each, Richardson. 2. Depends somewhat on the kind of wine, generally about twenty-seven gallons.

BROCKLEY.—Put the petroleum on the steel with a piece of flannel, and do not wipe it off. The old plan of rubbing steel over with mutton fat has always been found to answer in keeping steel from rust.

BROOKS OF SHEFFIELD.—1. You can read a will on payment of a shilling at the New Will Office, at Somerset House, Strand, and Victoria Embankment, and have it copied for a few shillings, according to the length. 2. Goose-tongue is an herbaceous plant, about a foot high or more, bearing white heads rather less in size than a daisy. It is found in moist meadows, especially in hilly districts, and is not the same thing as tarragon. 3. We do not know. 4. There is no English translation. 5. Saffron has grass-like leaves, and large crocus-like flowers of a purple colour. The dried stigmata form the saffron of the shops, which, when good, has a rich, deep orange colour, and is used as a flavouring and colouring ingredient, especially on the Continent, in culinary preparations, liqueurs, etc. Hay-saffron consists of the stigmata with part of the style carefully dried.

C. C. G.—An article on "Quinces" will appear next week.

C. H. (Sherborne).—Thanks, but we have received many copies.

CHICOT.—1. We are sorry you do not approve of the advertisements, but it would be impossible for us to give the quantity of matter we do for a

penny a week, or sixpence a month, without the assistance of advertisers. 2. Nicole Frères are among the best manufacturers. The Smith American Organ Company also supply very beautiful musical boxes.

CYDONIA.—You cannot do better than recommend your friend "Loudon's Encyclopædia of Gardening," 1871, 21s., and in conjunction with it "Brown's Practical Treatise on Forestry," 1830, 31s. 6d., Blackwood.

E. L. H.—Ferdinand II., King of the two Sicilies, succeeded to the throne November, 1830.

FUNGUS.—There is a useful little book entitled, "Mushroom Culture for Amateurs," by J. W. May, L. Upcott Gill, 1s. The subject of mushroom culture in cellars is fully treated therein.

G. B. (Derby).—If you wish to sell your old MS. you had better apply to Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson, and Hodge, 13, Wellington Street, Strand.

HEART'S DELIGHT.—The verses are the two last of a poem entitled, "A Denial," by Mrs. E. B. Browning:

So farewell thou, whom I have known too late  
To let these come so near.  
Be counted happy while men call thee great,  
And one beloved woman feels thee dear!  
Not I!—that cannot be.  
I am lost, I am changed; I must go farther, where  
The change shall take me worse, and no one dare  
Look in my face and see.

Meantime I bless thee. By these thoughts of mine  
I bless thee from all such!  
I bless thy lamp to oil, thy cup to wine,  
Thy hearth to joy, thy hand to an equal touch  
Of loyal truth. For me,  
I love thee not, I love thee not!—away!  
Here's no more courage in my soul to say,  
"Look in my face and see!"

HEREBY.—The term "Tyburn Ticket" was not, as you suppose, applied to a passport for the gallows, but was the popular name for a certificate given to the prosecutor of a felon, when the prosecution ended in a conviction. This kind of certificate was originated by statute (10 & 11 William III., c. 13, s. 2); its abolition took place in the year 1818. As the holder of a document of this kind was exempt from all "parish and ward offices within the parish wherein such felony was committed," these tickets were very valuable, and frequently sold for a high price.

H. L.—The charitable bequests in trust of the City of London Companies embrace a vast comprehensiveness of benevolent design, as remarkable as the entire amount must be magnificent, and, if it could be arrived at, as interesting to detail. They comprise pensions to decayed members; gifts of money, bread, meat, etc., to the poor; loans of various amounts to young beginners in business; funds for the benefit of hospitals, schools, exhibitors at the universities, for lectures and sermons, prisoners in the City gaols, etc. Persons desirous of benefiting by the funds of any of the Companies, or of obtaining more information respecting them, had better apply to the respective clerks, at their Companies' halls, for the necessary forms of application, etc.

HOUSEWIFE.—The directions for making pastry would take up too much space in this column; they were given fully in a valuable and original paper in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 32, and if you like to send three halfpence in stamps to the publisher, he will forward the number to you. Recipes for many kinds of cakes were given in Nos. 19 and 70, but if among them you do not find what you require please write again.

J. J.—Yes, if stamps are sent. Some time must elapse before MSS. can be read, as we receive so many.

M. H. (Altincham).—We are much interested by your allusion to Mr. Walter Besant's account of the herb which cured Professor Palmer, and by your testimony to the value of *lobelia inflata* as a curative agent.

M. O. B.—You could strengthen the vinegar by freezing it. Remove the ice which forms on the surface. The water of the vinegar alone freezes, leaving the acetic acid in solution in that which remains.

MONA.—Cremers, Regent Street, is the best place to get toy theatres. They are to be had from five shillings up to any price.

NURSE G.—Iceland-moss is not so much used now, but you might find it useful by way of a change. It is a species of lichen found in the arctic regions, and on the upper parts of lofty mountains. Dr. Pavy's recipe for its preparation is as follows: "Wash one ounce of the moss in cold water to remove impurities. Then heat with water up to nearly the boiling-point, and reject the liquid, which has extracted much of the bitter principle. Next boil with a pint of water for ten minutes in a covered vessel, and strain with gentle pressure while hot. A mucilaginous demulcent liquid, with mild bitter tonic properties. It may be flavoured with sugar, lemon-peel, white wine, or aromatics; or milk may be used instead of the water, by which a nourishing liquid is obtained."

PORNER.—We are much obliged by the offer of the verses ("The Post Boy"), but, unfortunately, we cannot use them.

ST. LEONARDS.—Skins dressed with alum and saltpetre will be soft and pliable. Reduce to a fine powder one spoonful of the former to two of the latter; sprinkle the powder on the flesh side of the skin, fold up tightly, and hang in a dry place. The process is completed in two or three days time by scraping the skin with a blunt-knife until clean and supple. We believe that skins can only be successfully dyed by skilled workmen.

THE BETROTHED.—1. Yes, a red nose may come from other causes than a too free use of alcohol. Do you remember the old lines:

Nose, nose, nose, nose,  
And who gave you that jolly red nose?  
Sinament and ginger, nutmeg and cloves,  
And that gave me my jolly red nose.

2. "A Complete Guide to the Game of Chess," by H. F. L. Meyer, cloth 7s. 6d (Griffith and Farran), will be the best book for you to get.

THE BRAMBLES IVY.—With respect to your enquiry as to "the cause of an echo," sound being produced by waves or pulses of the air, when such a wave meets an opposing surface, as a wall, it is reflected like light and proceeds in another direction, and the sound so heard is an echo. When the echo of a sound returns to the point whence the sound originated, the reflecting surface is at right angles to a line drawn to it from that point. An oblique surface sends the echo of a sound off in another direction, so

that it may be heard elsewhere, though not at the point where the sound originated. If the direct and reflected sounds succeed each other with great rapidity, which happens when the reflecting surface is near, the echo only clouds the original sound, but is not heard distinctly, and it is such indistinct echoes which interfere with the hearing in churches and other large buildings. Thus you will see that nothing short of the reconstruction of a building can prevent an echo when once it is there. Heavy curtains and hangings might, however, deaden the echo a little.

T. T. A. I. M.—The poem is "Faithful in Vanity Fair"; Suggested by One of David Scott's Illustrations of "Pilgrim's Progress." The book in which it is to be found is entitled "Thirty Years; Being Poems Old and New," by Miss Mulock, Macmillan and Co., 6s. The first verse runs as follows:

The great human whirlpool—'tis seething and seething:  
On! No time for shrieking out, scarcely for breathing;  
All tolling and moiling, some feeblier, some bolder,  
But each sees a fiend-face grim over his shoulder;  
Thus merrily live they in Vanity Fair.

WEE WIE.—1. Your MS., like so many others we receive, had no name or address written on it; therefore, we have been unable to communicate with you. 2. It is clear that if we were to advertise such a person as you require, she would at once become the fashion and "very expensive."

## Puzzles for Prizes.

### Prize Winners in No. 135.

1st Prize, 10s., "Trivia."

2nd Prize, 5s., "Idonea" (Frederick Waite, Esq., 40, Moscow Road, Bayswater).

"Trivia" is requested to send name and address.

### AN ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEARE.

Imogen, only daughter of Lear, an old military officer, has been betrothed from her infancy to Hamlet, only son of an old comrade of Lear's, and ward of a merchant, Iago. Imogen, however, has seen Romeo (Hamlet's fellow-student, and brought to Lear's house by Hamlet), and has fallen deeply in love with him, as he with her, at their first interview. Romeo cannot bear to deal treacherously towards his friend, Hamlet, and therefore will not utter his love; but by his appearance and manner betrays the secret to his sister, Portia, who determines to aid him. Hamlet, also, guesses the secret, and is sorely perplexed between his love for Imogen and his affection for Romeo.

On the other hand, Benedick, Imogen's cousin and foster-brother, discovers her indifference to Hamlet and passion for Romeo. Knowing the fiery nature of Lear, and ascertaining his chivalrous (almost obstinate) adherence to his plighted word at all costs, heightened in this instance by his devotion to the memory of his old fellow-officer, Hamlet's father, Benedick does not dare to plead his cousin's cause openly, and in his perplexity consults his follower, Touchstone.

Meanwhile, Iago, as Hamlet's guardian, has made Imogen's acquaintance, and, becoming deeply enamoured of her, determines to secure her for himself, by fair means or foul. At first, he tries to break off the proposed match by insinuating slanders against Hamlet to Lear; but the latter remains immovably bent on the match. Iago then enlists the aid of Falstaff, who soon ingratiates himself with Lear by lying tales of the wars. Falstaff undertakes to carry off Imogen, as she walks in the garden with her nurse, and convey her to a house of Iago's.

Touchstone overhears the plot and tells Benedick, who, seeking Romeo to consult with him, comes instead to Portia, and finding that she also is trying to bring Romeo and Imogen together, proposes that they should work in concert. They agree to counterplot Iago, and Portia suggests a plan. Falstaff is allowed to carry off Imogen and her nurse (whom he has bargained for as his share of the plunder), but is attacked on the way by Benedick and Touchstone disguised as robbers. Touchstone easily drives off Falstaff, while Benedick takes charge of Imogen and his foster-mother (the nurse), and substitutes for them Portia and Aguecheek, a senile admirer of Portia's, whom she has persuaded to dress up as an old woman. Falstaff returns, and unconscious of the exchange, carries them off to Iago, and boasts of his prowess in beating off the robbers, only to be confounded by the unrolling of Portia and Aguecheek. Iago, furious, menaces Portia, who confronts him boldly, while Aguecheek takes refuge behind her. Just then, Hamlet and Romeo, who have left Lear in despair at the loss of his daughter, and have traced Falstaff, rush in in time to defend Portia. Hamlet attacks and kills Iago (who is masked), and is horror-struck on finding who it is. Romeo, meanwhile, is astounded to find his sister in place of Imogen. Portia explains the mystery, and they return to Lear, where they find Benedick and Imogen just arrived.

Hamlet, remorseful at having killed his guardian, determines to resign Imogen to Romeo, and to retire into a monastery. Lear, softened by his grief at the supposed loss of his daughter, consents. Benedick and Portia make up a match, and Touchstone is duly rewarded.

TRIVIA.

"Trivia" is the only competitor who has sent in answers to both Puzzles. His Threepenny-Bit Puzzle is a model of clearness, and can be read almost as easily as print of the ordinary size. Besides the Lord's Prayer, he has written forty-eight extra words. "Idonea's" writing is also extremely clear, but does not quite equal "Trivia's" in this respect. He has introduced seventy-five words besides the Lord's Prayer. "Enoch" makes a very good third. His circle includes fifty-three extra words, and he has left a space in the middle unfilled.

OUT OF THE RUNNING.—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize: No. 124.—1st Prize, "Ferdinando"; 2nd Prize, "Ambrosia." No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frensham," "Ryland," "Malblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood"; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan"; 2nd Prize, "Malblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May." No. 130.—1st Prize, "The Arabs"; 2nd Prize, "Allice." No. 132.—1st Prize, "Atlas"; 2nd Prize, "Ethel May." No. 133.—1st Prize, "Syd Gardner"; 2nd Prize, "Medway." No. 134.—1st Prize, "One and All"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 135.—1st Prize, "Trivia"; 2nd Prize, "Idonea."

Answers have also been received from—A. Montgomery, Enoch, Ellen Golds, Emma Jane, Fedel Leo, Festina Lento, George David, Minnie, Sans Souci.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 134, received too late from Fred Sharpe.



## Odds and Ends.

A STORY is told of a college president who suspected that some of the students had planned to rob his hen-roost. Near the enclosure were two large apple-trees at the back of the house; so he quietly went out and waited till they came. Of the two one ascended the tree, the other waited below. When they were ready to commence operations, the doctor made a slight noise, and the one below started off with an exclamation of surprise. The one in the tree asked in a whisper: "What's the matter?" To which the doctor replied, also in a whisper: "All's right." "Here, catch hold," said the upper one, handing down a rooster, "here's Old Prex." And, handing down a hen, "Here's Mrs. Prex." "And here," handing down a chicken, "here's Miss Prex. I think that'll do." The doctor quietly got over the fence with the fowls, and went to his house. The poor robber of the hen-roost descended to find his companion gone. What they said when they met will probably never be known; but in the morning the two young gentlemen received a polite invitation to dine with the president, an honour they could not very well decline. Possibly they were embarrassed when, seated at the table, they saw three fowls roasted for the dinner, and we can imagine their sensations when the doctor said: "Now, young gentlemen, will you have a piece of Old Prex, Mrs. Prex, or Miss Prex." How the dinner passed off, and how the young delinquents got off, deponent sayeth not. On that theme history is dumb. But nothing more was heard of the escapee, the doctor thinking that the mortification was sufficient punishment.

DURING a sea voyage a ventriloquist made friends with the engineer of the ship, and was allowed to enter the engine-room. He took a seat in the corner, and pulling his hat down over his eyes, appeared to be lost in reverie. Presently a certain part of the machinery began to squeak. The engineer oiled it, and went about his usual duties. In the course of a few minutes the squeaking was heard again, and the engineer rushed, oil-can in hand, to lubricate the same spindle. Again he returned to his post, but it was only a few minutes until the same old spindle was squeaking louder than ever. "Confound the thing," he yelled, "it is bewitched!" More oil was administered, but the engineer began to be suspicious as to its cause. Pretty soon the spindle began to squeak again; and slipping up behind the ventriloquist, the engineer squirted a half pint of oil down the joker's back. "There," said he, "I guess that spindle won't squeak any more." The joke was so good that the ventriloquist could not keep it.

MISS MULOCK tells us that it takes a heroine to be economical; for will not many a woman rather run in debt for a bonnet than wear her old one a year behind the mode?—give a ball, and stint the family dinner a month after?—take a large house and furnish handsome reception-rooms, while her household huddle together anyhow? She prefers this a hundred times to stating plainly, by word or manner: "My income is so much a year—I don't care who knows it—it will not allow me to live beyond a certain rate, it will not keep comfortably both my family and my acquaintances—therefore excuse my preferring the comfort of my family to the entertainment of my acquaintances. And, society, if you choose to look in upon us, you must just take us as we are, without any pretences of any kind; or you may shut the door and say good-bye!"

THOMAS WALL, who lived early in the last century, and from whose note-book we gather that his wife was what is popularly known as "a bit of a Tartar," penned the following significant lines:

"Ye gods, ye gave to me a wife  
Out of your grace and favour,  
To be the comfort of my life,  
And I was glad to have her.

"But if you, mighty powers divine,  
A greater bliss design her,  
T' obey your wills at any time  
I'm ready to resign her."

In *Notes and Queries* it is stated that the *Standard* newspaper reported that "the remains of the late Mr. John Payne Collier were interred yesterday in Bray Churchyard, near Maidenhead, in the presence of a large number of spectators," with other particulars. In the *Eastern Daily Press* the announcement appears as follows: "The Bray Colliery Disaster: The remains of the late John Payne, collier, were interred yesterday afternoon in the Bray Churchyard, in the presence of a large number of friends and spectators." So much for literary reputation at the age of ninety-four!

THE *St. Paul's Gazette* (Minnesota) declares that the Crow Indians, computed at 800 families, reckoning 3,000 heads, are the richest people in the world. They are the owners of 6,500,000 acres of good land, which at one dollar an acre gives a value of 6,500,000 dols. They have 11,500 horses, worth twenty dollars apiece; that is 230,000 dols. They receive an annual allowance of 800,000 dols. from the United States Government. Reckoning up all these items, we have a total of 7,530,000, or 3,510 dols. a head.

AFTER the battle of Blenheim (fought August 2nd, 1704), the Duke of Marlborough, having recognised among the wounded prisoners a private soldier whom he had noticed for his daring valour during action, said to him: "If your master had many soldiers such as you he would be invincible." "It is not men like me he is short of," smartly replied the prisoner; "it is a general like yourself."

ACCUSTOM yourself to submit on all and every occasion, and on the most minute, no less than on the most important circumstances in life, to a small present evil, to obtain a greater distant good. This will give decision, tone, and energy to the mind, which, thus disciplined, will often reap victory from defeat and honour from repulse.

If you would lift me you must be on higher ground. If you would liberate me, you must be free. If you would correct my false views of facts, hold up to me the same facts in the true order of thought.

SIR PETER LELY made it a rule never to look at a bad picture, having found by experience that whenever he did so, his pencil took a tint from it. Apply the same rule to bad books and company.

A BLACK servant, named Peter, was sent to purchase some fish, but he was to be sure and see it was fresh. Peter accordingly went to the nearest fishmonger's, and, seeing a lot of fish on the usual marble slab, put his black face near them and began smelling them. The fishmonger, seeing this, called out to Peter: "Hulloa, you black scoundrel, what are you smelling my fish for?" Peter, looking up knowingly, replied: "Me am not smelling your fish, massa, me am only talking to them." "Well, what do you say to the fish?" enquired the fishmonger. "I was asking them how their brothers were out at sea," replied Peter. "And what reply did you get from the fish?" asked the amused fishmonger. "Well, the fish said they couldn't exactly tell, as they hadn't seen them for six weeks."

AN Irishman, driven to desperation by the stringency of the money-market and high price of provisions, procured a pistol and took to the road. Meeting a traveller, he stopped him with: "Your money or your life!" Seeing that Pat was a novice, he said: "I tell you what I'll do. I'll give you all my money for that pistol." "Agreed," Pat received the money, and handed over the pistol. "Now," said the traveller, "hand back that money, or I'll blow your brains out." "Blaze away, my hearty," said Pat; "never a drop of powder there's in it."

SCENE: Class-room in a London Board school. H.M.I. examining a third standard in geography: "What is the name of that island which lies nearly midway between England, Ireland, and Scotland?" No response. H.M.I. (encouragingly): "Well, what name would you give to an island if all the women were banished from it?" One boy, who thinks he has got it, quickly raises his hand. H.M.I.: "What do you say, my boy?" "Scilly isle, sir."

"My dear, come in and go to bed," said the wife of a jolly son of Erin, who had just returned from the fair in a decidedly how-come-you-so state; "you must be dreadfully tired, sure, with your long walk of six miles." "Arrah! get away with your nonsense," said Pat; "it wasn't the length of the way, at all, that fatigued me; it was the breadth of it."

WHY is it that when a plumber comes to mend the pipes, he always has to go back after his tools? Probably because a long and careful examination convinces him that he can't repair the damage without tools.

STUDNEY SMITH once commenced a charity sermon by remarking, "Benevolence is a sentiment common to human nature. A never sees B in distress without asking C to relieve him."

A MILLIONAIRE, on going into the college library, saw a volume labelled *Virgili Opera*. Turning to his friend he said: "By Jove, Tom, I never knew Virgil wrote music."

It is maintained that the most inspiring natural sight which a glazier can contemplate, is the gleam of early day breaking through the windows.

A JURYMEN remarked: "May it please yer honor I am deaf in one ear." "Then leave the box," replied the judge; "a juror must hear both sides."

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 139.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1883.

[Vol. VI.]

## By Parcel Post.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

A FACE whose greatest beauty depends on expression defies description—how then is Clare Stanhope to be presented to the reader?

I will just remark that if her mouth was rather large, it was exquisitely shaped, and her smile was perfect. And then such eyes! they matched in colour the hazel of her hair, but grew darker at times when excited feeling gave them an especial charm, and they revealed depths of silent sympathy. In daily life it more frequently happened that a merry imp peeped out of them, full of quiet mischief.

That impish spirit had fled, blinded by tears, as Clare stood at one of the windows of Fairlea Lodge, on the first morning in August, 1883.

She looked across the park towards the Hall, to which the Lodge was a sort of *succursale*; having for years been either a jointure house, or a retreat for the unmarried daughters of the Fortescue family. This Lodge was now occupied by the two maiden aunts of Herbert Fortescue, and Clare Stanhope was their guest.

She looked towards the three-gabled mansion where the family of her friends had lived for four centuries. The diamond-paned windows were sparkling in the light of the summer morning, the peacocks which fed from their master's hand were sunning themselves on the stone balustrade of the terrace; and, as a background to the picture, the trees of the pheasant-haunted wood rose above the house, looking stately and cool in the blue distance.

And this was the home which Herbert Fortescue had been summoned to resign to a stranger, an American.

She had been told of this extraordinary claim by a letter from Herbert received that morning. The American professed to be the heir of Herbert's uncle Reginald, his grandfather's eldest son. Should this statement be substantiated, Herbert would have to give up the dear old place, the hall with its minstrels' gallery and faded tapestry, the guard-room and its ancient weapons, the gallery with portraits of the cavaliers who had worn them.

But why think of such details, when the loss of Fairlea estate would involve the loss of position—fortune—bread!

It was too terrible.

She held in her hand a letter written in reply to one she had that morning received from Herbert, in which he told her he was a beggar, and therefore released her from her engagement. In answer she told him no change of circumstance could change her love.

A clock striking eleven warned her that she must get her letter posted without delay, if she wished it to go by the day mail. The post-office was two miles distant; but the old housekeeper, who had been her nurse, was going in the dog-cart to the neighbouring village.

Clare took the letter to Mrs. Dickson's room.

"Will I post a letter, and be sure not to forget it? That I will, and I think, my dear, you may trust your old nurse," said Dickson, as she laid the letter carefully beside her gloves and purse, and then went to put on her bonnet and shawl.

During her short absence there came into her room a delicate, fragile-looking old lady, one of the two sisters in whose service she lived.

Miss Fortescue had in her hand a card box which the gardener had filled with ripe strawberries, and she looked round for a piece of string. She found a ball of packthread on the table, and she also saw Clare's letter, and perceiving that it was addressed to her nephew, for whom she destined the strawberries, she placed it among the green leaves which covered the fruit. Then she closed the box and tied it up in cartridge-paper. The gardener had remarked that the box was a very slight one; but Anne Fortescue's only fault was obstinacy in small matters, and she thought as she sealed the packthread that her neat parcel looked extremely secure. Her opportunities for the exercise of her feeble will had been scanty enough when she lived in the Hall during the lifetime of her father. That gentleman never allowed his daughters to go beyond the park gates, unless they went in the large yellow carriage drawn by four bays, sixteen hands high. After possessing about as much freedom as that enjoyed in historic times by a queen of Spain, she found great contentment in the Lodge, and the veriest trifles amused her.

So it happened that she found a pleasure in using for the first time a parcel post label, and in affixing the right number of stamps, after weighing the box in Dickson's scales.

She had sent off the post-boy, when she met the housekeeper on the stairs, and said:

"I found a letter from Miss Clare to my nephew on your table, Dicksie, so I enclosed it in a box I am sending him."

"Oh, did you, mum? Miss Clare wished me to post it, not knowing as you would be sending this morning," replied the housekeeper in a tone of annoyance.

"I've been sending Mr. Fortescue some of our late strawberries."

"Law, mum! Send strawberries to Mr. Herbert when he could buy up Covent Garden, if he wanted to?"

"But ours are late, and such fine ones," said Miss Fortescue, who saw she had given Dickson dire offence.

"She always were a meddlesome Mattie, but never means harm. I shall let Miss Clare think I posted the letter, it's no use vexing her by saying I couldn't keep my promise to post it myself."

While Dickson grumbled, and Anne Fortescue had a sensation of mild regret at having vexed her, Rhoda, her younger sister, and Clare Stanhope were talking together about the real misfortune which seemed about to fall on the present occupier of Fairlea.

Rhoda had also received a letter from Herbert that morning, and he had imposed on her the task of breaking to Miss Fortescue news of a change which would in some degree affect them all.

"I cannot understand," said Clare, "why this man did not come forward sooner. Or, at least, why his relations or guardians did not make the claim when Herbert's father died."

"It all comes of the way our family has been divided, Clare. My poor father was harsh and arbitrary, and my brother Reginald had his strong will and violent temper. They used to quarrel dreadfully, and at last there came a climax. Reginald had been staying with some friends in Yorkshire, and when he came home, he walked into my father's library, leading by the hand a young woman, whom he introduced as his wife. She was the daughter of his friend's gamekeeper, and Reginald brought her to my father without any preparation, and, of course, my father got into an awful passion. I don't know what passed between them in the library, but Anne and I were just coming in at the hall-door as Reginald and his wife were coming out. Directly I saw her I guessed what had happened, for a dubious sentence in a letter from Reginald had given me a hint which, at the time I read it, I only half understood. I was sure there must have been a terrible scene in the library, and at the same time, something in the bride's proud, pale face told me she was a good, noble girl, who had married for love and not for money or position. The carriage in which we had been driving was just turning from the door, and the off leader, who had been very troublesome during our drive, began to rear. One of the footmen went to her head, and a groom came running from the stables. She was a splendid bay mare, and Reginald, who had been far less affected than the poor bride by his interview, looked on for a moment with interest. Then he said to his wife:

"When we come back, Mrs. Fortescue, you will be mistress here, and we'll have the best team in the county. There are my sisters—Anne, Rhoda, this is my wife."

"Anne shrank back timidly, but I, who am fifteen years younger, had never been afraid of my father, and only thought just then of the poor pale bride, and I went to her, holding out my hand, and said:

"My brother's wife is my sister."

"There came into her face a look of surprise and pleasure I shall never forget. All the pride and coldness disappeared as her strong hand clasped mine. I could not resist that look, and though Reginald had been a constant source of anxiety to all of us, I was very fond of him. I kissed his wife, and I felt her give a great sob. Then Reginald hurried her away, and beckoned to the man with the fly that had brought them, and they drove off. But before he went he turned to me and said:

"You've always been a kind sister to me, Rhoda. Good-bye!"

"And his wife gave me a last look from the window as they drove away, the tears running down her beautiful face."

Rhoda Fortescue paused; the remembrance of the scene she had described was visibly before her.

"That," she said, after a silence, "was in 1855, twenty-eight years ago, and only once did we hear from Reginald. It was when he sent me a little note from Southampton—just a few words:

"We sail for Melbourne this morning. My wife sends her dear love. You are the only one of my kindred whom I ever wish to see again. God bless you!"

"Six years afterwards a notice of his death was copied into several English papers from some Melbourne gazette, accompanied by a statement that he was heir to the entailed estate of Fairlea, and had died without issue."

"Then," said Clare eagerly, "it is possible that, after all, this man may not be his son."

"He seems to have satisfied Herbert on that point, and Herbert would not be prejudiced in his favour."

## CHAPTER II.

ON the second morning after Clare had given Dickson the letter to post, she looked hopefully for one in return, but none arrived. Herbert was occupied and worried, she thought—she would hear from him to-morrow. But to-morrow came, and day followed day, and still no letter came.

Then she began to ask herself how it was that the outpouring of her sympathy and love had awakened no response. A week—two weeks—passed away; never during the three months of their engagement had Herbert been so long silent. A thousand doubts tormented her. Perhaps he thought she had not understood that marriage was for him impossible, or that a hopeless engagement would but distress and hamper him. Perhaps his love could only live in an atmosphere of sunshine.

By day she strove to drive away her worrying thoughts by incessant occupation, and at night she lay down to rest determined to sleep the sleep of utter forgetfulness; but with the grey summer dawn her eyes would open, and she would wake with a start, and all the passionate regrets that she had resolutely quelled would resume their mastery. She often rose and looked out on the pale primrose sky, and watched the tinted clouds that await the rising sun, and strove to calm her heart, not all in vain, by thoughts of other worlds than this; but the mental strife of those long, lonely hours stole the colour from her cheek and the lustre from her eyes.

She had slept rather longer than usual, and was looking the better for it, as, after breakfast, she sat near a window washing in a sketch of summer foliage on her drawing-block. She did not look up when the parlour-maid brought in a card to Miss Fortescue, saying:

"I was to ask you, ma'am, whether you would please to see the gentleman?"

Miss Fortescue passed the card to her sister with a frightened look, and Clare started as Rhoda read aloud the name of "Mark Fortescue." There was no prefix.

"We had better see him," said Rhoda.

"My dear!" remonstrated Miss Fortescue.

"If he is the true heir, it is not in Herbert's interest that we should treat him with discourtesy."

Clare looked up as Jane returned, expecting to see a thin man with a long hooked nose and pointed beard, such as Brother Jonathan is represented by caricaturists. There came, instead of that lank person, one who might have been Herbert Fortescue's brother, only that he was taller, broader, and much tanned by American suns and Atlantic breezes.

"I am very much obliged to you for granting me this interview," said he, holding out his hand to Miss Fortescue, who reluctantly touched it with the tips of her fingers, while she forced the conventional smile which she thought due to any one received beneath her roof.

Rhoda, as she shook hands with him, and looked into his honest eyes, felt a sudden conviction that conscious imposition was on his part impossible.

"My sister, Miss Rhoda Fortescue," said Anne, who was always being shocked by Rhoda's informal ways, and thought a too late introduction better than none.

Then Mark looked steadfastly towards Clare; but Miss Fortescue thought her complaisance had gone far enough. She would not present her nephew's enemy to his betrothed.

"Is that lady a relation, too?" asked the audacious stranger.

"No," said Rhoda; "a friend who is staying with us."

Mark took this to be introduction sufficient, so he strode towards Clare, and rather shyly held out his hand. Clare hesitated a moment. She was angry with Herbert, wounded and indignant, but she could not take the hand of his rival. She would not see it, and bowed.

For an instant Mark stood looking at her, the blood slowly mounting to his temples, then he bent his head slightly, and turned away, not so much embarrassed as greatly discomfited.

Miss Fortescue, who would have shaken hands with her worst enemy rather than be uncivil, thought this young man had brought in with him an atmosphere of ill-breeding, and attempted to steer into the calm waters of conventionality by indicating a seat, and asking a commonplace question:

"Have you been long in England, Mr. —?"

No, she couldn't call him Fortescue, it might be admitting his right to the estate. It was dreadfully awkward and disagreeable. He ought never to have been admitted.

"I have been in England about a month, and I have ventured to

come to you, Miss Fortescue, because I have no doubt you have influence with your nephew, and——"

"Oh dear no; really I could not interfere in any matter of importance affecting his interests."

She looked so piteously incompetent that Mark turned to Rhoda, who had at once impressed him as the stronger character.

"Cannot you induce Herbert Fortescue to listen to the terms I propose, instead of declaring he will have all or nothing? I don't want to take to myself his patrimony. Why should my grandfather have entailed his estate on his son's elder son? Brothers ought to share and share alike. I, as Reginald's heir, and Herbert, as the younger brother's heir, ought to divide the estate between us."

"In England an estate always goes to the eldest son," observed Miss Fortescue with the dignity of one who is instructing the ignorant. "What," she added, "would become of an estate divided between five or six sons?"

"What would become of the four or five younger sons, I should rather ask?"

"In a few generations," said Rhoda, "an estate so divided dwindles to a potato-field, and the unfortunates who try to live on their land would be better without it; but Fairlea will certainly bear dividing once, and if your claim is as just as I am sure you believe it to be, such a distribution of the property on your part would be most generous."

"Only just, it seems to me. My people were, I think, to blame in leaving us in ignorance of our true position so long. But directly I proposed a division of the land, Herbert Fortescue concluded I knew of some flaw in my title, and declared he would defend his rights with his last shilling."

"No doubt it would be desirable to have a legal opinion," said Anne Fortescue mildly, and irrelevantly.

"As many opinions as you please," said Mark rather impatiently. "I am most anxious to have my claim investigated at once; but if we are to have a long Chancery suit like the Roger Tichborne business, our estate will dwindle till there won't be much left to divide."

There was a little silence. Miss Fortescue was sorely puzzled. Lawsuits were terrible; needless compromises worse.

During the pause Rhoda opened a desk, and produced a small book, in which was pasted a notice of Reginald Fortescue's death and the statement that he had died without heirs. This she placed in Mark's hand, and looked at him keenly while he read it.

He considered for some moments with an air of perplexity, and at last exclaimed with more of Yankee intonation than had hitherto affected his speech:

"I reckon my mother inserted this notice. After my father's death she got an idea in her head that my grandfather Fortescue could take me from her if he knew of my existence. Whether he could have done so I can't say, but she thought so."

"And she never told you you were heir to an estate in England?" said Rhoda enquiringly.

"She was always telling me I was to remember I was a gentleman born; but my poor mother died when I was still a little chap, and I was left at the school in Melbourne where she had sent me. She had fixed everything so that I should be well cared for. When I grew up I went to look up her family in New York. I thought they would be able to tell me why mother had given me a notion that I was better born than herself. I found my grandfather dead, and only my cousin Matt left, and he could not tell me much, for my grandfather, the gamekeeper, was a very silent man. But Matt showed me a letter from my mother which he found in grandfather's desk. I left it with my lawyer. Here's a bit I copied from it."

He handed a sheet of paper to Rhoda, who read:

"DEAR FATHER,

"I send you some more money to put into Matt's business, as you've kindly done before. I get good interest here, but don't like to have all my eggs in one basket, as the saying is, and I save all I can, for my boy may want money for the lawyers, who will prove his rights by-and-by. He's a regular Fortescue, and no mistake, and down at Fairlea his face will be almost enough to make them own him lord of the manor at once."

"That's strong, is it not?" said Mark, as Rhoda returned the sheet of paper. "But I did not feel sure till I came to England and consulted a lawyer. You may know the firm of Furnival and Clement, Miss Fortescue, in Bedford Row."

"A highly respectable firm," said Anne, feeling she was bound to speak the truth even of a foe. As she spoke, a little Japanese gong was gently struck in the hall, and Mark guessed it to be an intimation that lunch was ready.

He immediately rose and thanked his hostess for having given him the interview.

"I hope you will represent to your nephew how ready I am to go shares with him," he said, as he held Rhoda's hand. Even she

did not think it desirable that he should be invited to stay for luncheon, but she frankly clasped his hand and said :

"I will tell him what you wish."

He bent his head to Clare, and would have passed on, but, with a little quick movement, she held out her hand. He gave her a look of pleased surprise, and it seemed to her as if Herbert's eyes were meeting hers at that moment. She would hardly have owned to herself, even in her secret heart, that the grey eyes of her lover seemed to have become the windows of a larger, nobler soul than that which dwelt in Herbert's breast.

### CHAPTER III.

"SOCIETY" had for some weeks been leaving London, and now that Parliament was prorogued, there were, as Horace Walpole once said in his day, "not ten people in town."

Herbert Fortescue, walking moodily past empty houses, asked himself how he should exist, when he had ceased to own the rents of Fairlea. He had slowly come to believe that neither he nor his father had been the lawful heirs to that estate; and he felt that he would soon have to give place to his cousin from the States. When he had sold his horses and the bric-a-brac that was scattered over his lodgings in Clarges Street, he would but realise enough to keep him from actual penury, and he shuddered as he pictured to himself the life before him.

Had Clare Stanhope clung to him in his adversity, her uncle's legacy, which he had hitherto thought a most contemptible sum, would have helped to eke out his income; but she had evidently accepted his resignation of her hand, and had not even written him a kindly word of sympathy.

He had looked rather eagerly for a letter, the contents of which he thought he could easily divine; not so much from insight into Clare's character, as from a full appreciation of his own merits.

"No letters?" he said when his valet brought him, on a tray, a broken card-basket, from which oozed strawberry-juice and crushed strawberries.

Herbert glanced at the address, recognised Miss Fortescue's old-fashioned sloping hand, looked at her present with disgust, and said, as he threw himself back in his chair: "No letters—ugh! Throw that mess away."

Not being fond of fruit the valet gave the box to the landlady's child, who ate the strawberries, stained himself all over with the juice, and threw the leaves with Clare's letter into the fire, where they sputtered to his heart's content. Such was the fate of the sweetest little letter ever penned.

It never occurred to Herbert that a letter from Clare could have got among his aunt's strawberries, for he did not even know she was staying at the Lodge. The letter she had received from him he had sent to her own home, and it had been forwarded, for Clare's visit to Fairlea had been an unexpected one.

And now, because she seemed to have taken him at his word when he told her that for him marriage was impossible, he complained of her worldliness and cruelty—certainly she might have written. Thinking thus, he chanced to glance upwards, and found he was passing a house from which the owner had not yet fled; for carefully tended flowers were in the balcony, curtains gently waved in the open windows, and the favourite colley was lying on the doorstep. Yes, Miss Morley was at home, though a portmanteau in the hall gave token of intended travel. She was, in fact, in her room with her maid, superintending the packing of her dresses.

Herbert rang, and was admitted.

He threw himself into a delightfully comfortable chair, and looked around the room into which he had been ushered.

Shades of blue and grey pervaded the furniture; water-colour drawings of snow-capped mountains hung on the softly-tinted walls; and the air was scented, not by French perfumes but by carnations, whose deep red looked the richer from their contrast with the cool shades around them.

Herbert had been just long enough alone in this pleasant room to feel mentally refreshed by it, when Miss Morley came in.

She was not beautiful; but she had a charming manner, and was always perfectly dressed. As she advanced to meet her visitor, clad in the most becoming of tea-gowns, Herbert thought her almost pretty.

"You are still in town, Mr. Fortescue. So kind of you to look me up. I begin to feel like Alexander Selkirk—don't you?"

"London can be no desert-place till Miss Morley leaves it," said Herbert.

Instead of replying, Kate Morley laughed. Her laugh was as pleasant as her voice.

"It is just tea-time," said she, "and I think I have heard you say that you don't despise tea."

"On the contrary, I am thirsty, as well as dreary and altogether

crushed. You may have heard, Miss Morley—for bad news travels fast—that I am ruined and done for."

"I've heard some man from America is claiming your estates; but I hope he is another Arthur Orton."

"I have every reason to believe he is the real heir."

"Oh, Mr. Fortescue!"

Her look of real regret, her tone of sympathy, touched Herbert. He was low-spirited, and the atmosphere around her was soothing.

She was the daughter of a physician, who, when he died, left her a house in Bloomsbury and three thousand pounds a year. Miss Morley sold the house, rented another in a more fashionable neighbourhood, and invited, to live with her as chaperon, a widowed aunt.

It seemed strange that Kate Morley—pleasant, ladylike, and well-to-do—should have passed the age of thirty without marrying; but she was difficult to please. She liked the company of artists and literary men, especially when, in her decorous house, they conformed to the usages of society; but she knew that she would hate Bohemianism in a husband. A soldier would have suited her; but a good-looking captain of hussars was so manifestly attracted by her money that she refused his offer, not without regret. A young curate won her favour—the second son of an earl, who had inherited a small fortune from his mother. He had little time to devote to society. He wanted a wife—and he thought he had found one in Miss Morley, whose almsgiving was most liberal, and who listened to his schemes for the extinction of pauperism with interest. But when she found that he was eager to get work in the East of London, and would expect his wife to live there, she looked on him as quite a lunatic. "*Pas de zèle*" was her motto.

But she certainly regretted the curate; she was not likely to have another offer from the son of an earl. She first met Herbert Fortescue at the house of his solicitor, and after dinner the young man had found her at the piano. She had a well-trained voice, and as she had a lesson or two for every new song, her style and expression were good.

"Do you like that song?" she said. "It is one of Madame D.'s. She is coming to dine with me on Thursday; if you would care to come and meet her, I should be very happy to see you. Thursday, eight o'clock."

Herbert went, and found the dinner and the arrangements perfect. The invitation was repeated at intervals, and Herbert never felt less bored than when he passed an evening at Kate Morley's.

When Herbert was taking leave of her, Miss Morley laid her hand lightly on his arm. It was a fair hand, and on one finger glittered a costly diamond ring. Another hand had once lain on Herbert's for a moment; it wore no diamonds, it was slightly tanned, and at that moment somewhat flower-stained, but its touch had thrilled to his heart.

He looked at Kate Morley's hand, and asked himself, not without emotion, whether it meant the possibility of three thousand pounds a year. He placed his own hand over hers, and looked up in her face. She was certainly almost pretty, and she was a lady. He was so fastidious, that had she at that moment made play with her eyes, or attempted any kind of effect, he would have felt repelled. But she had the good taste to be always herself, never agitated by strong feeling, but kindly, well-bred, and ever at her "level best."

As Herbert looked into her eyes she met his glance frankly, yet with a shade of sadness; and then she looked away, not with down-cast glance, but thoughtfully; and with a little sigh, she said gently:

"You have not lost Fairlea yet. There is hope that things may not be so bad as they seem."

"Don't tell me to be hopeful, suspense is such an awful bore. I could bear it better if I were not so much alone. But all the fellows I know are out of town, and I want to be here when my lawyer, to whom I have telegraphed, comes from Norway. I fear you, too, will be gone in a few days."

"I hardly think so. It is so difficult to fix on a spot that is not swarming with excursionists. Can you recommend a place really pleasant and new?"

"Certainly not. I cannot be so disinterested," was, of course, Herbert's reply.

On his way home, Herbert reflected that she was some years his senior; but she would save him from a life of drudgery—a word which it was his custom to apply to every kind of systematic employment.

### CHAPTER IV.

CLARE STANHOPE had been sketching a group of horse-chestnuts which stood in the park, and was passing the Hall on her way to the Lodge, when she became aware of a man who was seated on the

terrace balustrade. At first she took it to be Herbert Fortescue, but in another moment she perceived that it was not Herbert, but Mark.

This was not the first time she had encountered him since he called at the Lodge. Once he had delivered Clare's dog from the jaws of a ferocious cur, and had walked some distance with her, lest the attack should be repeated. Another time he had found the Miss Fortescues weather-bound in a bye-street, where they had visited an old servant, and had fetched their carriage for them. And when he was favoured by such opportunities, Clare could not help seeing that he held any service he could render to the elder ladies amply rewarded by a word or a smile from her.

There was no smile for him, but rather a look of repulsion, as she saw him seated on the terrace, anticipating the moment when all around him would be acknowledged his own, his head somewhat thrown back, and a little cloud of smoke testifying to the cigar which rendered his enjoyment complete.

"Whatever else he means to share, he means to have the Hall," thought Clare. "Well, it is his right; but it is not good form to behave as if he were already in possession."

She was turning to take another path when Mark saw her, and with a leap cleared the balustrade and gained the lower level of the park.

"Mayn't I carry some of your things?" said he, raising his hat; "your camp-stool, and—"

Clare told him she was accustomed to carry all her drawing-implements; and she did not resign them.

He looked so chagrined that she could not find it in her heart to wish him good-morning and so dismiss him, and he walked a few paces by her side.

"I've been all over the old house, Miss Clare," said he, after a little silence.

He had heard her called Clare, but he was ignorant of her surname. This use of her christian-name was disagreeable to Clare.

"I imagine you are pleased with your future property," she said very dryly.

"It's a grand old house, and I conclude it would have been a difficult thing to divide."

What did he mean? Had he given up his intention of sharing the estate, or did he intend to share it still, retaining the house for himself?

Mark answered Clare's questioning eyes.

"Fairlea is not mine," he said, "nor ever will be. I've been down to Yorkshire where my mother was living when my father first saw her, and I wanted to look up her old friends. Well, for a time I'd no luck, for my grandfather, the keeper, was there only a few years. The village people said, 'Ay, there coom'd a maan o' the naam o' Smithson, and a gentleman born married his lass.' Many remember just that. At last, one evening, the woman who kept the village store came to me and asked if I was the son of the gentleman from Somersetshire and Jane Smithson, if so, she was glad to see me, for she'd been my mother's bridesmaid. I told her my mother's name was Mary. You can't think how surprised that woman looked; and she said, 'Eh, then! he maun a married Mary 'way there 'cross the water.' To cut a long story short, Miss Clare, I found my father had married Jane Smithson; before he left England; and when he went to Australia, his wife would have her younger sister go with them. They did badly at first, the work was too hard for my father, who seems to have been unfit for such a life, and when Jane, his first wife died, he fell ill. I learnt this from a letter which Mary, the youngest sister, wrote to the woman at the Yorkshire shop. She said she would try if good nursing would bring him round, and she found that making tea-total drinks for the diggers paid well, and she would be able to keep herself and him till he was fit for work. There the letter ended, and she never wrote another to her Yorkshire friend. Can you wonder that my father married her? She was one of those people who never speak of the dead, so I never heard my father's name pass her lips, and had no notion she was a second wife till I got her marriage-certificate. She made a good deal of money, sent me to a good school in Melbourne, and told me I was a gentleman by birth. As marriage with a deceased wife's sister is lawful in Australia, I don't doubt she thought it had become so in England. However that might be, Fairlea belongs to Herbert and can never be mine. I wrote and told him so this morning. Aren't you glad, Miss Clare?"

"I'm glad for Mr. Herbert Fortescue's sake," said Clare with an effort, "but I'm sorry for your disappointment. And," she added, looking up in his face, "how well you bear it!"

"Oh no, I'm very much cut up about it," replied Mark in his usual even tones. "I didn't want the money; but I did want the position. Birth is a thing you can't buy. I thought I was an English gentleman."

"So you are, and always will be," exclaimed Clare, and then she checked herself and blushed at the earnestness of her tone.

As to Mark, the red blood leaped up to face and brow, and a new light shone in his eyes.

"I should have valued Fairlea," he said, "chiefly because it would have raised me in position to your level."

"You would in position have been my superior, for my father does not own a single acre. But I don't so much value position."

"You value birth?"

"It's a good thing to come of honest folk."

Mark walked on in silence, looking on the ground, then, raising his head, he said softly and as if thinking aloud:

"You can't think what a strange and wonderful thing it is to me to talk to you—to hear you talk. I've never been used to English ladies. I've met with a few on board ship, or in railway cars, but none like you. England is a beautiful language, as you speak it."

Clare laughed, but she could not keep down a blush of pleasure. Mark's admiration was so genuine, and he so unsophisticated.

"I'm glad," she said, "I don't maltreat Her Majesty's English."

"That's not what I mean; it's your voice—your tone. I hope my telling you so is not impertinent."

"Oh no; I know what you mean. You did not happen to be thrown among American ladies; and some people in New York speak through their noses."

"It's not that either—they are altogether different. No one is like you, and I know that I shall never meet anyone who could seem to me in any degree the same."

He spoke without hesitation, but not without a feeling of shyness, which brought the deep colour to his bronzed cheek. Clare was in his eyes an almost celestial being, and it would seem that in an angelic presence men have always felt afraid. But, shy as he felt, his words had the ring of truth's pure gold; and Clare felt that he loved her as she had never been loved before. Of such love Herbert had been incapable, and this she vaguely felt; but her heart had not recovered from its recent wound—it was not yet prepared to own another lord.

"I hope we shall always be friends," she said, and her calm speech did not disappoint Mark. He had not expected heaven's gates to open for him; it was much that Clare had set them ajar.

He was looking down on her, as a man might gaze on a vision dim but sweet—a vision suggesting vague possibilities—when there was a sound of voices and of footsteps on the terrace stairs, and he found himself face to face with Herbert Fortescue and a lady.

What brought them there can be briefly told. Herbert's solicitor had written to inform him that a man was now in London who had been present at the burial of Reginald Fortescue's first wife, and that the clergyman who had married him to Mark's mother was still officiating in the church in Melbourne where the banns had been published. He added that he was still investigating Reginald's history, for sometimes extraordinary circumstances would come to light to invalidate a claim to property; but, as every fresh discovery furnished another link in Mark's chain of evidence, he strongly advised his client to accept such terms as the claimant might offer without delay. When his right should be fully established, a compromise would be, of course, far more difficult to effect.

This letter Herbert had taken to Miss Morley, to whom he was now formally engaged, and who, to his great comfort, relieved him as far as possible from the bore of managing his own affairs.

Beneath the crust of conventional manner and the garb of fashion Miss Morley concealed from casual observers the shrewdness of a woman of business.

"Keep Fairlea Hall if possible," she said, "even at the sacrifice of a large portion of the land. You can add to your property after a few years of economy, but you cannot buy position or family portraits."

"The economy will be no end of a bore," said Herbert despondingly.

"You will be able to keep a couple of hunters, and I shall not be much expense. The county ladies would only hate me if I dressed better than they."

This, when she was bringing him three thousand pounds a year, extracted from Herbert an expression of gratitude and admiration.

Then Miss Morley proposed that he should take her to Fairlea, for she felt she would like to judge of the condition of the house before Herbert had sacrificed property in order to retain it.

Accompanied by her aunt, who was a discreet chaperon and continually effaced herself, she had been examining every room with satisfaction, when, on descending the terrace-steps, she saw before her a larger edition of her *fiancé*, and with him a girl who, as she met Herbert, grew suddenly pale.

It was a strange meeting, and perhaps each of the four who met so unexpectedly might have adopted the exclamation of Miss Miggs at that "conflicting moment."

They paused and looked one another in the face with unfriendly glances.

Mark saw before him the owner of all he had so lately thought to share, and the sight of him certainly produced no pleasing sensation.

Herbert had caught on Mark's face, as he bent over Clare, an expression which showed he would strive to rival him in love as well as in position, and for that one moment he could have been fain to slay him on the spot.

Clare knew that Herbert had quickly found another love, for his engagement to Kate Morley had been duly announced, and if she was pale it was not from wounded affection.

Miss Morley felt no very deep emotion—only a passing jealousy of the girl whose name she guessed intuitively, and whom she found so young and charming, needing no dresses by Worth to give her—as she stood there in her homespun—a distinguished air.

As this incongruous quartette stood thus, at the bottom of the terrace-steps, anger or annoyance blazed out of their eyes for two or three seconds; then the gentle influences of civilisation came to their aid, and each face became a decent mask.

Mark was the first to speak.

"I've taken the liberty of going over your house, Mr. Fortescue," he said, holding out his hand, which Herbert remembered it was his policy to take.

"Very glad, I'm sure," said he.

"How do you do?" said Clare in the coolest and most cheerful manner. "Pray introduce me," she added, glancing towards Miss Morley.

And as Herbert, with dry lips which would hardly articulate, presented the girl he still loved to the woman whose monotonous excellence had already begun to weary him, Clare was avenged.

But the momentary return to savage instincts had given way to good manners.

"I reckon you left town before a letter from me reached you by second post, Mr. Fortescue," said Mark.

"Yes; we started early. I shall be glad to talk over any arrangement you may propose."

"I have nothing to propose," replied Mark, amusing himself for a moment with the anxiety which even Herbert's habitual non-chalance could not wholly conceal.

"You will of course understand that I should not yield to your claim unless you are prepared to make terms with me, and so avoid a Chancery suit," replied Herbert nervously.

Mark smiled.

"All right. There will be no Chancery suit. I withdraw my claim. My father's marriage, though lawful in Australia, is illegal here. I shall return to the country where my name is Fortescue."

Herbert gasped.

"Are you sure of this?" he said, and found that he was trembling so that he could scarcely stand.

"Quite sure. I have no claim to your estate, Mr. Fortescue. You are monarch of all you survey," and serene in his strong character and more robust physique, he looked with pity, not unmingled with amusement, at the effect of his words upon Herbert.

It was a relief to Mr. Fortescue that Miss Morley and Clare kept up a flow of very small talk for a few minutes.

He was recovering a little from the shock of sudden joy as Clare turned towards the Lodge.

"Good-morning," she said. "We shall meet again, I hope, for no doubt you will be calling on the Miss Fortescues."

This time Mark succeeded in taking from her her camp-stool and drawing-block, and the concession gave his voice a cheerful ring as he said:

"Good-bye, Mr. Fortescue. Glad to see you at Daisy Place, Pitfield, if ever you come to Victoria."

Herbert and Miss Morley were married while yet the leaves, though gold and copper tinted, clothed the wood of Fairlea Manor.

In Herbert's beautiful home it is his wife's chief care to please him. Yet he often remembers, with a bitter regret, the changeable moods and bright intelligence of one who has not reached a dead level of superficial excellence.

Mark has returned to Victoria, and as Clare gave him leave to write to her, every Australian mail brings her a letter. They are only friends, she says, but she betrays great interest in the arrival of the Melbourne packets, and wears a ring made from an Australian nugget, which used to appear on Mark's little finger.

Miss Fortescue cannot understand why Herbert married a doctor's daughter instead of Clare, and is beginning to connect the circumstance with her having sent a letter with her strawberries.

"My child," she lately said, "if I could think I had blighted your young life——" but Clare interrupted her:

"My dear Miss Fortescue, do I look like a blighted being? On the contrary—I may say so, as Herbert is so happily married—I feel I am under great obligation to 'The Parcel Post.'"

## On Christmas Eve.

HEAP on the logs! till the bright sparks quicker  
Upwards fly in a glittering train.  
Heap on the logs! till the red flame's flicker  
Comes and goes on the diamond-pane.  
Window may quiver, and door may rattle,  
Shaken and swayed by the tempest's din;  
Little we reck of the stormy battle,  
Safely housed in the warmth within.  
Faces happy with youthful gladness,  
Flush and beam in the ruddy light;  
Faces furrowed with lines of sadness,  
Leave unheeded their cares to-night.  
Snatches of music, and song, and laughter,  
Cheerily mingle, and rise, and fall,  
Ringing up to the oaken rafter,  
Echoing back from the silent hall.  
Surely but once, in the year's swift changes,  
Comes the message of peace to earth;  
Surely but once, as around it ranges,  
Comes the season of happy mirth!  
Hope! that the shadows of life can brighten;  
Joy! that is governed by reason's rule;  
Love! that the burdens of life can lighten;  
Reign in our hearts on this eve of Yule.

## Snowdon House.

(A SHORT SERIAL STORY.)

### PART II.

AGATHA rose after a few very bitter moments, during which she mastered the tears which began to flow, and with her lips set in a look of determination which implied some resolve, drew up the blind, and admitted the light—now the fading light of evening—into the room. She looked at the letter which had been given to her with a sad smile before she opened it.

"I do not think that my father, sadly driven as he is, will counsel my seeking a situation in a lunatic asylum," she said. "No, when we are compelled to resort to such work, it must be for our own profit. I know he has often thought of such a scheme. I trust he has decided upon something which will enable me to leave this hateful place. How can I live here now?"

She opened the letter as she said this, and, seating herself close to the casement, began to read it. Ere she had read many lines she started, passed her hand nervously across her forehead, while over her face, which had become pallid, there came again a scarlet flush.

"Good Heaven!" she muttered, "can it be possible?"

She read and re-read the letter, which was indeed of strange import to her. It was of no great length, and to quote it may save a great deal of explanation. It ran thus:

"MY DEAR AGATHA,

"Your last letter reached me on the same day with one from your aunt, which dealt with almost the same subjects, but in a very different spirit, and from a very different point of view. This correspondence would have added a great deal to my other troubles, as you feared would be the case, but for something which has determined me to make a total change in my plans. I have frequently mentioned Mr. Wayre, of Snowdon House. You have learnt that he is not only the wealthiest patient I have ever secured, but that he has given me some assistance, and seems inclined to do more. I understand him thoroughly, and I now ask you plainly—do you think you could consent to marry him? He is twice your own age, and more, but he is manageable, despite some eccentric points—only eccentric in a social sense—and rich—very rich. I am sure from what I know of him that this could be managed, and speedily. I would not propose such a scheme if I saw any chance of your doing better; but a penniless girl, with no friends of influence, has but a poor chance of doing so much. You would have a fine position here, and he would stand my banker to a large amount if I wished to improve my practice. This last consideration, although of course of importance, would not, as I am sure you know, Agatha, of itself have influenced me to write on the subject. If you think the alternative thus offered more pleasant than any other opening now presenting itself, leave your aunt as soon as possible—at once if you can—and return home. In any case write to me by first post.

"Your affectionate father,

"FRANK FULHAM.

"P.S.—Mr. Wayre is a widower, but I know from his own lips that there is no one in the world with any claim upon him."

It must be owned that this was a letter calculated to startle a



young woman, and demanding some intense thought, even if its receipt had not been preceded by such painful and exciting circumstances.

"It is well," said Agatha, after a reverie which had lasted so long that the last tinge of daylight had faded away, and lights were shining from the white-curtained windows of the few houses visible from where she sat; "it is well that this was not made known to me earlier! It is well that every spark of hope should first have been trampled out, or I might— My father is right!" she exclaimed after a brief pause. "I know better than he does how right he is. Since love, and romance, and all the brilliant colours with which I had decked the future are gone, let me take that which is in my reach, and try to do my duty." An involuntary shudder checked her speech here, and she clasped her hands over her eyes. "I have no choice," she went on as she hastily arranged her hair and bathed her eyes, "I must not look back. Others have suffered and lived on before me; surely I can do as they have done."

She went downstairs, where she found, in the parlour, Mrs. Gurdon with Mr. Gurdon, whom we have purposely placed second on the list, as his wife was first and chief in the house. The three children, who completed the family, were also there; these were to some extent under Agatha's charge, and her frequent indispositions had of late increased the housewife's responsibility, and, it is probable, had somewhat soured her temper.

But besides these, there was present one person who was thoroughly objectionable to Agatha, although his frequent visits were undoubtedly made upon her account, and were as undoubtedly encouraged by Mrs. Gurdon. As this visitor will not personally figure again in our tale, it will be enough to say that he was a tolerably well-to-do tradesman in the village, and regarded by Mrs. Gurdon as a great "catch" for her penniless niece, and the temper referred to was greatly soured by Agatha's persistent avoidance of this worthy resident.

He rose and made a formal bow as Agatha entered, while Mrs. Gurdon looked up with something akin to a smile, intending, perhaps, to show to her niece that if she behaved well, even now all might go right, and no more be heard of the dreaded situation at Dr. Smith's.

"Had I needed encouragement in my resolve, it is now supplied," thought the girl; "here, then, is one of the alternatives to which I must be reduced if I slight my father's letter. I will speak at once, while I have the resolution strong upon me. I will say what cannot be recalled, and I know will never be forgiven."

Thus resolved, she took her seat, and devoted herself to the younger members of the circle.

To two or three attempts at conversation on the part of the stranger—whose name, by-the-bye, was Tummell—she gave brief replies, until, presently, Mrs. Gurdon unconsciously sprang the mine which was prepared. She did this by telling her that Mr. Tummell had been good enough to come with an invitation to join him in a little excursion a few miles out from the village, and had kindly included Agatha in the party. Mrs. Gurdon concluded by saying that she had accepted the invitation on Agatha's behalf with thanks.

"It is very kind, no doubt, on the part of Mr. Tummell," returned the girl, "but it will be impossible for me to accept the invitation."

"Impossible!" interrupted the lady; "why impossible? What do you mean?"

"I mean that I must leave you before the date you mention," said Agatha quietly. "I was about to ask you, indeed, how soon you could spare me."

"Spare you!" ejaculated each of her listeners, not including the children, of course, while Mrs. Gurdon continued:

"What whim have you taken into your head now? I thought you were anxious to get a situation?"

"So I was," replied the girl; "but my father wishes me to return home, and I shall be glad to do so as soon as possible, without inconvenience to yourself."

"Inconvenience!" exclaimed Mrs. Gurdon with a toss of her head, and in a tone which spoke volumes. "It is quite a new thing for you to study our convenience, and, as far as I am concerned, you may leave to-morrow."

There was a good deal more said on the subject, not all being so acid in its flavour; the visitor, indeed, and, as far as he dared, Mr. Gurdon, offering some slight arguments against her departure; but the good lady of the house had her way, as was the custom there. Mrs. Gurdon felt herself slighted by this resolve so unexpectedly announced, and determined to have no half measures. So, in accordance with her decisive speech, it was arranged, ere they separated that evening, that Agatha should leave by the midday train on the morrow.

This was prompt execution, but it suited both parties. Mrs. Gurdon was glad to get rid of the relative whose presence had never been agreeable to her, and who had shown a perverse determi-

nation not to do the only thing which could, in Mrs. Gurdon's opinion, make a provision for her. Agatha was, of course, glad to leave a spot which was identified with so much that was painful, and accordingly she gladly took her seat at the appointed time in the train which arrived at Bridgeley that evening, having telegraphed her immediate compliance with his request to her father, who met her at the station.

The doctor's first exclamation was one of surprise at her looking so ill, but she explained that it was only through the excitement and unpleasantness of leaving her aunt so suddenly. Dr. Fulham had known all along that his daughter was far from comfortable with her relative, so was not surprised at this report. Medical men, too, however quick and accurate they may be in discerning the symptoms of their patients, are no more gifted than ordinary people when they have to deal with their own families, and so the unmistakable traces of grief and anxiety so plainly visible in Agatha's face were accepted as being the result of so trivial a cause.

Late as was the hour of her arrival, Agatha held a long conversation with her father, which lasted far into the night, and in which she exhibited a resolution and a willingness to agree to the doctor's proposals which greatly delighted that gentleman, who had perhaps expected some difficulty with her. Then, in addition to this particular scheme, there was a docility in the girl which was what he had not looked for, and which was so far beyond all he had seen in past days, that he could not help muttering, when he had bidden her good-night, and was alone:

"After all, Jane Gurdon has done her some good. I had no idea of finding Agatha so much improved by the visit."

The dog was sent to Mr. Wayre in due course, under charge of a keeper from the London dealer, and in accordance with the advice of Dr. Fulham, the animal was paraded through Shaletown, where it was seen by most of the "hands," while even those who did not see the dog must have heard of it to a certainty, as Nero's appearance made a marked sensation in the place.

A crowd of admiring boys and girls followed the keeper with his charge quite up to the lodge-gates of Snowdon House, so that there was no question as to the creature's destination being well known, and from the outspoken comments of the crowd, which were overheard by Mr. Wayre, he felt that there was at last some hope of a time of rest and safety for him and his property.

The doctor came over that evening on purpose to be introduced to the hound, the keeper staying all night in order to do what was necessary in this way, for, as the man said: "He would be blown if the dog hadn't got as much sense as a Christian, or a Lord Mayor, for the matter of that, and knowed people as he was introduced to, and was as harmless as a babby. But just let anybody as wasn't introduced to him try any games," and so on.

Safe quarters for the creature's use during the day were provided, and Ezra was installed as its custodian, not greatly to the manager's delight.

Wayre expressed himself highly pleased with his acquisition, and at once resumed work in the improvement of his demesne, which for some time had been suspended.

The doctor still paid his visits, which had, indeed, come to be considered as much friendly as professional; as much to give advice on general subjects as on the health of Mr. Wayre, and the latter looked forward to these calls with much eagerness.

One day, however, the doctor did not come, and Mr. Wayre's temper suffered in consequence; as Ezra found, and his wife, and the men who were at work in the grounds, all of whom interchanged remarks at the lodge-gates uncomplimentary to their employer.

The next day Mr. Wayre was restless and fidgety in his manner; once he ordered the chaise to be got out, but countermanded it directly. Nothing could please him, and Ezra, in the safe security of the lodge, denounced his master's temper in language which formed a suitable counterpart to that which he himself had received during the morning.

A little later in the day the master was standing by the side of a trench in which some men were digging, when he was startled by a tap on the shoulder, for he had heard no footsteps approaching on the soft turf, and then a voice said:

"Here at last, Mr. Wayre."

It was the doctor, and the patient turned quickly round with an exclamation which was intended half for welcome and half for an expression of his disappointment, but both were checked in surprise at what he saw.

By the side of the doctor stood an elegant and particularly handsome young woman, who bowed as she met his eye, while Fulham said:

"This is my daughter, Mr. Wayre; she came home last night, and I thought you would not mind my bringing her over, as I wished her to see what could be done in the way of improving such an estate as this."

"I am extremely happy in thinking that Miss Fulham will be good enough to watch our progress," said Wayre, lifting his hat as he made the most conventional speech the doctor had ever heard him deliver; "at present, Miss Fulham, you see us at our worst, I hope."

"I see that your grounds are capable of being made very beautiful, sir," returned the young lady; "indeed, they are beautiful now. The view in every direction is so charming, that if it were not for—" She paused here, as if slightly embarrassed.

"Ah, if it were not for those detestable ironworks!" exclaimed Mr. Wayre. "Yes, I could see what you meant, but I have shut them out from nearly every window of the house, and by a belt of transplanted trees and quick-growing shrubs at the south-east corner there, I will hide them from—" Yet this cannot interest you, Miss Fulham, you will not care—"

"But I do care," smiled the young lady, as the speaker paused; "you forget, or rather do not know, Mr. Wayre, that I have just come up from the heart of a rural district, where we had nothing more exciting to study than such things as trees and shrubs; the crops, of course, diversified it, and so did my poultry."

"Yes," said the doctor, "to Agatha, Bridgeley will seem a centre of gay and fashionable life, I have no doubt. We need no better amusement than this."

Mr. Wayre, however, would not be content with this assurance, and took his visitors into the house, where the doctor's stay was prolonged beyond even his usual measure. When they left, the host would not hear of their walking home, but ordered out the chaise in earnest, and accompanied them to Bridgeley.

The conversation was chiefly carried on between Dr. Fulham and Mr. Wayre; when Miss Agatha spoke, it was in answer to some direct appeal from one or the other, generally from her host. At parting the latter exclaimed, as though he had just remembered it:

"Do not fail to run over to-morrow, doctor, and—by Jove! 'tis well I thought of it—Miss Fulham must be introduced to Nero, not that he is ever out in the daytime, but I hope sometimes to see you both of an evening, and it is as well to be on the safe side."

"And who is Nero, sir?" asked the girl.

Ezra was driving, and as he heard this question, muttered something between his teeth.

An explanation was of course given, to which Miss Fulham listened with evident pleasure, and declared that if possible she should like to go over soon and see such a noble creature, for she doted on dogs, especially large ones, there was something in them so much like a lion.

"Well, Miss Fulham, if that be your taste, I am confident you will not be disappointed in Nero," returned Mr. Wayre; "he is lion-like enough, I fancy, to scare many an actual king of the forest, as I believe it is correct to call the lion."

A little more on the subject was said, and then the carriage drove back.

Ezra was in no good temper again to-day, and when he went to have his tea at the lodge, began, as his wife said, "a cussin' and swearin'" about the doctor's daughter.

"She not know who Nero was!" exclaimed the manager; "she with her pretty, innocent ways, and her fondness for big dogs! She knew as well what Nero was, and why he was here, as master did himself—perhaps it will turn out she knew a good deal more. She is invited here to-morrow, and she will come, Sukey, you may take your oath of that."

Mr. Ezra was not disposed to be a lenient critic of Miss Agatha Fulham, that was plain, but he was sagacious enough to be very civil and attentive to her when she came on the next day, for Ezra's prophecy was exactly fulfilled. The young lady was delighted with Nero, and patted his massive head with her gloved hand, at the very commencement of their interview. It is true that Nero's master, and Ezra, Nero's keeper, were present, and that the terrible quadruped was always gentle to those who were so presented to him; nevertheless, few girls would have had the courage to put their hands within snapping distance of his great white fangs, and Mr. Wayre was pleased by her daring, at which Ezra himself was a little astonished.

So this visit was a success, and as the workmen were not likely to be soon got rid of at Snowdon House, and as many occasions arose when the opinion of a third party, especially a lady, was valuable, there was nothing strange about the request which Mr. Wayre made to the doctor, and in consequence of which the latter brought his daughter with him in his daily visits.

Mr. Wayre owned that these visits were the only relief to his dulness which made it bearable; sometimes, indeed, he anticipated them by going over to Bridgeley with the chaise, where, taking up Dr. and Miss Fulham, they would drive out to some pleasant or interesting spot, which showed, as Mr. Wayre readily owned, that the patient must be getting a great deal better,

The alterations at Snowdon House, too, were extended, and included large improvements in the somewhat dreary mansion itself, and so went on some months, the keen eyes of Dr. Fulham watching and noting everything, we may be sure, until one day, when these alterations were all finished, the workmen all banished, and the estate had resumed its pristine quietude, the doctor arrived to pay his daily visit without his usual companion.

This omission naturally called forth an immediate enquiry on the part of Mr. Wayre.

"Oh, I have left her busy—packing up," returned the doctor; "women, you know, always make such a momentous business of that."

He said this with a light air and a smile, but the face of his listener showed no smile in return.

"What do you mean, sir?" he asked; "you talk as if I understood you. I don't."

"Why, surely I have spoken about it to you. I must have done so often," replied Dr. Fulham with an expression of surprise, which did him credit if it were not natural; "she's going away to-morrow to a friend—a relative—in London. She will probably stay there until she gets a situation. She thinks of being a governess, you know."

"No, sir, I do not know this," retorted Wayre, who paused for a second, then went on abruptly: "Come into the house, sir; I have something to say to you."

Without a word the doctor followed him, and took a seat in the gloomy square parlour as he had been accustomed to do, and waited the promised communication. Mr. Wayre did not speak at once, nor did he even look at his companion; his eyes, his knitted brow, his tightly-closed lips, were turned from him. The host was gazing intently from the window, but a less astute observer than the doctor might have told, with no great difficulty, that he saw nothing of the landscape which lay beyond, but that his brow was bent in consideration of mental, not external objects.

Turning suddenly, he began just as suddenly:

"This unexpected information, doctor, leads me to speak a little earlier than I intended—only a little, for I have had the intention in my mind for months. I am an old man, I know—"

"No such thing," interposed Fulham; "I do not mean to call myself old for many a day—why should you?"

"I am somewhat older than you in years, far older in health, and in trouble also," continued Wayre; "but we need not bandy argument; I merely wish to show that I do not shrink from the avowal, or disguise the fact. I was a miserable, lonely man when you first came here, and I believe that but for you I should have sunk into—into what I dread. Yet your skill alone might have failed; it has been your daughter's society that has wrought the charm. To look forward to her visits, day by day, has brightened my existence."

"I am pleased to think we have been of any service to you," said Fulham as the other paused here. "I hope the improvement—"

"I am glad that this opportunity has presented itself of speaking to you first, and alone," continued Mr. Wayre, without any reference to the speech the doctor had commenced; "I can speak more freely. I do not like to say I am in love with Miss Fulham; such an expression has a romantic flavour only fitted for younger people, but I will offer her my home, my kindest attention, my wealth. She will not have a bad position as Mrs. Wayre of Snowdon House, where her will shall be law, and I will strive to cause her as little regret at the acceptance of my offer as possible."

"You astonish me! this is so utterly unlooked for!" exclaimed the doctor when Wayre had finished speaking. His listener did indeed look astonished, but until that moment his piercing eyes had followed every change in Wayre's countenance, every movement of his lips, with the keen, watchful air so familiar with him. "Has Agatha any idea—have you said—"

"You surely must know I have not spoken to her," interrupted Wayre. "Had I done so she would have told you; and, besides, you know, also, that I have never seen her out of your company for ten minutes at a time."

"I really cannot say what her answer would be," pursued the doctor. "Not that I have any doubt as to her liking for your company. If you have found pleasure in her visits here, she has found equal pleasure in paying them. They have been looked forward to on her part, and, now I recall everything, I can see that great part of our evening conversation has been devoted to what has passed here in the day, or what we anticipated for the next day. I am sure she regards you as her best friend in the world—I will venture so far as that."

"What do you advise me to do?" said Mr. Wayre. "Will you act as my ambassador, or shall I drive over to your place to-night? I take it for granted that you, at all events, as a man of the world, will see the advantage—perhaps I don't mean exactly that, but I do

look for your support. If she is going away I must have my answer to-night. I cannot afford the time for a seven years' courtship, you know."

"I hardly know how to answer you," returned the doctor slowly, and seeming to reflect as he spoke. "I will do what I can, readily, for you have my good-will. Come over to-night yourself; it will look better, and have a great effect. I fancy few girls would like to be asked in marriage by proxy. Yes, come over."

"I will, as you counsel it," replied Wayre. "You know Mr. Darley. He is my solicitor. Call on him to-morrow, and he will satisfy you as to my power and will to behave liberally."

"There is no occasion, I am sure—" began the doctor, who might have found it difficult to finish his sentence well, if the other had not gone impetuously on.

"There is occasion, sir," exclaimed Wayre. "I shall do what is right, and I wish you to know it. I can reward those who are true and kind to me, as I can punish and have punished those who are ungrateful and unjust to me—or those I thought to be so," he added with a change in his tone. "No man is a judge in his own case. I never thought again to see a face which I should prefer to other faces, or hear a voice that should sound sweeter in my ears than other voices. With—with what happened many years ago, and does not concern us now, I thought I had done with all that."

The conversation was carried on for a long time after this, the most genial manner marking Dr. Fulham's behaviour, and when he left he promised to use his best endeavours in behalf of his friend. A prolonged hand-shaking testified to their mutual good-will and appreciation.

The doctor had ridden out upon the only steed of which he boasted—carriage he had none—and on this he went back at a better speed than was usually gained from that quadruped. Evening was just closing in as he arrived at his house, and Miss Fulham, who had been at work in the sitting-room, had left off on account of the fading light, and was seated, thoughtfully gazing into the dark and little-frequented street as her father came in; and this work on which she was employed was not of the light and interesting kind called "fancy." It was good, honest, hard sewing, and was therefore work in more than one sense. The inmates of Dr. Fulham's household—they were not numerous—had to work in earnest.

As her father entered, she turned towards him with something like a sigh, quitting her reverie with a perceptible effort.

"Now, Agatha—" began the doctor. There was something in his tone which at once arrested the attention of the girl, and her abstracted look changed for one of the deepest attention. Her colour, too, went and came. She felt that it did, but the shade in the room—a dark and cheerless apartment at best—was too heavy to allow of this being seen by her father. "Now, Agatha," he said, "all has happened exactly as I expected. What I foretold is realised to the very letter. He will be over here to-night—he may be on the road now—to speak for himself."

"Mr. Wayre?" asked the girl.

"Mr. Wayre!" echoed her father, with an approach to irritation in his tone; "of whom could I be speaking, if I did not mean Mr. Wayre? At the bare mention of your going away, he took fright, spoke out at once; and, as I told you, is following to speak to you. You will be mistress of Snowdon House, Agatha—absolute in everything, I am sure. He has referred me to his lawyer, but, as you know, I have already made enquiries which have satisfied me that he is a far richer man than is commonly believed."

"I must go on with it then, I suppose," replied Agatha, who spoke in a tone very different to the eager, excited manner of her father; "this is the last moment for turning back."

"Turning back!—last moment!" cried Fulham. "What is the meaning of this? Who wishes to turn back? For what have we been striving, scheming—I must speak plainly, Agatha—for months past, but for this? Here we stand between poverty, disgrace, with all the miserable straits which failure brings, and comfort, peace, respect, luxury. How can you speak of turning back? Is it not as much for your sake, Agatha, as my own, that I have striven?"

"You are needlessly warm, father," said the girl; "I have not refused to join you hitherto, and I shall not refuse now. I am as little enamoured of poverty and all its straits, as you can be. I only wish to make sure, at this last moment, that we know our own minds, and are sure we wish for the success which seems within our grasp."

"Wish for it!" repeated the doctor scornfully; "how can we fail to do so?"

"You certainly cannot, you ought not to, expect any display of enthusiasm on my side," continued his daughter; "it has been difficult enough for me to sustain the part you have assigned to me. My future will not be the one which girls would—had they the power—pick out for themselves; so much the better, perhaps. I do

not pretend to regret—" A momentary catch in her breath here checked her speech.

"I should think no girl would indeed pretend to regret anything in our lives and prospects," retorted the doctor; "you know well enough what it is here—by what shifts and stratagems I have been enabled to hold on until now; yet, dreary as such a life is, you were glad enough to leave the roof of your churlish relative to join me; you were glad, when there was a chance, of getting away from Cheshire."

"Yes," said the girl after a pause; "as you say, it was fortunate that I had a chance of leaving Cheshire." This, by-the-by, was not exactly what Dr. Fulham had said, but it was probably near enough. "And, since you continue in the same mind—since, I mean, that we are both in the same mind—I will go through with our plan. Do not fear for me, or my performance, father," she continued with a sudden change of tone and a laugh; "I see nothing before me better than to be Mrs. Wayre, nothing half so good as to be mistress of Snowdon House, and so I shall be quite prepared to enter on the negotiation."

Fulham appeared rather astonished by this abrupt change, but a good deal relieved by it nevertheless, and he echoed his daughter's laugh with loudness, if not with heartiness.

It was now almost dark, so the gas was lighted, the blinds drawn down, and the doctor was about to go to another room to have his cup of tea, when the noise of wheels was heard. It came closer, then stopped at their door.

Agatha glanced at her father, gave a significant wave of her hand in the direction of the sound, then sank into a chair, and took up a book at random from the table, on which lay several volumes, for this was the doctor's consulting-room, as well as Agatha's parlour when they had no patients—and they had not many.

The next moment the attendant boy announced that:

"If you please, sir, Mr. Wayre, from Snowdon House, is here, sir, and wants to see you."

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 138.)

## Miss Chrissie's Protégé.

(A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.)

### CHAPTER III.

DID Lucy Grant know why Seth Gavin was in prison? Did she know why that cruel blow had been struck among the woodland blossoms and the singing birds? Oh yes, she knew perfectly, and a far crueller blow had fallen on her own heart by the knowledge.

She had been quite conscious that he followed her that day, after she had quarrelled with him below the hill—quite conscious of it, and glad of it too, for she was growing weary of teasing and making him jealous, knowing, deep down in her heart, that there was no one like him, for strength, and patience, and tender love, to her.

"I'll let him overtake me, and then we'll make it up once for all," she said with a flush on her cheeks, knowing how much the "once for all" involved.

She was listening to his footsteps so intently, hearing, with quicker heart-beats, how they came nearer, that she never noticed the handsome, smiling Mr. Jacobs disposed in the most picturesque attitude beneath the big beech—never knew he was near her till he spoke. Then she stopped just long enough to fling a glance backwards and answer—she knew not what—while her lips smiled and her eyes were filled with a saucy gladness. The moment's pause and the blush accompanying it meant encouragement to the stranger, who hitherto had found encouragement frequently enough among the beauties of humble rank.

"What sweet flowers, but far less sweet than your own eyes!" he said, trying to seize her; but the girl broke from him, with as pure a sense of outraged dignity as could have stirred in the breast of a queen.

"Wretch! to look and speak like that, as if he thought me a fool, or worse!" she pouted, hurrying upwards, fleet as a fawn.

For a moment she longed to stop and claim Seth's sympathy and protection, but consideration for his interests deterred her. It would only make bad blood between him and the rich man, and Mr. Jacobs gave Seth frequent employment.

"Perhaps I shall tell him a little about it when I see him. I shall be cooler then, and he will care less," she concluded.

But all that evening he did not come, and before night she knew he was a prisoner.

"It is my fault—all my fault," she wailed, standing pallid as a ghost before her father. "Oh, I shall never forgive myself."

"How was it thy fault, child?" the old weaver asked pettishly.

"He saw me and Mr. Jacobs, and he is so jealous, and we had quarrelled."

"Saw what? What is the man at the mill to thee—a man of bad character like that, who has brought sorrow to many a lass before now?"

"It was nothing—nothing, indeed, father. I met him often, and he only stared at me, but to-day he spoke, and I, not thinking of him at all, but only of Seth, who was behind, I stopped, and then he tried to kiss me, and Seth saw him, I know, and that is how all has gone wrong. Oh, father, father, I don't care if the mill-owner is dead, but I do care if Seth has killed him."

"Heaven help Seth and thee, and me, and all of us!" the old man answered, groaning.

But Mr. Jacobs did not die, and as tidings of his slow convalescence crept up the hillside, Timothy Grant's heart rose. After all, things would not be so very bad for Seth. Jealousy is a potent motive for a rough action, all men allow, and a month's imprisonment, or perhaps, indeed, only a fine, would be all he need fear.

But at the trial things took a turn the Grants never anticipated. Mr. Jacobs swore, and honestly too, that the only motive he could assign for the attack made on him was a refusal on his part to employ Seth Gavin again at the rate of wages paid him hitherto; and to this Seth listened in apathetic indifference.

"There was another motive, I know," the old weaver interrupted querulously to the people near him, but they bade him silence impatiently, intent only on what the witnesses had to say.

Timothy Grant had entered the assize town that day with the light step and hopeful bearing of a young man. He left it tottering feebly, and his face was ashen-grey, for, to his judgment, Seth Gavin's young life was ruined, and the ruin had been wrought by Lucy Grant.

If the Greys were not very wide awake in a general way, they had made a decided hit for once in getting Seth Gavin as gardener, groom, carpenter, and factotum at no wages whatever. This was what the neighbourhood said, and neighbourhoods have generally the knack of expressing truths in an ill-natured way.

Gentle Miss Chrissie, actuated solely by the desire to help a fellow-mortal in distress, had found a treasure in the skilled mechanic who brought his best powers gratefully to her service. And it was wonderful what he could do—wonderful in the eyes of the delicate, scholarly curate and his mild, sweet, little sister. Why, in an evening he could get through more in the patch of garden than Mr. Grey was equal to in a week, and then, what window-boxes and rustic chairs he made, and what dishes of plumpest fish he caught! Half his time was given to the service of the parsonage-house, and yet in the other half he managed to do as much good work as daysmen achieved in full time. But that was because Seth never wasted an hour gossiping at the beershop, or came home, after an outing, with a headache.

Seth Gavin was the steadiest man in the whole country-side, and not because men held aloof from him now, as they had done at first, more in discomfort than contempt, but because those prison years had taught him to find in his own thoughts companionship enough.

Miss Chrissie had only meant to do a kind action in taking up Seth Gavin, but the kindness had borne more immediate fruit than is generally the habit of that slow-growing plant. Never before had her roses and gardenias looked as if a skilled hand attended on them; never before had her fowls slumbered peacefully, undisturbed by precipitate descents from crazy perches; never before had a hundred little comforts found their way to the parsonage.

"Seth is the cleverest creature," Miss Chrissie confided to her brother at the breakfast-table; "I don't know what he is ignorant of. He told me this morning how to cure the pip in chickens; and we never had eatable butter till he showed Nancy what was wrong with the churn."

"Yes, he can take a hand at anything—he is a fine fellow. I've been thinking a good deal about Seth lately, Chrissie."

"Have you?" Miss Chrissie's heart sank, she could not have told why; perhaps because the curate's "I've been thinking," so often involved a sacrifice for her.

"Yes, I've been thinking that no man would take a pound a week, and do for us what Seth Gavin does for nothing."

"Indeed I dare say not."

"Of course he does it out of gratitude because we took him up, but it is not fair that we should have all his services for nothing."

"No; but we could not afford to pay him, and indeed I don't believe he ever thinks of payment."

"Yet, all the same, Chrissie, justice is justice."

Miss Chrissie's mild face had grown indignantly pink. If she prided herself on anything it was on her fairness to every one; yet here was her brother actually seeming to accuse her of something.

"Well, if you think I've been doing anything unjust, it's more than Seth does," she said huffily.

"No, you haven't, Chrissie, you have been most kind and merciful

when he needed a friend. But things are altering now. He has been here a year, under my eye, and so I can give him a character that will put him straight."

"He does not need a character. The whole neighbourhood——"

"But I mean him to leave the neighbourhood." Miss Chrissie's face fell. "It's only fair to him."

"Where do you mean him to go?" she asked in a small, subdued, disheartened voice.

"To Scotland. I saw Lord Calmont's advertisement accidentally in the *Field* yesterday. He wants a gamekeeper. To a man who knew something of carpentry, he would give excellent wages."

"But Seth is not a gamekeeper," Miss Chrissie protested with faint rebellion.

"It's all the same, a man like that may become anything he has a mind to."

"But would Lord Calmont not object?"

"I don't think so. I used to know him a little, and I shall write and tell him all the truth about Seth, and leave him to judge for himself."

"Do you think—is that best?" In spite of herself there was an anxious look on Miss Chrissie's face, and a sorrowful frown between her eyes.

"I think so."

The curate smiled at his sister as he spoke, and Miss Chrissie smiled back, though feebly. She had sacrificed too much to her brother in the past to hesitate at yielding her *protégé* now.

"Did you see Seth Gavin to-day?"

That was a frequent question of Lucy Grant's when her father came home, after leaving his webs with their owners, for though she and her former lover had never met since his return from that horrible life of which she never could bear to think, interviews between him and the weaver were not infrequent.

"No, not to-day."

The old man came over to the fireplace, and seated himself tiredly on the wooden settle, and looked thoughtfully at the smouldering embers.

"Any news down in the village, father?"

Lucy took up her knitting mechanically, but her hands trembled. She could hardly have told why. Perhaps she remembered that Timothy had looked just so, when he brought her word that her old playfellow was a felon.

"No news that I'm ready to believe yet," he answered fretfully.

"Then you have heard something?"

"Yes; they say that Seth has got a main good place in Scotland, and goes there soon for good."

"Well, why not? Movin' round is all the fashion; few folks die in the parish they were born in nowadays."

Lucy's cheerfulness was so assertive that the old man looked up at her curiously.

"I'm sorry to lose him. I thought you would ha' been sorry too," he said after a pause.

"Why should I be sorry? I haven't spoken to him for more than three years."

"And yet I thought once, Lucy, that you an' Seth might ha' made things right before now."

"Oh dear no, Seth is far too grand for the like of me," she said, speaking out of the bitterness of her sore heart; and then she rose and went outside, as if the stillness of the little kitchen oppressed her.

"These young ones—how they spoil things for one another," Timothy said with a sigh. "There is a small wrong-doing, and then a great fire of pain, and that is life. Well, it must burn itself out; friends are not wise who interfere."

Lucy's pain was burning itself out, she knew how cruelly. All the sorrow, and regret, and shame—for it was shame to have branded Seth Gavin—had concentrated itself now into despair.

He was going away without ever having spoken to her, without ever having heard her explanation, or known she loved him—going away thinking hardly of her, doubtless. And, bad as things were now, they would be worse when she had lost sight of him. Indeed, she scarcely knew how she could bear existence if she never saw his face or heard his name, or knew how he fared. She tried to think of the coming days in which she would look towards his place in church and find it vacant, in which she would see her father come up from the valley or over the hill without ever hoping he might utter a name that would set all her pulses stirring.

She was very miserable. Had she deserved quite so much misery? she asked herself often. Many a woman had done worse than she without faring so ill; but those women were luckier. He blamed her for his ruin, of course, and he could not forgive her, would never speak to her while they lived. That was a little cruel, and yet Lucy could not blame him. She was too dispirited to think of censuring him or any one.

"I shall speak to him myself. I shall offer him my good wishes, whether he will or no," she told herself valorously, still meaning to accost him, and still deferring the evil day.

And then another echo stole into her world of sound, an echo like the swish of a sabre after the hiss of a whip—Seth Gavin would not go alone to Scotland. Bessie Vance, who sat near him in church, and was often at Miss Grey's for an evening's sewing—Bessie with the pretty, glad young face—was going with him.

"Hear about your old sweetheart, Lucy?" the village girls asked with the bold discourtesy that passes for frankness in remote districts. "Bess Vance will be his wife now, instead of you, as we had thought."

"Bess thinks a gaol-bird good enough," another said with a coarse laugh, passing on.

He was to marry Bessie Vance! Well, once no one would have compared Bessie to her, for all her pearly teeth and face of cream and roses. But Bessie had never injured him.

Now that he was happy, now that things had all turned out well for him, surely he might have been great enough to come to her and offer her his pardon, and renew their old friendship. So much she would have done for him; but then he was a man, and men's ways were sometimes hard.

"I must speak to him. I shall suffer less when I have spoken," she said, and resolved to put herself in his way.

All the harvest-work in the Deepdale Valley was over. The harvest-festival had been celebrated everywhere, and the golden corn lay in bushels in the granaries. But the small produce of the curate's acre-patch was only now being threshed out by the homely, almost disused flail.

With his coat off, and the rustling straw lying about his feet, while his sturdy arms swung the flail with mighty strokes, Seth Gavin was looking his best. And so the girl thought, who entered at the door and stood just a faint shadow on his breadth of daylight.

"Is it you, Lucy?" he asked, pausing to gaze at her incredulously.

"Yes; I was passing here, and I heard you at your work, so I thought I'd step in out of the rain to speak with you."

"And right welcome you are—as welcome as sunshine," he said heartily as he threw the flail aside and piled the straw into a rustling golden throne for her. "Sit here, an' let me look at you. It's many a day since we have had a chat."

"I don't think that was my fault, Seth."

"No, maybe not."

His face had saddened and grown grave again.

"It's maybe bold of me to come after you to-day," she said with a short uncomfortable laugh, "but I wanted to give you my good wishes. You are going to Scotland, they say, and you will be happy and well-to-do there."

"Well no, Lucy. I don't mean to go after all. I let Mr. Grey ask the place for me, because I wanted to see if I could get it, with all there is against me; but I don't think I ever meant to take it. Somehow it's more like what I want just to stay on here, and work down folks' bad opinions. But I did want Mr. Grey to tell all the ill he knew of me, that I might see how a stranger would feel about it."

"And you could get the situation?"

"Yes; an' so I feel now that I can choose to stay in the old place, not that I must do it."

Lucy drew a short quick breath, whether of pain or relief she could not have told.

"Bessie will be pleased you are staying," she said after a pause.

"I think so."

"I have heard about you and Bessie," she went on steadily, after a pause, "and I'm very glad you have settled things if she will make you happy. All the folks speak well of her, now that she is to be your wife."

He did not answer for a minute. He had taken up his flail again, and stood leaning on it, and looking out on the ducks rioting and revelling in the rain.

"Bessie is a good girl an' wise," he said dreamily.

"Yes, and you're a good man, Seth. I think I scarcely knew how good till it was too late."

She was looking up at him now, her hands clasped about her knees, her eyes fearless and very bright.

"Then you are my friend, in spite of everything?"

"Was I ever anything else? I don't think so, though you have kept away from me as if I'd been an enemy."

"I did not mean it, Lucy. I was goin' back to you one night, an' I saw you break up the old seat I'd made for you—you remember?"

"Oh, Seth!"

"Yes, you were tearin' it down as if you hated it."

"Only because it was worn out and done—only because I loved it too well to leave it in ruins."

"I did not know. I was goin' back to you with my heart full of old times, goin' maybe to ask if you would not take me up when the whole world was against me, and I saw that, an' then I turned away again."

"What shall I do—oh, Seth, what shall I do?"

The rapid, hopeless tears were falling, the weak hands wrung each other feebly. All her undeserved pain had culminated now. He had loved her through all the time of his prison-life—had loved her, and was coming back to her, and she had lost him through such a pitiful chance!

"Do—why, nothing! What does it matter what I did or thought?" he said with a certain husky roughness in his voice.

Of course he belonged to another now; of course he had no right to come and comfort her; and yet it was hard that he should stand so far aloof and speak so harshly.

"It would not matter to everyone; but it does matter to me," she said, with a desperate effort to be calm, "and I think, for the sake of old times, you might have come and spoken."

"I had so little to offer, an' I was afraid of bein' tempted to ask."

"Ah, that is so like you men, so like some of you, at any rate." And then a new thought came, and took the momentary bitter blitheness out of her. "And yet you were not afraid to ask of Bessie, having as little to bestow on her."

"Bessie an' I are only good friends, Lucy. We were never more. David Clyde is her sweetheart. I know all about it."

She did not lift her glance or speak, and her down-dropped lids hid her shy, suffused eyes, but he was not looking at her, only out at the falling rain.

"You see there was so little to lead me to you then," he went on sadly. "I was just out of gaol, without a character, an' with a poor chance of good work for many a day, an' you had thought but little of me when I could offer a pleasant home an' a good name."

"I was such a fool then, wanting all the coaxing and seeking, and none of the care. I'd have played with you if you'd been a prince. I could not help it, and maybe I didn't care for you then, maybe I only learned to care when I knew I had spoiled your life."

"Then you do care now?"

"It's three years and three months since I knew I loved you with all my heart."

"You see I owed him some special favour for his special pain," she told Miss Chrissie afterwards, "and I felt that if I did not ask him then, he'd likely never come as near wanting me again."

"Is Seth at home?" The curate had stopped his cob and the little phaeton, that were his sister's proudest possession, before the carpenter's door.

"He's working at the Park, sir, but I expect him home any time," the little wife answered, smiling.

"Well, I can't wait now, but tell him when he comes back that he was elected a churchwarden at yesterday's vestry meeting."

"It is the best proof of confidence the parish could give him," the curate said to himself, as he drove on between the hawthorn hedges, "and I'm glad to think they voted, to a man, for Chrissie's protégé."

(Concluded.—Commenced in No. 138.)

## Mistletoe.

I KISSED you in the long ago

Beneath the holly,  
Where hung some hidden mistletoe;  
We were but boy and girl, and so  
You thought it sweet as I, I know,  
That youth's dear folly.

But now with years long left behind,  
And melancholy,  
I come from other lands to find  
Not you, who filled my heart and mind,  
My unforgotten saint enshrined  
In niche of holly—

But one who says that bygone day  
Was childish folly,  
That we must muse on growing grey,  
And leave the boys and girls to play,  
With mistletoe and wreathings gay  
Of Christmas holly.

Now look me frankly in the eyes,  
My cousin Dolly,  
Oh yes, your words are wondrous wise,  
But what care I while all I prize  
Is mine, while your sweet look denies  
You think it folly?



# Gustav's Ghost.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

PEOPLE were congratulating each other upon the arrival of "another old-fashioned Christmas;" they seemed quite to enjoy being chilly for so good a cause, and on so appropriate an occasion.

As for me, I got into a smoking-carriage, lit a cigar, and wished that I had not quite such a long journey before me in this "fine, seasonable weather."

Grey and white, white and grey, the landscape flew past the windows; snow-clouds gathered, a wind sharp as a sword found its way to my corner every time the door was opened, and I thought with a sigh of the mist and mud of last year. Then also I had gone down to my uncle's for Christmas, and hunted blissfully, to my own satisfaction and the astonishment of my family and friends.

"I thought it was all over with you, my boy," said Sir Reginald. "I never meant to own you as my nephew again after your going to that German hole. But I suppose a Boscawen can't help riding?"

And he never more reproached me with that "German hole"; in other words the university of Tübingen, which, to his unspeakable surprise and horror, I had preferred to that of Oxford. Indeed I had every reason to suppose that he had forgiven all Germany and the Germans too, for he had condescended to invite my college chum Gustav von Friedland to meet me at the Hall this Christmas-time.

I could not help laughing as I thought of Gustav at my uncle Reginald's. The wildest of smoking, beer-drinking, duel-fighting students had he been when last I saw him, captain of the most eccentric club, and talker of the most vernacular Swabian.

His friendship for me had been of a highly romantic type, and his letters for a year after I came home had been enthusiastically frequent. Lately, however, they had ceased, after one gloomy note in which he told me he was a doomed, lost, ruined man. He had made no answer to my "kind enquiries," and I wondered in what mood I should find him.

Darker and darker grew the scene outside, and twilight deepened into night, before a well-known station, a welcoming servant, and a waiting carriage showed that my journey was coming to an end.

Soon I was in sight of the Hall, flashing promises of hospitality from every window, as the steady lamplight or dancing firelight streamed out upon the darkness.

I knew beforehand what I should find when I made my way in; the merry party in the great oak-panelled hall—one of the county sights—the school boys and girls, the elder people standing round the great log-fire, the smiling faces of my cousins, the genial laugh and welcome of my uncle, the soft voice and smile of his wife. But I could not imagine what Gustav would be about in the midst of them.

I went in, unannounced as usual, and there was more noise than usual to guide me—shouts, laughter, cries of "Bravo!"

They were all playing a game of Blindman's Buff, I found, and the applause had been evoked by the very Gustav himself, who had sprung over some seemingly insurmountable barrier in his flight from the blind man.

"Hallo, here's Frank!" shouted a schoolboy cousin, as I stood in the doorway, and in a moment they were all round me, shaking hands, welcoming, questioning, all in a breath.

Gustav stared, with eyes that had become very wild and haggard since I had seen them; seemed for a moment uncertain as to my identity; and then rushed forward and embraced me, to the unspeakable delight of certain schoolboys there assembled.

But they did not allow him much time for his rapturous greetings, dragging him back to the game as quickly as might be.

Sir Reginald stood watching him with a rather puzzled expression. "Never saw such an active fellow in my life as that friend of yours, Frank; running, jumping, tumbling about, never quiet. And he rides too," added he thoughtfully, as one who had not expected such a thing from that outer barbarian, a foreigner.

"He was always very active," I said. "Fond of riding and driving too," and I mentally recalled Gustav as he used to appear in the uniform of his fellowship, driving his four-in-hand at a gallop out of Tübingen, hotly pursued by outraged authority.

"He's a decent sort of fellow, that Von What's-his-name," said one of the schoolboys presently; "but, you know, Frank, he's an awful old lunatic. I never saw such a fellow. He goes about staring and muttering to himself sometimes, like a fellow in a play, and seems not to see you when you speak to him. Then he wakes up, shrieking with laughter, and rushing about in the maddest way. He's bought an Irish horse that's as mad as himself, and he jumped him right over Deadman's Dyke the other day. If they don't break each other's necks soon, that horse and that foreigner, I'm a Dutchman myself. Look at him now. Did you ever!"

Certainly I never had seen anyone run and jump as lightly and

quickly, he seemed to pass through the hands of the pursuers like a smoke-wreath.

"Does he play and sing much, here?" I asked.

"Operas full," returned my companion, with a little air of disgust. "That's the worst of him. Shows he's only a German after all."

"For shame!" cried my prettiest cousin, Katie, often described as "the one with the blue eyes." "Herr von Friedland is charming at the piano. Only fancy, Frank, he can improvise most beautifully. He does it sometimes in the evening to stop our going upstairs. He would sit up all night if he could."

"The servants say he comes out of his room and runs up and down stairs at night," put in another boy; "Felton thinks there's a bogey after him."

Evidently Gustav was the hero of the hour; but I did not quite like his looks and all that they had said of him. It all reminded me of that last gloomy letter I had had from him.

The game was over at last, the dressing-bell rang, and obediently, as usual, we dispersed at the sound.

"You have your old room, Frank, at the end of the long corridor, and Herr von Friedland is next to you," said Lady Boscawen.

"Come, come, I will show you the way," cried Gustav, taking my arm as we went upstairs. "It is a hard house to know, but I knew it directly."

"Considering that I have spent all my Christmases here these five-and-twenty years, I think I ought to know my way about it too."

"Ah, but you come and go like a man," Gustav rattled on in his beloved Swabian. "You do not know the place at all hours—you never glide about it like the ghost, when all the rest are busy with their dreams—eh? You don't know all the cracks and creakings, the wind-whisperings and moanings that are abroad in it then."

"Well, I prefer my bed at such times, I must say," I answered, looking at him curiously.

He followed me into my room, when he suddenly turned grave, and stood looking about him sadly enough.

"Perhaps I shall rest quieter in my grave—I mean my bed, now you are close to me," he said. "I did not like this room being empty."

"Why, Gustav, you are the last man in the world to say such things. I should have expected you to laugh at loneliness."

"Alone! Ah yes, to be alone, that is a very good thing, but not to be alone, and yet not to be allowed to choose one's company, that is a bad thing—a bad thing, Frank!"

Then with a queer, twitching sort of smile he left the room.

"Your friend is so peculiar, Frank," Katie confided to me, as we stood waiting for dinner. "So very peculiar that I expect he will make you feel quite responsible."

"Responsible?"

"Don't you know how you have people on your conscience when you have introduced them, and they do not behave themselves?"

"I hope Gustav behaves himself?"

"Ah, of course. But, Frank, he is so odd!"

"How?"

"I can't describe it. But he is odder than odd sometimes. By the way, he is a great admirer of mine, do you know?"

"I don't see the oddity of that, I must confess."

At this moment the subject of our speech came into the room. A slight man he was, with fair hair, and blue eyes, a sort of typical German face, which used to express nothing but endless good-humour and daring fun. Now it was indescribably changed. True he had reduced his moustache, and cut his hair short since the student days, and now he had on the customary evening-dress. And he looked even less "like other people" than he had looked at Tübingen with flowing hair and wonderful uniform.

He did nothing, however, to rouse my sense of responsibility all the pleasant, merry evening, till the ladies were disposing themselves to go to bed. Then he sprang up from the table where he had been conjuring, to the delight of the boys, and hurried across the room to Katie.

"You are going and we have not had one song," he pleaded.

"We must put that off till to-morrow, I fear. It is getting so late, and they were all so happy with your tricks, it seemed a pity to interrupt."

"Let me beg for a few more minutes' happiness," he said, seating himself at the piano and beginning to play a plaintive little pleading air, that seemed to echo his request.

"Don't you hear it is begging for a song?" he said, looking up at Katie, who stood by admiring his skill, but shaking her head at the request.

"You will not grant it?"

The entreaty became passionate; it swelled in strange grandeur through the room, it cried so wildly, that even Sir Reginald, who considered music quite beneath the dignity of man, looked gravely at the player, and suggested to a neighbour in a low

voice that it was wonderful to see the musical genius of the Germans.

"You still refuse?" Gustav went on, absorbed in his playing. "Then it turns to despair."

And the music sobbed and wailed so pitifully that Katie's heart was touched.

"Oh, I cannot resist that," she cried.

And so we had a song, and Gustav accompanied it, and then went on with a sort of reverie upon the melody, very dreamy and beautiful.

But there was Lady Boscawen getting very sleepy, and Sir Reginald and the others impatient, and it was impossible to let Gustav go on keeping them, as unconcerned as if he were a musical-box.

"My dear fellow," I said in his ear, "it's ever so late, and people are going to bed."

"*Natürlich*," he answered indifferently.

"Yes, and *natürlich* you must come too," I persisted, and managed at last to drag him away.

When we got upstairs, he seemed still disposed to sit up a little longer, but pleading my own sleepiness, I got rid of him at last, and wished him "good-night." He answered with an odd sort of smile, which set me once more wondering over the change in him. Too sleepy to proceed resolutely to bed, I sat in a great chair by the fire, seeing past scenes in the red coals, and recalling Gustav as he used to be, till I had thought myself into a doze.

Soon I was dreaming of Tübingen, of Gustav, and of Fritz Werner, with whom he used to quarrel so often. Quite plainly I saw those two in the Lindenallee, gesticulating, disputing. Gustav's eyes flashed fire, and then he suddenly turned and pointed down the avenue where Katie came wandering along, singing the song she had sung to-night. I was afraid she would see them quarrelling, and be frightened. I tried to step forward and speak; then that nameless horror of powerlessness that one finds in dreams came over me. I struggled—I woke. The fire was dying down, I was very cold, and someone was knocking at my door. Before I was awake enough to give permission, it opened, and Gustav hurried in, pale, strange, with staring eyes.

He had his coat off, and was moving his arms slowly up and down in a curious way; altogether I did not like the look of him.

"Gustav, what time of night, or morning, do you suppose it is? What's the matter? Why don't you go to bed?"

"I feel more helpless lying down," he answered in an odd kind of voice.

"Anything the matter? Aren't you well?"

"Well enough. It's very cold."

I put some more coal on, the fire blazed up again; he sat down by it, shivering and rubbing his hands.

"Cold, cold!" he repeated to himself dreamily.

"It's a cold process, sitting up when you should be in bed," I remarked with a significant glance at my own inviting-looking couch.

He turned round, and took hold of my hand.

"Never mind, my friend, you will let me sit here a little, will you not?"

"Certainly, if you wish for such a sacrifice on the altar of friendship," said I, trying to laugh. "But I wish you would explain yourself, Gustav. Is this indigestion—or what is it all?"

"Explain! Frank, you do not know what it is to be haunted, tormented as I am. I know you cannot—cannot imagine it. But do not laugh, old friend. If you only knew how horrible that sounds to me—horrible—horrible!"

He repeated the word many times, his voice dying down into a whisper.

"I believe I have been asleep a long time in this chair," I said by way of saying something, for the dying out of his whispered "Horrible!" left an unpleasant impression. "I was asleep when you came to the door, and, in my dreams, I saw you quarrelling with Fritz Werner."

He started at the name, grew white, and trembled. He did not speak, but fixed his eyes upon me as if I were saying something strange and terrible.

"Do you ever hear of him now?" I persisted, for silence would have been intolerable under the circumstances.

Gustav only shook his head and covered his face with his hands.

"I wish you would tell me what has gone wrong," I said uneasily. "You really have become a most extraordinary fellow, Gustav."

He looked up with a perfectly white face.

"The worst is to come," he answered hoarsely.

"To come—when?"

"You will see—in two days—on Christmas Eve."

"You have got into some nervous, depressed state; and no wonder if you never go to sleep."

"How is anyone to sleep, tormented in this way, watched, haunted—no solitude, no peace?"

I thought the words were rather appropriate to myself as well as

to the speaker, but I did not hint as much to him, he was too far gone for that.

"Why don't you lie down on the sofa here and go to sleep?" I suggested with a longing glance at my own pillow.

To my surprise, he accepted the proposal with sudden satisfaction, and threw himself down, covering his face with his hands. I covered him up with a large eider-down quilt, and I think he fell asleep. At any rate, he let me go to bed in silence, and when I woke in the morning he was gone.

When we met at breakfast-time next day, he was in the wildest spirits, talking more than anyone else, gesticulating, laughing, applauding.

It had frozen harder than ever that night, and a great skating-party was organised to Stillride Mere, a happy skating-ground of the neighbourhood. How Gustav rattled on in an indescribable mixture of languages as he and Katie and I marched off over the iron-hard ground! It seemed impossible to believe in the haggard, horrified creature of last night, as he sang and laughed, and jumped gates, to the admiration of all the boys, and afterwards did more curious things in skates than any mortal could be expected to do under any ordinary circumstances.

A merry day had we all out there on the ice, making a winter picnic of it, and kindling an enormous bonfire, round which we took our luncheon. Not till twilight was falling, and carriages had arrived for the ladies, did we recognise that it was time to break up the party, and then Gustav raced the boys home, and beat them with an ease which they rather resented.

More music and singing filled up the evening, and when we were too sleepy to listen any more, my aunt retired, murmuring to me:

"What wonderful spirits Herr von Friedland has! He is quite the life of the party."

But I felt as if he might be the death of one of the party, if he would not allow that humble individual his natural night's rest after six or seven hours' skating, and, not much liking the look he gave me as we went upstairs, I bade him a cordial but hurried good-night, and rushed into my room. Remembering the painful experiences of last night, I got into bed with all possible speed, thinking that if I were actually safe asleep, he never could have the cruelty to wake me.

Alas! his extremity was too great for such consideration. It seemed to me that I had just fallen asleep, when a nightmare-like sensation roused me again, and, opening my eyes, I dimly perceived a figure sitting on my bed.

There was no escaping him.

"Is that you, Gustav?" I murmured feebly.

"It is I. Forgive my waking you, Frank; the solitude that is no solitude became too horrible. If I did not seek some human companionship I should go mad."

Not being at all sure that he was not mad already, I made no reply to this but a sigh of resignation.

"Ah, Frank, you don't know what I go through," he went on in a strange, hollow voice, fixing his eyes upon me. "You could not imagine the suffering of it."

"But what is it? What is the matter with you?"

His voice sank into a whisper.

"I have a dead man for my companion—a dead man who hates me."

"You have taken some fancy into your head."

"Fancy! Ah, I feel him near me, drawing closer and closer as the night grows deep, his cold arms are round me, his cold breath on my face—the breath of the dead. You don't know what it is, and he is getting stronger and stronger. To-morrow will be Christmas Eve, and to-morrow he will be too strong; he will take me away with him."

"This is madness, Gustav," I protested stoutly, though something of grim reality in his voice made my blood run cold. "Whatever put such things in your head, Gustav?"

"Last Christmas Eve I killed him," he answered in a lower voice, turning his head away from me. "This time it will be his turn."

"Killed him? Whom are you talking about?"

"Fritz Werner. I killed him in a duel—mortally wounded him, that is. We quarrelled about Gretchen. I did not know that it was a more serious affair than when we fought before. But when they took him away, he said, 'You have done for me this time. I shall die and haunt you'—and he kept his word."

"Fritz Werner dead?"

"Dead, and close beside us now," he answered drearily.

This was horrible! Gustav's many quarrels with Fritz had always had their comic side, his many duels had never produced anything more serious than a cut hand or lip. That he should have killed poor old Fritz seemed too impossible, too incongruous for belief.

"I can't believe it," I said.

"It does seem like a dream," Gustav went on. "When his eyes looked at me that time out of his white face, and he said those words in a dying voice, I thought he seemed changed into somebody else. But I shall know when he takes me away to-morrow."

"Don't go on like that, Gustav. You fought fair, though that fighting was always a foolish thing. It was an accident if you did kill him. He might have done the same by you."

"Yes, he means to, he can't relent now. Dead men are like that. I suppose their last thoughts stiffen and keep in one place, rigid, like their limbs."

"If you go on like that, Gustav, I shall think you're out of your mind."

"It's enough to make me. But I'm sane enough. I know what I know. No matter. Go to sleep again, Frank, you who can sleep. I only want to sit here by you, and feel your living spirit near."

And he would not lie down or cover himself up, or do anything approaching to the comfortable, except make up the fire at my earnest request. Cold and darkness would make matters worse, I told him.

What a night I had, to be sure!—dozing off every now and then, and waking with some horrid fancy, to find Gustav always sitting there looking at me, expressing all his abominable notions with his eyes. Every now and then a great coal dropped out of the grate, and made me suppose, sleepily, that Fritz was coming down the chimney; or a sudden gust of wind made me start from my pillow. Then Gustav would smile a sickly smile, and tell me benevolently to go to sleep again. What a night it was, to be sure!

I thought, a good many times during that night, that morning certainly would never come again—it was simply an impossibility. I mentioned this two or three times to Gustav, who only gasped in reply.

At last, when I was hopelessly reduced to lying staring at the unhappy friend who sat with such a maddening persistence staring at me, it occurred to him to get up and open the shutters, and there was a little grey light coming in the east.

"I welcome the morning," said Gustav solemnly. And so did I, for he sat and watched the growing light now, and let me fall asleep in good earnest at last.

Naturally enough I appeared very late at the breakfast-table, where I was greeted with many jests upon my tardiness. I did not mind that, but it was almost past human patience to see Gustav there already, laughing and talking with the most exuberant merriment and a great deal of noise. How could he, I mentally questioned—how could he look me in the face and do it?

The frost was harder than ever, the skaters declared triumphantly, and once more skating was to be the order of the day.

"Of course you're coming, Frank?" remarked Katie.

"I don't know—I'm tired—lazy."

"Frank's sleepy; he got up too early this morning," observed my aunt with fine satire, and Gustav looked at me and actually laughed.

Patience! Patience! We all started forth as before, and went this time to a large lake at the north side of the park, a pretty lake surrounded by bushes, with a view of the hilly road beyond the park gates.

It was one of those sparkling winter mornings that never look to me quite real. All the mist of last night had left the trees gleaming white and splendid in the winter sun, the sky with its pale-blue looked strangely far away, the frozen grass-spears glistened where we trod. It was beautiful, with a dreamlike beauty, and all day long I felt only half awake.

I could see how forced Gustav's spirits were at times. I caught the frightened glance that every now and then he cast around him. Even the boys' merriment did not sound as genial as it had done yesterday, and Katie looked graver than her wont.

The influence extended itself; by-and-by the boys voted it "slow" to go on skating, and proposed a steeplechase across the fields, the skating-ladies walked home with the spectators, only Gustav and I remained on the lake.

He had refused all proposals to come away, and I did not like to leave him; he kept on skating about, sometimes performing feats of curious dexterity, sometimes only rushing round and round swiftly as the wind.

The sun was setting, the air was growing very cold, and now there stole up from the village church the sound of chiming bells.

Gustav stopped and listened.

"Why do they ring?" he asked.

"They always do here on Christmas Eve," I said.

"Christmas Eve!" He repeated the words with trembling lips, his eyes filled with tears. "What a happy time this is in the Fatherland, is it not, Frank? Now they are lighting up their trees and singing their hymns, and gathering round their firesides. It is Christmas Eve!"

"Won't you come home now?" I asked, as I sat down on the bank to take off my skates. "We have had enough of the ice, haven't we?"

"No, not yet; the house—the house is my grave. He will be there waiting for me. Let me stay here a little longer, out with the free wind and Christmas bells. If something strange is coming towards me—and I feel it is—let me wait for it here."

I took off my skates in silence, and began to walk up and down the road waiting for him. The bells had ceased again, the evening was very still, there was no sound out there but the ring of his skates upon the ice and my footsteps on the frozen ground. It grew late, the last red ring of the sun dipped out of sight, the after-glow faded, all the land grew grey. In the dimness Gustav looked a strange, wild figure as he skimmed across the lake; swifter than a bird's his flight appeared to me.

Suddenly the bell chime broke forth again, and with it a cry of horror from my friend, that made me spring to his side.

"What is it—what is it?" I exclaimed as he clutched me with one hand, and with the other pointed towards the road. "Speak, Gustav! Tell me what you see?"

"Do you see nothing, Frank? Nothing in the road out there? The figure in the cloak? It is coming nearer, it is coming towards me. It is Fritz—Fritz Werner!"

I never shall forget the horror of his voice, never shall forget the thrill that passed through me, when looking where he pointed, I saw indeed a figure wrapped in a cloak coming swiftly towards us through the dim twilight. I clasped Gustav as frantically as he clasped me; we stood frozen into silence through some apparently endless moments, as the figure came nearer, more clearly visible, steadily approaching us. It paused as it came through the gates, seemed to catch sight of us, left the path, came to the bank above the lake, and there, peering at us through the bushes, I saw, quite plainly now, the pale face of Fritz Werner. I could not move or speak, Gustav also was still, and as we stood thus silent, the bells sent forth once more their merry chime.

"Who is there?" said a voice at last—the voice of Fritz, I knew; "I cannot clearly see you. Is it Frank?"

The word seemed suddenly to break the spell that bound me. I wrenched myself from Gustav and sprang forward—sprang forward to clasp a solid hand of flesh and bone stretched out to me. This was no ghost; I held him fast.

"Fritz, is it you?"

The fields, the bushes, and the creeping mist were reeling round with me; for a moment I did not know what happened to me. Then all was steady again and I knew that Fritz stood before me talking, and I found myself saying:

"We took you for a ghost!"

"We—who are we?"

"Gustav is with me, horribly frightened and frightening me horribly. We thought you were dead."

He had not waited to listen, but was already embracing Gustav on the ice—Gustav who would not believe his senses at first. He said nothing, but trembled strangely, and at last burst out into tears.

"He has been in a horrible fright about you," I explained, as Gustav sat down on the bank, hiding his face in his hands. "He was persuaded that you haunted him because he had killed you. He has had no peace, and took care that his friends should have none either."

"He always had a lively imagination," responded Fritz. "And he did very nearly kill me. Having just then made Tübingen too hot to hold me, I found it convenient to publish my death, and my good friends Max and Otto von Meilingen got me out of the place in an airy coffin. I did write to let Gustav know, but he had vanished nobody knew where. Being in England I thought I would look you up and hear what had become of the other madman. I did not expect to find him here though. Look here, Gustav, I say, you need not trouble about me, I'm no more dead than you are."

"Come in both of you and warm yourselves," I suggested, "Here, Gustav, I'll help you off with your skates, and we'll come up to the house. It was all fancy about your being haunted, you see. Come, Fritz, my uncle will be delighted to see you, and the boys will enjoy another German."

Gustav obeyed mechanically, he said not one word all the way home, and was so white and speechless all the evening that my aunt feared he was quite out of spirits.

"You will sleep to-night," I remarked as we went upstairs, without any music or delay on his part that evening.

"I am so dreadfully ashamed of myself for not letting you sleep," he answered. "You cannot think how much ashamed I am. But the feeling of being haunted almost drove me mad. It was so terribly real. I felt him there, though I could not see him."

"Fritz is right about your imagination, I suppose. But it's all over now, and the best thing you can do is to forget all about it."

I believe he thought so too, for often as we have met since he has never renewed the subject; but ever afterwards subsided into a much more quiet and "matter-of-fact young man."

As for me, it was long before I went to my room at night without a smile of satisfaction at the thought that now, at any rate, whatever troubled me, I had nothing to fear from my poor Gustav's Ghost.

## The Editor's Note Book.

PATRIOTISM is a paying game sometimes, and so Mr. Parnell must have thought when they gave him that cheque for thirty-seven thousand pounds in Dublin the other day. By way of showing his gratitude, and of proving that he had fairly earned the gift, his abuse of England and the Government, and especially of Lord Spencer and Mr. Trevelyan, was more virulent than ever. But it is clear that he would not be so abusive if he did not feel that the policy of the Government is too strong for the band of disaffected conspirators who call themselves the Land League, and the measure of his vituperation is undoubtedly the measure of Mr. Trevelyan's success.

THE excess of zeal which induced the Metropolitan Board of Works rather to overdo the preservation of Hampstead Heath, and to prohibit games which have been played on the Heath by inhabitants of Hampstead from time immemorial, has received a check from the judges of the Queen's Bench Division, who have decided that the Board had not the power to put a stop to cricket-playing, which they claimed to have in the case of Mr. Pritchard. There has been a good deal too much enclosing, and warning off, and notice-boarding on Hampstead Heath altogether, and it may be hoped that the present decision will remind the Board that to confine the public practically to roads and paths is an odd way of preserving the Heath for their enjoyment.

NOTWITHSTANDING the official-looking contradictions which appeared in some of the papers, Mr. Tennyson is to have his peerage, it seems, after all. What good a seat in the House of Lords will do the author of "In Memoriam," "The Princess," and "Idylls of the King," is not altogether apparent on the surface, but no one is likely to grudge him the distinction if he thinks it worth accepting.

WHATEVER varied opinions may be entertained as to the artistic merits of the New Law Courts, it seems certain that the arrangements for their ventilation are about as bad as it is possible to make them. To hit the happy medium between stuffiness and draughts is a difficult, but should not be an insoluble, problem. For years the ventilation of the House of Commons was a byword, but Dr. Percy succeeded in putting matters to rights, and could, probably, do the same good service in the new building.

THE principal difficulty in the way seems to be that nobody—or, at all events, nobody who can be got at—is responsible for the arrangements in the courts, and thus the complaints of jurymen and the lamentations of the judges waste themselves on the desert air of which the building is, during certain stages of the ventilating process, so inconveniently full.

ANYONE who wishes to form a collection of pictures at an extremely modest charge would do well to run over to Paris, to attend the sale of the works of art which were accumulated by the late M. Borniche, and are now being dispersed under the auctioneer's hammer at the Salle Droccot. Twenty-eight thousand lots are included in the catalogue of this extraordinary sale, and their average price, so far, has been about eleven pounds. I wonder whether we have anybody like M. Borniche buying silently and secretly in England. If not, it is difficult to find an answer to one of the most puzzling questions I know—"Who buys all the pictures?"

I DO not think that Miss Cobbe's conduct of the anti-vivisection campaign will elevate either the lady herself, or the cause which she advocates, in the estimation of people with any sense of fairness or propriety, and when she permits herself to write of so distinguished a man of science and so worthy a public servant as Professor Owen as "that old impostor Owen" she unconsciously affords us a gauge by which it is easy to measure her own intellectual capacity. Why people cannot conduct controversies of this sort with some regard to politeness I cannot understand, but it is unfortunately the fact that wherever the strong-minded female intervenes there is losing of temper and calling of names.

I DO not see why, because a lady has been, or is, on the stage, the writers of paragraphs in society papers should go out of their way to insult her. The other day *Truth* contained a paragraph very plainly asserting that the match between Lord Garmoyne and Miss Fortescue had been broken off, and that a money consideration had been paid to the lady. This insult had no foundation in fact, for the story is untrue from beginning to end, and could only have been

concocted with the intention of giving pain to a perfectly innocent lady who has no power to defend herself against such malicious falsehoods. Nor was the sneer in the *World* in particularly good taste, that the marriage would take place as soon as the gentleman "leaves school." Lord Garmoyne is in his twenty-third year.

WHETHER the extraordinarily variable weather of the last few days has any connection with the beautiful sunrises and sunsets which have been astonishing the world, or whether it is merely due to the sportive nature of the British climate, would form a pleasing puzzle for the meteorologists, who would be sure to be prepared with any amount and variety of conjecture and theory on the subject. One great point in favour of these gentlemen is that it is impossible to prove that they are wrong, even when they attribute with absolute confidence the magnificent appearance of the evening and morning heavens to the dust which was produced by the volcanic cataclysm in Java during the autumn, and which is declared to have been wandering about in space ever since.

IT is always pleasant to acquire knowledge, and I feel quite grateful to Dr. Mortimer Granville for his lucid and exact explanation of the causes of dreaming. Dreams, says the doctor, "are simply toyings of the imagination, or higher brain function, with the records of ideation." After this, there can be no doubt that we ought all to take the doctor's advice and wear nightcaps.

THAT must have been an intelligent jury which was empanelled, one day last week, at the Central Criminal Court, to try a case in which the Army and Navy Stores were the prosecutors. After the opening address of counsel, one of the twelve said they were in a difficulty, as the foreman looked upon Stores as "a lot of cheats and blacklegs altogether," and that, for his own part, he was of opinion that "these military cheat honest tradesmen out of their living."

OF course, these two profound thinkers were relieved from further connection with the case, and two other jurymen took their places; but the troubles of the Army and Navy Stores were not yet over. The second jury heard the case through, but were unable to agree upon a verdict, eleven of them being of one way of thinking, while one remained unconvinced, not, as he said, because he had any personal objection to Stores, but because he was unable to make up his mind in a hurry. Trial by jury is a great and glorious institution, but, like most other human arrangements, it is not absolutely perfect.

THE death of Signor Mario will carry the memory of many people back to the time when the Italian Opera was the fashion, and when this delightful singer and the incomparable Grisi were the reigning favourites of the musical public. Such a combination of voice, acting, and personal comeliness as Mario enjoyed is rare indeed, and it seemed quite within the fitness of things that his life should be, as it was, one long romance. It is forty-five years since Mario made his first appearance on the stage, and fourteen since his retirement into a private life, for which, notwithstanding his brilliantly successful career, he had not been able to make very adequate provision.

IT is once more stated that the National Opera House on the Victoria Embankment, which was begun as far back as 1875, is to be completed by its original projector, Mr. Mapleson. I cannot think that success is likely to attend the speculation. Italian opera, except on Patti nights, has been for some time in a very bad way at Covent Garden, and another immense theatre for its performance seems altogether unnecessary. Mr. Mapleson is a daring and ingenious speculator, but I think it will be impossible even for him to galvanise this worn out and expiring body into healthy life again.

Some of the newspapers, and notably the *Standard*, continue to publish accounts of Mr. Irving's appearances in America, which convey, as they are no doubt intended to do, an impression that his success has been of a very qualified nature, if it could even be called success at all. The *Morning Journal* of New York has set itself to contradict this view in a most categorical manner, and declares that "never in the history of the American stage has any engagement been played with the artistic or financial success that has accompanied that of the great English actor." From a private letter I gather that the attitude of the New York public was at first a little doubtful, but that the last two weeks of the season there were triumphant, and that an enthusiastic welcome is sure to be given to Mr. Irving on his return to the "Empire City" on his way home.

## Cookery.

### QUINCES.

In addition to our own good harvest of quinces there is this year a large importation from foreign countries, and the fruit is so cheap that it is worth while for housekeepers to utilise it.

The quince is one of those things about which there is no moderate taste. People either violently like or dislike it; in the former case so highly is the flavour appreciated that the quince is eaten raw, whilst in the latter even a morsel is objected to.

Quince jelly is generally acceptable, it is delicate in flavour, and inviting in appearance. The trouble of making this jelly is an obstacle to its being much used in families; but quince marmalade is as easily made as any other preserve. The recipe we give for this, from Miss Acton's "Modern Cookery," is excellent and economical.

For puddings and pies quinces do not answer alone, and as a rule only a small quantity is used for flavouring. Various sweet dishes can be made of quinces, that which is given for "Buttered Quinces" is popular in France, and "Quince Cream" is delicious. In former years when "Bandoline" was used the seeds of the quince were in great request, and made a preparation superior to all others. Dumas says: "A syrup, very useful in cases of obstinate diarrhoea is made of quinces, and the mucilaginous water obtained by the immersion of their seeds." Quince mucilage is still sometimes used as an emollient and sheathing application to abraded or wounded surfaces, as cracked lips, etc., etc.

Quince wine is not often made in England, but it is said to be wholesome and of fine flavour. A recipe for this wine, taken from the "Dictionary of Daily Wants," is subjoined. An excellent liqueur can be made by infusing the fruit in either brandy or gin, and it is still more delicious combined with cherry-brandy.

### QUINCE JELLY.

The quinces should first be quartered, then peeled, cored, and sliced. To each pound allow a quart of water, in which boil the quinces until reduced to a pulp; drain them through a fine sieve, and to each pint of juice allow ten ounces of lump sugar. Put the juice and sugar into the preserving-kettle, and stir over the fire until the sugar is melted, then pass the jelly through a napkin.

All fruit jellies are improved, both in colour and brilliancy, by being boiled in small quantities; therefore, if more than three quarts of jelly is made, it should be boiled in two parts. After straining, boil the jelly, removing any scum, until either it registers 28° on the syrup-gauge or will set when a little is tried on a plate. Put the jelly into glasses and cover over when cold.

If preferred, the jelly can be made of equal quantities of russet apples and quinces, and the fruit, after the juice has been drained to make the jelly, can be boiled with sugar for second quality marmalade.

### QUINCE MARMALADE.

"When to economise the fruit is not an object, pare, core, and quarter some of the inferior quinces, and boil them in as much water as will nearly cover them until they begin to break; strain the juice from them, and for the marmalade put half a pint of it to each pound of fresh quinces. In preparing these be careful to cut out the hard stony parts round the cores. Simmer them gently until they are perfectly tender, then press them, with the juice, through a coarse sieve; put them into a perfectly clean pan, and boil them until they form almost a dry paste; add for each pound of quinces and the half pint of juice, three-quarters of a pound of sugar in fine powder, and boil the marmalade for half an hour, stirring it gently without ceasing; it will be very firm and bright in colour. If made shortly after the fruit is gathered, a little additional sugar will be required, and when a richer and less dry marmalade is better liked, it must be boiled for a shorter time, and an equal weight of fruit and sugar may be used.

"Quinces pared and cored, four pounds; prepared juice, one quart; two to three hours. Boiled fast to dry, twenty to forty minutes. Sugar three pounds, thirty minutes. Richer marmalade: quinces four pounds; juice, one quart; sugar, four pounds."

### QUINCE CREAM.

Take half a pound of quince jelly, dissolve it by putting the pot in boiling water; stir into it half an ounce of gelatine dissolved in a gill of boiling water. When cool add it to half a pint of rich cream, and whip until it sets. Put the cream into a cold mould and let it stand for a few hours.

### BUTTERED QUINCES.

Bake quinces until soft, then with a spoon carefully take out the pulp, without getting any seeds or skin. Put this pulp into a stew-pan, with enough sugar to make it sweet, a pinch of ground cinnamon, and a good piece of butter. Stir this over the fire until well mixed, but do not let it boil. Serve neatly piled in the middle of a dish, with fried bread, cut in triangular pieces, arranged round it.

### QUINCE WINE.

"This wine is made from very ripe quinces. When gathered they must be thoroughly wiped and pared, then slice the quinces length-

wise, and remove cores, bruising them thoroughly in a mashing-tub with a pestle; strain off the liquid part by pressing the pulp in a hair-bag. Warm this liquor over the fire and skim it, but do not allow it to boil. Sprinkle into it some powdered loaf-sugar, then in a gallon of water and a quart of wine, boil twelve or fourteen large quinces thinly sliced, add two pounds of fine sugar, and then strain off the liquid part and mix it with the natural juice of the quinces. Put this into a cask and mix the whole well together, then let it settle; put in two or three whites of eggs, and afterwards draw it off. To make it still better, add a quarter of a pound of stoned raisins and half an ounce of cinnamon to a quart of liquor, to the consumption of a third part, and put it into the cask when the wine is fermenting."

### QUINCE LIQUEUR.

Half fill wine-bottles with fine ripe quinces, peeled, cored, and cut into small pieces, then fill up the bottles with brandy or gin. Let them stand for three months, shaking occasionally, then drain off the liquor into clear bottles, and when it is perfectly bright, sweeten it with a rich syrup made by boiling lump sugar in the proportion of one pound to a gill and a half of water.

Equal quantities of New Town Pippins and quinces make a liqueur less rough in flavour than one of quinces only.

### QUINCE MUCILAGE.

Soak half an ounce of quince seeds in a pint of water for an hour or two, boil for ten minutes, and strain through fine muslin. If to be used as a draught, the mucilage can be flavoured with a little quince jelly dissolved in it when hot.

## Judges in the Far West.

I WAS once assured by a former Chief Justice of one of the States on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, that the first grand jury he ever charged were sitting on the prairie under a tree, and that there was not a man of them who had on any other foot-gear than moccasins. And I knew a judge, in the early days of California, when everybody felt bound to make money, who sat on the bench in the morning, mined during the day, and played the fiddle in a whisky-store at night. The county court judge of Madison County, in addition to performing his judicial duties, used to "run" the gang saw in the Port Madison Mills.

In these judges, although we often find their knowledge of law not very clear or defined, yet, and what is more important, their notion of equity is strong. A most notorious "rowdy" from New England, who had escaped the law several times, was at last captured in the act of smashing the interior of a Chinese house in the little village of Eureka, in North California. The evidence against him was rather weak, and it was feared that he would again escape. But when the prisoner was brought into court, his honour burst upon him with a tirade of abuse:

"E-e-h! Ye long, leathern, lantern-jawed Yankee cuss! We've ketcht you, e-e-h, at last! I'll commit you at once."

"But, judge," whispered the clerk, "you'll have to hear the evidence."

"Evidence be blowed!" was the rejoinder. "Wasn't I thar, and seed it all myself?"

Judge P. was once holding a term of the district court in the village of Cornwallis, in the then territory of Oregon. His court was held in a common log-house, with a large open fireplace, and a few rough heavy benches that had never known a plane. An indictment had been found against one Charley Sandborn, for selling whisky without a licence. He stood at one side of the fireplace with his hands deep in his pockets, while the judge sat on a school-bench at the other side. When required to plead, Charley threw himself on the mercy of the court, and was sentenced to pay the lowest fine and costs. At the close of the sentence, by way of personal palliation, the judge remarked, "that while it was the duty of the court to enforce the laws as it found them in the statute-book, the person of the court was not inimical to men who sold whisky."

There was in Idaho territory a judge who was well-known as "Alec Smith." A woman brought a suit in his court for divorce, and had the discernment to select a friend of her own, who stood well with the judge, as her attorney. When the case was called on, the judge, addressing the plaintiff's attorney, said:

"Mr. H., I don't think people ought to be compelled to live together when they don't want to, and I will decree a divorce in this case." Mr. H. bowed blandly. Thereupon the judge, turning to another attorney, whom he took to be the counsel for the defendant, said:

"Mr. M., I suppose you have no objection to the decree?" Mr. M. nodded assent. But it happened that the attorney for the defendant was another Mr. M., not then in court. Presently he came in, and finding that his client had been divorced without a hearing, began to remonstrate. Alec listened a moment, then interrupted him, saying:

"Mr. M., it is too late. The court has pronounced the decree for divorce, and the parties are no longer man and wife. But if you want to argue the case right bad, the court can marry them over again and give you a crack at it."



I was at Clear Lake, when an Irishman was tried in the County Court for beating his wife. A point of law was raised by the attorney for the defence, as to the admissibility of certain evidence offered by the district attorney, "Judge" J. H. Thompson (once a "judge" always a "judge"), who conducted the prosecution, and the court called upon him to produce the authorities in support of his position. The attorney being rather slow in finding the law on the point, the court, just as he had done so, ruled that the evidence could not be admitted.

"The deuce you do!" halloed the district attorney. "Say, judge, I'll read you the law, and bet you a thousand dollars I'm right."

"I'll send you to gaol for twenty-four hours for contempt of court!" cried the judge.

"Send to gaol and be hanged!" cried the district attorney. "I know my rights, and intend to maintain them."

The judge then called out:

"Sheriff Crigler, take Judge Thompson to gaol and adjourn the court for four-and-twenty hours!"

Crigler advanced to obey the order, but halted abruptly on seeing the district attorney put himself into a "posish," and at the same time shouting loud enough to be heard all over the town that neither Crigler or any other man should carry him to gaol. To make things sure, the sheriff called for a commitment, but while this was being prepared, mutual apologies passed between the judge and the attorney, and the order was revoked. The court was then adjourned for a quarter of an hour, to allow, according to the custom made and provided in such cases, of "drinks" being exchanged; after which the trial proceeded, and resulted in the acquittal of the defendant.

I witnessed once—not in rough American territory—but in the British town of Victoria, Vancouver's Island, a "stand-up" fight between the "Honourable the Attorney-General," and a client of the opposite side in a suit; and not long afterwards two of the most prominent of the members of the Colonial Parliament engaged in a like encounter. I mention this, lest it might be unjustly supposed that these eccentricities of conduct were found exclusively in border parts of the United States.

I have seen a judge who is said, in pursuance of his duty as a magistrate, to have fined a man twenty-five dollars for shooting at another, but who also—swayed by his feelings as a man—expressed his regret that he could not mulct the other in the same sum for not shooting back again.

In the early days of California one of these rough-and-ready dispensers of the law held a court on a Sunday, and sentenced a "greaser" (a native Californian or Mexican) to thirty-nine lashes for theft; but on the prisoner's lawyer threatening to apply for a writ of *habeas corpus*, on the ground that it was "unconstitutiona!" to hold a court on a Sunday, the judge declared, with a round oath, that rather than the blessed greaser should get off by such a pettifoggish trick, the sentence should be carried into effect "right away," and then and there the thirty-nine lashes were vigorously applied, the judge remarking at the conclusion, that the lawyer had better reserve his *habeas corpus* until the greaser's back got barked again!

But most commendable on the whole was the patience shown by these judges under the orations of long-winded, and not very learned attorneys. The most extraordinary instance of this patience, perhaps, was that of a judge in Illinois, who, after two wordy lawyers had argued and reargued about the meaning of a certain Act of Congress, closed the discussion at the end of the second day by calmly remarking: "Gentlemen, the Act is repealed!"

I could go on recounting numerous other anecdotes of a similar kind, but have related sufficient to give my readers some notion how justice used to be administered at one time, and that not so very long ago, in the vast regions known as the Far West.

## Teaching at Home.

### ARITHMETIC. PART III.

As soon as a child can write the numbers up to a hundred, and add single columns of figures, you may begin to teach him something of multiplication.

It is a mistake to defer multiplication until a child has mastered addition and subtraction; and a still greater mistake to begin by teaching him the tables from a book, by rote. There is even no need, at first, to make use of the word multiplication; introduce the subject to the child as, what it really is, a short method of addition.

AMONG his other little sums give him one and one to add together, two and two, three and three, and so on with all the numbers up to nine. You need not give him the whole row at once, let him add three or four of the numbers in a lesson. The next day you give him the same sums over again. He will like this, "because it is so easy," and will work them partly from memory, partly by reckoning. Do not let him work his sums in a copy-book, as he ought not to be able to look back at his old work. On the other hand do not let him use a slate, as the ease with which wrong figures can be rubbed out makes him careless about putting them down.

WHEN you see he has got the sum of any two numbers fixed in his head, put down the next numbers twice over, and let him add them up also, day after day, till he knows them too. The three lines can be learnt in the same manner; you give the child one and one and one to add, two and two and two, and so on; and gradually he works his way through the whole multiplication-table.

It will very likely take six months to teach a child the multiplication-table on this system, but his time will have been very well spent. He will have got an intelligent idea of multiplication, will be able to say the tables in any order—by no means a universal accomplishment—and, if a little tact has been used, he will have thought it rather an enjoyable exercise than otherwise.

HITHERTO I have supposed that the pupil has only added the figures in a single column, and here I add a word of caution. Beware of making the column too long, as by so doing you put a dangerous strain on a young child's attention. Some children find it much easier to reckon up figures than others, and the teacher must judge from what she knows of her pupil, and by watching the expression of his face when working. Knit brows and flushed cheeks are danger-signals not to be neglected, and if a child suffers from headache after the lesson, you may be sure you have overtaxed him. It is the too long sustained effort which hurts the child; break up the long row of figures into three or four short ones, and he will manage them with ease.

BUT before adding sums with two or three columns, the pupil must learn about "carrying," and now we shall begin to reap some advantage from our previous preparation of the soil. You let the child add up the first column of figures, the units. Say the line comes to twenty-seven, the child will, very likely, write down twenty-seven at the bottom. If he does, don't check him, he is quite justified by his present knowledge in so writing it, and, if the column is correctly added, merely say: "That's right, now add this second column, but first can you tell me what all these figures stand for?" You may even let the child read them over to you, and get him to tell you that they stand for three tens, six tens, and so on. Then you tell him to add up the line. The chances are he will do so without taking any notice of the twenty, in which case you must call his attention to it: "Look here, you have got these two tens at the bottom, why don't you add them on to the other tens?"

THE child thinks your suggestion a sensible one, and acts upon it. We will suppose our second column has been a short one, and only amounts to nine.

You make sure that he understands that this nine represents not nine units, but nine tens or ninety, and then you tell him to write it down.

But the place where he would naturally write it, is occupied by the two, and he turns round to you with the remark, "I can't put it down, there's no room."

"No more there is," you reply; "there's that tiresome two in the way. Well, if I were you, I should scratch it out with my penknife, and write the nine in its place. You don't want the two now, for you've put it into the nine."

The scratching out of the two forms a pleasing little interlude, during which the pupil refreshes himself before attacking another sum.

We will suppose this time the first column comes to thirty-six, and if your pupil seems inclined to write down the total result, remind him what a trouble you had with those two tens in the last sum, and ask him what is the best thing he can do with the three tens he has to deal with.

You will now soon find that the child begins to understand what is wanted of him; you don't have to furnish him with an arbitrary rule, such as, "Write down the right-hand figure and carry the left"—a most difficult direction, by the way, for a child to remember; and when he finds out in a longer sum that the tens in his second column have mounted to hundreds, he will perceive that these hundreds must be added to those in his third column.

IN subtraction, as in addition, you should begin with easy examples, little sums of two columns. The earlier ones, such as nineteen from twenty-one, the pupil will probably be able to answer straight off; but when you give him, say, thirty-nine to take from fifty-six, he will probably be puzzled. His knowledge that the three and the five stand for three tens and five tens will again be useful to him. Tell him that, as he can't take the nine from the six, he must take it from one of those five tens, and must be sure to recollect that there will then be only four tens left in the second column of the subtrahend (you needn't use that long word, and can point your remark with your forefinger instead). You show him that the one, which remains over from his subtraction, must be added to the six remaining over in the top line; then all he has to do is to take the two tens from the four tens, and he has finished his sum.

WHEN you come to multiplication, try and impress upon your pupil what a delightfully easy process it is, and how much trouble it saves.

Tell the child to count the chairs in the room, and then ask him how many legs each chair has got. We will suppose there are twelve chairs, and he tells you each chair has four legs. Then you tell him to find out how many legs there are altogether.

It seems a long business, but you let him toil through it; he may either count each wooden leg, or he may write down four for the legs of each chair, and then add the numbers up.

At last he tells you there are forty-eight legs.

You reply: "That's quite right; but why did you take all that trouble about it? Don't you remember that twelve fours are forty-eight? You could have found out how many legs there were in a moment, if you had remembered to think of that."

WHEN the child has to multiply two or three figures, explain the "carrying," on the same principle that you did in addition.

Next, you must show him how to multiply by two figures; one of the numbers between twelve and twenty is best for a beginning. Say you have chosen sixteen.

You may ask the child if he knows the sixteen table, and then show him that, as he does not know so far, he had better multiply by the six first and the ten afterwards, and that if he adds the two results together, it will be just the same as multiplying by sixteen.

He then sets to work to carry out your suggestion, and be sure you let him fairly multiply by the ten. When he has finished, you can let him compare this line with the top line, and show him that the sole result of his labour in multiplying by ten has been the addition of a nought to the original number.

He won't forget this delightful short-cut, and when he comes to multiply by twenty or thirty, you must tell him to use it for the ten part of the business, and then multiply the result by the two or the three as the case may be.

TILL a child has made considerable progress never allow him to omit the noughts in his working. If he is multiplying by four figures, the second line of his sum should have one nought at the end of it, the third, two noughts, and the fourth, three. The noughts will serve the double purpose of keeping the other figures in their places, and helping the child to remember what it all means.

I HAVE dealt at some length on the most elementary teaching from the conviction that it is the most important part of the matter, and I believe arithmetic would never be distasteful to children if taught to them intelligently, and in a manner adapted to their understandings, by a patient mother or aunt.

ENCOURAGE your pupils to make discoveries for themselves; let your lessons be lively and varied, and keep a firm hold on reality. The more you can get your pupil to try experiments for himself, the better. Let him count the inches on your yard-measure, instead of looking into the table-book; show him the coins in your purse, and let him investigate the kitchen weights and scales. In short, show him how to gain experience, and then how to reason on the experience he has gained.

## George III. at Windsor.

OLD King George's memory is held dear at Windsor. Thousands of honest old stories of him circulate in the neighbourhood, all showing what a dull, respectable, worthy, tiresome old fellow he was. He rose at half-past seven, attended service in the chapel, and breakfasted at nine with the queen and the princesses. The meal lasted only half an hour. The princesses were arranged according to the severest etiquette. After breakfast the king rode out attended by his equerries and his daughters. If the weather was bad, he sat within doors and played chess. He dined at two, the queen and princesses at four. At five he visited the queen, and took a glass of wine-and-water. He then transacted private business with his secretary. The evening was spent at cards, all visitors retiring when the clock struck ten, and always supperless. The royal family separated at eleven for the night.

We all know, from Peter Pindar, how the king chattered, asked foolish questions, and answered them himself. His simple adventures are still narrated at many Windsor farms. One day he had to pass a narrow gate, on which a stolid ploughboy sat swinging.

"Who are you, boy?" said the king.

"I be a pig-boy. I be fro a the low country, and out of work at present."

"Don't they want lads here?" asked the king.

"I don't know," replied the boy. "All hereabouts belongs to Georgey."

"And who is Georgey?"

"Georgey! Why the king. He lives at the castle, but he does no good to me."

The king at once ordered the boy to be employed on his farm, and promised to look after him. He turned out a steady lad.

The king once went into a cottage and began turning the meat for an old woman, and was so pleased with himself for doing it, that he left on the rude table five guineas to buy a jack, wrapped in a paper with that notification. There was no pride about him, and he was very kind-hearted. Once the Queen Charlotte met a little boy—"the king's beefeater's little boy." The king said:

"Kneel down, kiss the queen's hand."

But the boy was obdurate and determined.

"No," said he, "I won't kneel, for if I do I shall spoil my new breeches."

The king was not so obstinate and pig-headed but that he could bend to common-sense sometimes. One day Colonel Price differed with him about cutting down a certain tree which the king thought injured the prospect.

"Aye," said the king pettishly, "that's your way; you continually contradict me."

"If your majesty," said the colonel, "will not condescend to listen to the honest sentiments of your servants, you can never hear the truth."

After a short pause the king laid his hand kindly on the colonel's shoulder, and said:

"You are right, Price; the tree shall stand."

Even when Prince George was a boy Handel had noticed his fondness for music, and the taste continued till his death. When old, crazed, and blind, he would wander up and down the corridors of Windsor, dressed in a purple dressing-gown, his long white beard falling on his breast, and used, at lucid intervals, to sing a hymn, and accompany himself on the harpsichord. One day, towards the end of his life, in a sane moment, the king heard a bell toll. He asked who was dead, and was told it was a Mrs. S. The king had a great memory—memory is almost a royal prerogative—and immediately said:

"Ah, she was a linen-draper at the corner of — Street. She was a good woman, and brought up her children in the fear of God. She has gone to heaven. I hope I shall soon follow her."

Latterly he became impressed with a sense that he was dead, and used to say: "I must have a suit of black in memory of King George III., for whom I know there is a general mourning."

He would often hold conversation with imaginary noblemen, but the topics to which he referred were always past events. Sometimes he would sit for hours in a torpor, his head resting on both hands. Often he would make his servants sit down and would address them as if he were in Parliament.

At length, in 1820, Death came mercifully and gave the word of release. The lying-in-state took place in the audience-chamber, where the yeomen of the guard stood, their halberds hung with black crape. The coffin was placed beneath a throne hung with black cloth. Two heralds in tabards sat at the foot of the coffin, and the mourners at the head.

When all the public had been admitted, the Eton boys were allowed to pass through the room. The funeral took place by night, and was magnificent and solemn. The procession was marshalled in St. George's Hall, the Duke of York being chief mourner. About nine o'clock the symphony to the Dead March in Saul reverberated mournfully, the trumpet sounded, and the minute guns thundered. As the coffin passed every spectator uncovered. The torch-light lit the earnest faces, and gleamed on the towers, pinnacles, and battlements of the castle. A detachment of the Grenadier Guards lined the aisle, their arms and standards reversed, and every second man carrying a lighted wax taper. The van was headed by the poor knights and the pages. Then came judges, bishops, privy-councillors, and peers. Dukes bore the pall, marquesses supported the canopy over the coffin. The Duke of York followed the coffin, and with him came the Dukes of Clarence, Sussex, and Gloucester, and Prince Leopold. There was a thrill of awe when the coffin passed into the vault, and the handful of dust fell and re-echoed on the coffin-lid. The herald then read the titles of the new king. "*Le Roi est mort; vive le Roi!*"

## Household Gardening.

### CHRISTMAS FLOWERS.

If we enter the great flower-markets of London, Manchester, Edinburgh, and other populous places, we shall be almost overwhelmed with the variety, number, and beauty of the plants and flowers. Stately Palms and elegant Ferns; gorgeous Poinsettias, with their great scarlet radiating crowns; masses of dwarf Tulips, bright and clear; charming wax-like Roman Hyacinths, diffusing their fragrance; pure and spotless Amazonian Lilies (*Eucharis Amazonica*), the queen of many a wreath, garland, and bouquet; snowy Camellias with their shell-like petals, massive and symmetrical; deliciously perfumed Stephanotis, Gardenias, and Lilies of the Valley; variedly coloured Primulas, Cyclamens, and Chrysanthemums; and, amongst hardy flowers, bunches of sweet Violets and masses of Eucharis-like white Christmas Roses.

### GIFTS OF FLOWERS.

Those are some of the flowers of the season that are annually scattered over the land as Christmas gifts from friend to friend, and by the rich to the poor, for it is one of the happy customs of the time for the affluent to send flowers to brighten the corridors and wards of those noblest of institutions—hospitals and infirmaries—and to cheer their inmates.

This beneficent thoughtfulness is growing and spreading. Let the pretty custom be fostered, which costs so little to many, and is fraught with so much good to the recipients of these floral gifts.

But it is not the unfortunate and afflicted alone who are gladdened with these charming embodiments of goodwill and kind wishes. Vast numbers, who, in their early days, had the run of gardens and green-houses, are now perforce located in gardenless towns. They may be able to purchase flowers or they may not; be this as it may, a box of Violets by parcels post will be appraised at far more than its intrinsic value as an emblem of friendship conveyed in a form most graceful and appropriate.

We have practised what we preach, and sent in our time hundreds of boxes of flowers, receiving in return appreciative letters that were more than ample reward for our small expenditure of time and postage-stamps, in adding one more link to the chain of floral friendships.

#### PURCHASED CHRISTMAS PLANTS.

Numbers of readers of these notes grow at least some of the plants above enumerated, and their rooms are now made pleasant by their fresh green foliage or welcome flowers; but a still greater number invest at this season in a few plants, grown by others, for home adornment. A hint on the management of these purchased plants may be useful.

First of all it is well to remember that these plants have been carefully and even tenderly nurtured. They have been treated like delicate children, and have been sedulously kept from draughts; they have also been accorded a genial spring-like temperature and atmosphere. This cannot be reproduced in rooms, but much may be done in prolonging the beauty of the plants.

Let them not be placed too close to the glass of the window, especially at night, or they may receive a chill from which they cannot recover. A window will be suitable for them in the daytime, and the light will be beneficial, but at night they will be better in the interior of the room, and, tastefully disposed, will add immensely to the appearance of the apartment.

Never for a moment allow the soil in the pots of these "market plants" to be in any degree dry. They have been accustomed to constant and regular moisture, and to withhold it is certain to impair their beauty and shorten their lives.

Examine them twice daily, and, if possible, do as skilled cultivators do—anticipate their wants; that is to say, do not wait until they suffer by thirst before water is given, but give it just in time to prevent their getting thirsty. That is one of the greatest secrets of success in plant-culture.

Always give these fresh healthy-looking plants tepid water. To this they have been accustomed, and to give them water quite cold would have much the same effect on them as a foot-bath of iced water would have on a person who had made himself comfortable in a warm, cosy room. In both cases a chill would be imparted to the system which might have serious results. Lukewarm water, therefore, should always be given to the plants in question.

The dry air of a living-room, and especially a very warm one, is always more or less injurious to these purchased plants. This dryness cannot be prevented, but the evil resulting may be mitigated by the use of a spray diffuser. These may be had from a chemist or ironmonger, and tepid water in the form of the finest spray, blown on the foliage, covering it as with dew, towards the close of a warm evening, will be peculiarly refreshing and beneficial. By such attention as described plants in rooms may be kept in the best condition over the longest periods, and quite throughout the festive season.

#### CHRISTMAS FRUITS.

As in the case of plants so in fruits for the season, the majority must purchase them; yet not a few may grow at least some that will be very welcome, and even the sweeter for being home productions.

Oranges can only be grown at home in suitable heated structures, but when they are so ripened they far excel the foreign fruit; indeed, oranges purchased in the markets are not half so good as those well-grown in English hothouses. Miniature orange-trees are now imported from the Continent; some of these trees, not exceeding eighteen inches high, and growing in seven-inch pots, bear from ten to twenty small oranges. These are not good, but the heavily-laden trees are beautiful Christmas ornaments.

Grapes may be regarded as the most choice and acceptable of fruits for the season. Any one having a small vinery may grow them, and by selecting the right kinds, preserve bunches for Christmas. Many are kept until March in this way: the shoot bearing a bunch is cut off the vine any time in December, and the end of the stem inserted in a wine-bottle of water; and if placed in a room having an equable temperature of forty-five degrees, the grapes keep as fresh as if hanging on the vine. Thus the pruning can be done at the proper time and the crop stored for use. If any readers need instruction for growing grapes for Christmas use they can have it on making their want known to the editor.

Apples are indispensable for use at this period of the year, and instructions will be given for growing them in small gardens. The large Blenheim Orange variety and small Nonpareils rank among the best, the former by its noble appearance, the latter by its richness of flavour. A hint may here be given on developing the quality of apples. To have them in the best condition store them in a very warm cupboard or other suitable place, keeping them close, and there let them remain until wanted for table. Fruit so prepared is infinitely superior to that kept in a cold place. Let those who have not

tried this plan adopt it at once, and they will find the advantage of doing so by having greatly improved fruit.

Pears are the most delicious of hardy winter fruits, and the trees grow and bear well in suburban gardens. The handsome Beurre Diel and rich and buttery Winter Nellis, or Glout Morceau, are worthy of a place on every table. Whether the fruit is home-grown or purchased, let it be kept in a very warm place for a few days before being used, and if possible, a more marked improvement will be experienced than in the case of Apples. This simple method of preparing fruit for table is not by any means generally known, hence is mentioned here at a time when all who choose to do so may profit by the information and add to the enjoyment of their dessert.

#### PRUNING EVERGREENS.

Evergreens are indispensable now, and their sprays in great demand for wreath-making, as also are the individual leaves for designs and mottoes, the foliage of variegated Hollies being admirably adapted for this purpose.

There is quite a longing for Evergreen sprays by the younger members of a multitude of households, and although they can see the shrubs from the windows, they are told it is the wrong time of the year to prune them, the right time being September or March.

No harm whatever is done to Evergreens by pruning them now, but, on the contrary, many specimens will be improved by the judicious use of the knife, and the prunings that at other times are burned will be warmly welcomed by the fair decorators.

In pruning Evergreens, due regard must be had to the condition of each specimen, and only such parts should be cut off as are irregularly placed, and mar the symmetry and graceful contour of the shrub.

A hint may be given on using the knife which, though simple, is not unimportant. In the case of all branches which are below the level of the eye, the knife should be placed to their under sides and drawn through in an upward direction; but the exact reverse of this should be practised in severing branches that are above the "eye-level," the knife in the case of these being applied to the upper side and drawn downwards.

What can be the reason for this? will be a mental question that will occur to many, who may possibly think it a gardener's "fad." No, it is not a fad. Prune one shrub in the manner described and another near it without any such care, then examine the two specimens. One of them will be just as green and graceful as ever, and not a mark left by the knife will be visible; but obtrusive white stumpy ends will be dotted all over the other like patches of paint, and an appearance of stubbiness will pervade the shrub. In one case all the knife-marks will be visible; in the other, invisible; and that is the reason for the advice that is given.

Thousands of Evergreens need pruning. Prune them now, and burn not the branches; if not wanted by the owner, they will be borne away with shouts of glee by waiting children, a handful of Evergreens being esteemed a prize any time between now and the new year. Hundreds of such bunches we have had the pleasure of distributing, and have been gladdened by the gladness of the little ones, who rattled out their thanks in a rolling volley of the good old wish that is hoped will never die—"A Merry Christmas."

### Revenge by Will.

ONE of the most curious features in this method of revenge is that it has frequently deceived the intentions of the will-makers. A very remarkable instance of this once occurred, which has an air of compensation at the end quite dramatic.

A gentleman of large fortune was married to a lady of considerable attractions. For a time they lived happily; but the husband's disagreeable and ill-conditioned temper soon began to exhibit itself. This gradually turned to a positive dislike, quite undeserved by the wife, and at last deepened into a malignant hatred. Her forbearance and amiable disposition carried on matters with tolerable smoothness for some years, when the husband was seized with an illness which proved fatal, and he went out of the world in the old ill-conditioned way that he had lived. Her friends were congratulating themselves on this release, as she had but a slender settlement, and it was taken for granted that all his large fortune must come to her.

When his will, however, was opened, it was found that everything was left away from her; artful and ingenious devices had been used to deprive her of the smallest article of property; and with diabolical malignity a last blow was given: "And I make this disposition for a reason that she herself best knows." But this cruel and scandalous insinuation only recoiled on the head of the testator; for her friends knew her character too well, and set down this ungoverned hatred to something akin to insanity. The lady accepted her lot with great sweetness and resignation. Not long afterwards, one of her relatives, an eminent barrister, happened to be talking to one of the witnesses to the will in the street. Suddenly a gentleman passed by them.

"There's a coincidence," said the eminent barrister. "There's your fellow-witness, A. B."

"Oh, was he?" said the other carelessly. "I didn't know him."

"What!" exclaimed the barrister.

A few questions, and it came out that the two witnesses had signed at different times!

We may conceive the delight with which the barrister—a sympathising friend—received this unlooked-for news. The will collapsed, like a crazy house, without even the necessity for a legal proceeding; and the lady was triumphantly restored to her rights and honours. One might almost wish that her baffled persecutor had been allowed one peep from his grave, to see the failure of his malignant efforts.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### QUESTIONS.

BERTIE wants to know where he can obtain a copy of a recitation entitled "Hokey-Pokey," which is descriptive of an awful nightmare.

CUPID wishes for the name of the author and publisher of a poem entitled "The Curfew Bell." The burden of it is, "The curfew must not ring to-night."

MRS. J. will be glad if someone will tell her who is the author of the following quotation, giving chapter and verse if possible:

What art thou, frost, and whence are thy keen stores  
Deriv'd, thou secret all-involving power,  
Whom e'en the illusive fluid cannot fly?

The other verse is in Carey's ballad, "Sally in Our Alley."

OVTRIZ would be much obliged if any correspondent would give him a copy, or part at least, of L. E. L.'s little poem, beginning with the lines: "There was a ruined convent once."

S. W. H. writes: "Can any of your readers tell me where I can find an old comic recitation which begins:

"Three wags, whom some fastidious carpers  
Might rather designate three sharpers,  
Entered at York the Cat and Fiddle."

### ANSWERS.

AMATEUR THEATRICALS.—1. Hugo Proskaner, 480, Oxford Street. 2. Spirit gum. Apply to Clarkson, Wellington Street, or Fox, Little Russell Street. 3. The book which we last week recommended to "Anxious Mother" would give you full instructions.

B. H. C.—Many thanks; you will see that we have already given the information, which was sent to us from afar.

BLOSSOM.—Subscription to U.S.A., post-free 6s. 6d. per year.

CONSTANT READER.—1. "Cumnor Hall" is the ancient ballad which is said first to have given Sir Walter Scott the idea of "Kenilworth." He heard it when he was quite a child, and always remembered it, and admired it greatly. You will find it in many editions of Scott's novels, given in the preface to "Kenilworth." 2. If you write to any Derry bookseller you will get the poems written by Mrs. Alexander.

DOT.—No songs are published at 1s. net. They are usually published at 2s. net, and then you get them for 1s. 6d. Milton Welling's "Dreaming" (published by Enoch and Sons, 19, Harley Street) is a charming contralto song, of the sentimental order. You could not fail to like it. That would cost you 1s. 6d. You could get a shilling book of contralto songs at Boosey's, but of course they would not be new ones.

E. H. (Nice).—We recommend you to get a little book on the subject. The "Artistic Fancy Work Series," each number of which is complete in itself, and issued at the uniform price of 6d., would suit you.

FOG SIGNALS.—It is not a point which we can decide, but, from the testimony of some ladies of advanced age, we are led to believe that the bow on the bonnet was worn on the right side by married ladies, and on the left by those whose neck was not yet under the yoke.

GOOD CHEER.—1. There is no law to prevent people from making their mince-meat with uncooked beef if they are so minded, and we do not see why you should be so indignant at your mother-in-law's contention that her way is right. At the same time we look upon the use of beef in mince-meat as a survival of semi-barbarous cookery. The reputation which mince-pies have attained of being indigestible is certainly not undeserved, but it is probably due less to the materials of which they are made than to the faulty preparation of them. If all the ingredients are passed through a sausage-machine, they will be reduced almost to a pulp, and in this state will not disagree even with delicate people. Suet should be used in smaller proportions than that you mention; half a pound of it is ample for each pound of raisins, currants, sultanas, and apples, and it should be finely shred, then rolled, so as to avoid the possibility of any lumps. This plan of preparing suet makes it go farther, as it is thus mixed in small particles with the other materials, giving sufficient richness to the mince-meat without

the greasiness which is caused by the suet being in lumps. 2. Icing sugar, which can be bought of any good grocer, answers as well as that which is prepared at home.

H. LE B.—

Think naught a trifle, though it small appear;  
Small sands the mountain, moments make the year,  
And trifles life.—"Love of Fame," EDWARD YOUNG.

JOSÉ.—1. Please see answer last week to "Housewife." Your failure in making Madeira-cakes probably arises from your not having beaten the eggs and sugar sufficiently. Cakes of this class can only be successfully made by those who have patience to whisk the materials for some length of time, and, we may add, to acquire the proper method of doing this. 2. In HOUSEHOLD WORDS, Nos. 133 and 134, papers were given showing how to make cheap Christmas-boxes. 3. Many thanks for your kind words.

MRS. J.—"Tis not in mortals to command success. But we'll do more, Sempronius; we'll deserve it."—"Cato," Act I., Scene 2, Joseph Addison.

OLD READER.—The rent becomes due before twelve o'clock on the day week when the tenancy of the apartments commenced.

OLD WOMAN THAT LIVED IN HER SHOE.—The question, "How long is it necessary to keep children away from school after an infectious disease?" was answered some time since by the Academy of Medicine, Paris. With scarlet-fever, diphtheria, measles, and small-pox, isolation is to be maintained for forty days. Chicken-pox and mumps lose their contagious power after twenty-five days.

QUITE SO.—If any pawn-ticket is lost, mislaid, or stolen, the pawnier should at once apply to the pawnbroker for a form or declaration, to be made before a magistrate, or the pawnbroker will be bound to deliver the pledge to any person who produces the ticket to him and claims to redeem the same.

SYMPATHY.—The verses were written by the late Dean of Westminster, and were printed in *The Spectator*. We do not know if they have been published elsewhere:

"Till death us part,"

So speaks the heart

When each to each repeats the words of doom;

Thro' blessing and thro' curse,

For better and for worse,

We will be one till that dread hour shall come.

Life, with its myriad grasp,

Our yearning souls shall clasp.

By ceaseless love, and still expectant wonder;

In bonds that shall endure

Indissolubly sure,

Till God in death shall part our paths asunder.

Till death us join.

O voice yet more divine!

That to the broken heart breathes hope sublime;

Thro' lonely hours

And shattered powers

We still are one, despite of change and time.

Death, with his healing hand,

Shall once more knit the band

Which needs but that one link which none may sever;

Till, thro' the Only Good,

Heard, felt, and understood,

Our life in God shall make us one for ever.

THE AUNT.—The best and only explanation we know of, touching the grey mouse in "Faust," is that of Shelley's translation:

MEPHISTOPHELES. That was all right, my friend;

Be it enough that the mouse was not grey;

Do not disturb your time of happiness

With close consideration of such trifles.

ZENOPIA.—You will find your seven questions answered in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 137. Correspondents must remember that our space is limited, and lengthy answers have often to be kept over, whilst those which are shorter, and present no particular difficulty, are inserted at once.

## Puzzles for Prizes.

### Prize Winners in No. 136.

1st Prize, 10s., "Pericardium."

2nd Prize, 5s., "Polypodium" (Mrs. Joseph S. Leicester, Levenshulme View, Reddish, near Stockport).

"Pericardium" is requested to send his name and address.

The answer to the Poetical Acrostic is:

"Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal trust  
And none have baffled, many fallen before m  
Nor would redeem a moment of that hou  
Upon my strength—I do defy—disclai  
Eros and Anteros at Gadai  
Let it do thus for thine—Come pledge me fair the N.

H.  
E.  
R.  
M.  
A.

OUT OF THE RUNNING.—The following Prize-Winners come under the conditions of Rule 3, for thirteen weeks from the date of the Number in which they gained a Prize: No. 125.—Equal Prizes, "Frensham," "Ryland," "Maiblume." No. 126.—1st Prize, "Hookwood"; 2nd Prize, "L. C. L." No. 127.—1st Prize, "Manhattan"; 2nd Prize, "Maiblume." No. 128.—1st Prize, "Irish Exile"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 129.—Equal Prizes, "Abracadabra," "Acacia," "Ethel May." No. 130.—1st Prize, "The Arabs"; 2nd Prize, "Alice." No. 132.—1st Prize, "Atlas"; 2nd Prize, "Ethel May." No. 133.—1st Prize, "Syd Gardnor"; 2nd Prize, "Medway." No. 134.—1st Prize, "One and All"; 2nd Prize, "Froggie." No. 135.—1st Prize, "Trivia"; 2nd Prize, "Idonea." No. 136.—1st Prize, "Pericardium"; 2nd Prize, "Polypodium."

Answers have also been received from—Agamemnon, Battsbite, Cipher, Dover, Emma Jane, Froggie, One and All, Proteus, Sunflower, Tarradiddle, Warwickshire Lass.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 133, received too late from Bayleaf.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 135, received too late from Dafke, Hatchet, Inkpot, Marie, Robdavo.

## Odds and Ends.

A SHORT time ago the Queen of Italy, in the course of a railway journey, stopped at a certain station, and was met by the mayor and municipal big-wigs in all the glory of their robes of honour. An elegant luncheon had been provided, but the royal appetite was uncertain, and the Queen requested the obsequious deputation to get her a glass of wine, which was all that she required. This was promptly brought; but whilst drinking it, a drop fell from the glass on to her travelling dress. She at once sought in her pocket for a handkerchief to remove the stain; but the worthy mayor, whose daily avocations behind the counter had possibly accustomed him to the purposes for which ladies seek their pockets, misunderstood the motion of the Queen's hand, and murmured humbly, but earnestly: "Ah no, your majesty! I assure you it is all paid for!"

ONE morning Jerrold and Compton proceeded together to view the pictures in the Gallery of Illustration. On entering the ante-room they found themselves opposite to a number of very long looking-glasses. Pausing before one of these, Compton remarked to Jerrold: "You've come here to admire works of art. Very well; feast you on that work of nature!"—pointing to his own figure reflected in the glass. "Look at it; there's a picture for you!" "Yes," said Jerrold, regarding it intently; "very fine, very fine indeed!" Then turning to his friend: "Wants hanging, though?"

A VERY characteristic French story appears in a Paris paper. It runs thus: A man enters the shop of a barber to be shaved. He sits down, when a big dog comes in immediately afterwards, and sitting down in front of him, regards him with a fixed stare. "Ah, what does this mean?" cries the gentleman, who feels somewhat uncomfortable. "I'll tell you," replies the barber, meanwhile moving the razor about quickly. "From time to time, I chance to cut off an ear of a customer. Then the dog eats it!"

AN old pioneer, who believed that "what was to be would be," lived in a region infested by Indians. He always took his gun with him, and once, finding that some of his family had taken it, he would not go out without it. His friends rallied him, saying that there was no danger of the Indians, as he would not die until his time came, anyhow. "Yes," said old Leatherstockings, "but suppose I was to meet an Indian, and his time was come, it wouldn't do not to have my gun."

LIGHTNING speed in manufacture may certainly be claimed by our Transatlantic cousins. At the recent Louisville Exhibition, the *American Register* tells us, the Governor of Arkansas wore a suit of clothes made from cotton, which had been cleaned, ginned, carded, spun, dyed, woven, cut, and stitched by the tailor, all in one afternoon. Forty-four hours before, it was still unpicked in the cotton-fields five hundred miles away.

LANDLORD to tenant: "Good-morning, sir; fine day, sir; just called round to see if it would be convenient to settle your quarter's rent?" "Do you know, landlord, that none of the doors in this house will shut?" "New house, sir; new house, you know; takes time to settle." "Ah, then there's a pair of us. I'm a new tenant; it takes time for me to settle, too. Good-morning. Call again."

SAXE, the joker and poet, was once taking a trip on a steamer, when he fell in with a lively young lady, to whom he made himself very agreeable. Of course, he made an impression upon the damsel, who said at parting: "Good-bye, Mr. Saxe; I fear you'll soon be forgetting me." "Ah," said the inveterate punster, "if I was not a married man already, you may be sure I'd be for getting you."

"WE frequently see it stated," says Mr. Oddfish, "that such and such men started from extreme poverty, coming into town in the first place without a farthing of money, and rising by their own exertions. When I first came I had to borrow money to get here, and I've been borrowing money ever since. It is a great thing at sixty to have established such a wonderful credit."

THE *Paris Temps* recently translated an American telegram stating that a cyclone had occurred at Springfield, Missouri, as follows: "An election riot broke out in Springfield, Missouri; the rioters destroyed two houses, killed five persons, and injured thirty." The mistake is all the more ludicrous, as "cyclone" is a French as well as an English term.

THERE was a tedious play not long ago produced in London, in which one of the characters, a theatrical manager, had to say to another, "If any of the public are not satisfied, their money will be returned." Upon this the gallery rose as one man, and with outstretched hands shouted, "Me, me, me!"

It is reported that this reply was really given recently by the guide round St. Alban's Cathedral, to the remark that the variety of architecture was most interesting: "Yes, sir; you see the works was given to different contractors, who each did it in his own way."

THEY were two little children, and they were painting pictures in their school books. One youngster finished a cow in blue, and then remembered never to have seen a blue cow. "Never mind," encouragingly said the other; "we'll say the cow is cold."

A PREACHER in Tennessee is known as the "satisfying preacher." Whenever a church began to get a little tired of their pastor, this man was sent for, and after hearing a sermon or two from him they were "satisfied"—to keep the pastor they had.

"NEVER be critical upon the ladies," was the maxim of an old Irish peer, remarkable for his homage to the sex; "the only way in the world that a true gentleman ever will attempt to look at the faults of a pretty woman is to shut his eyes."

"WHOSE pigs are those, my lad?" "Whoy, they belong to that there big sow." "No, I mean who is their master?" "Whoy," again answered the lad, "that little un; he's a rare un to fight."

AN Irishman says that if the Naiads were constantly bathing, he presumes, from their name, the Dryads were the ones who brought the towels.

"Is lager-beer a tonic?" asked an invalid; and the German doctor answers: "It ish a tonic—it ish, in fact, Teu-tonic."

THE following are a few clever anagrams:

Lawyers—Sly ware.  
Crinoline—Inner coil.  
Telegraph—Great help.  
Poor-house—O sour hope.  
Impatient—Tim in a pet.  
Parliament—Partial men.  
Matrimony—Into my arm.  
Catalogues—Got as a clue.  
Sweetheart—There we sat.  
Old England—Golden land.  
Punishment—Nine thumps.  
Astronomers—Moon starers.  
Sovereignty—"Tis ye govern.  
Presbyterian—Best in prayer.  
Penitentiary—May I repent it.  
Sir Robert Peel—Terrible poser.  
Radical Reform—Rare mad frolic.  
Horatio Nelson—Honor est a Nilo.  
Douglas Jerrold—Sure a droll dog I.  
Arthur Wellesley—Truly he'll see war.  
Florence Nightingale—Flit on, cheering angel.  
Swedish Nightingale—Sing high, sweet Linda (or Lind).  
Victoria, England's Queen—Governs a nice quiet land.

SOME extraordinary stories are told of the value of cocoanut as an efficient food. The following instance is given by the *Fiji Times*: "A vessel that once left San Francisco with four hundred passengers for Sydney had, in consequence of running short of stores, to put in at Samsa, where a large quantity of cocoanuts were obtained. During the remainder of the passage very heavy weather was encountered, in which the vessel became water-logged and only reached Sydney after a perilous journey of eighty days, during which time all the provisions ran short, and men, women, and children were fed only upon cocoanuts, being at last reduced to one per diem for each adult. Notwithstanding the diet, not a life was lost, not a single case of sickness occurred, and all the passengers landed in a healthy and well-nourished condition."

## NOTICE.

ON JANUARY 5TH WILL APPEAR THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF A  
NEW SERIAL STORY, ENTITLED,

"MY LORD CONCEIT,"

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

## NOTICE.

NOW PUBLISHING,

## THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

WITH A COLOURED PLATE REPRESENTING  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD DURING THE HEAVY SNOWSTORM  
ON THE 18th JANUARY, 1881.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

## NOTICE.

NOW READY, PRICE SIXPENCE,

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AND SOMETHING SUITABLE FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

## NOTICE.

The Fifth Volume of HOUSEHOLD WORDS, containing Nos. 106 to 131, bound in cloth, uniform with Vols. 1, 2, 3, and 4, can now be had, price 4s. 6d. Also Binding Cases (including Title and Index), price 1s. 6d. Title and Index may also be obtained separately, price 1d.

All back Numbers, Parts, Quarterly Divisions and Volumes, also the Extra Numbers, are in print; and may be had by ordering from any Bookseller, Newsagent, or Railway Bookstall, or should any difficulty be found in procuring from an Agent, enclose stamps for the amount, adding price of postage, addressed to the Publisher of HOUSEHOLD WORDS, 24, Great New Street, E.C., when the copies will be sent per return.

The Publishers of HOUSEHOLD WORDS will send Copies direct, post-free, to any address in the United Kingdom or the Continent, upon receipt of P.O.O. made payable at the Fleet Street Office, to Messrs. CHARLES DICKENS & EVANS, at the following rates:

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New Volumes commence the first week in May and November respectively.

All applications for Advertisements to be addressed to Mr. J. Smith, 24, Great New Street, E.C.



"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 140.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1883.

[VOL. VI.]

## The Fate of a Christmas Card.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"So Paul really leaves us to-day. You have not forgotten, Deborah?"

"I do not call him Paul myself," answered Miss Deborah Compton; "but I am quite aware that the time has come for Mr. Sevyer to take his departure, and I am glad of it."

"You will not let him think that, sister?" said the first speaker uneasily. "You will wish him good-bye in a friendly manner?"

"Dr. Compton, am I ever rude to anyone?"

"No, certainly not, my dear Deborah."

As a matter of fact, her brother could recall many, very many instances in the years during which she had sojourned under his roof when the lady had been almost rude, and more than unpleasant; and the doctor knew, by painful experience, that it was a bad sign when she gave him his full title.

"I never forget what is due to others, or myself," Miss Compton went on with dignity; "and I shall say 'farewell' with pleasure to a very presuming young man, who was brought here to St. Peverall in defiance of my wishes, and against my advice."

"I was bound to get someone to help me," urged the other in mild deprecation. "You know what roads a country practitioner has to travel in such a district as this."

The doctor glanced forth from the window out on a dreary landscape, where the combs and hills, the stretching moorland of North Devon, were lying sombre and desolate under the winter's sky.

"Exmoor is a wild place, and it is always the people at a distance who are ill, especially at night. I was bound to have help," he repeated, "few as my patients are; and then—and then—I wanted leisure for my experiments."

"Your experiments!" and it was a marvel how any one could express so much in two words.

"No, Deborah, not that. Please don't."

He was an undersized individual, this Devonshire medical man, with pinched features, and a countenance almost vacuous. Save one expression of hope, all the other emotions were merged in a general blank; that one remained. It almost seemed as if the deep, wrinkled lines of his face were entrenchments, yielded one by one in a hard fight with the world, until hope—a perfect reliance, and undoubted confidence in something—had taken refuge in his still keen grey eyes, and refused to be driven forth.

"Not that, Deborah, please."

"Well, then, I won't," softening a little. "But you know yourself, brother, your practice is so small, we could not live without my poor annuity. Your few patients don't pay you, and it was unwise to have an assistant, a young and handsome one, too."

"One moment, Deborah," he interrupted. "Paul Sevyer is not more expensive for being good-looking. He may eat a trifle extra on account of youth, but I could not have had an older man at the price. Why, I pay him next to nothing, and that little," with a sorrowful smile, "I usually borrow for my—my—you know," avoiding the word which had given offence.

"He would never have stayed on such terms," she rejoined, "never, but for our niece; and here he has been three years. It was madness. Muriel Davenant is just as foolish, just as romantic as her mother was before her, and we know what silly Janet did—married a penniless pauper of a curate. Why, Sir Angus Garth would make Muriel his wife to-morrow, and he owns all that we can see. She gives him not one scrap of encouragement, and—"

There came an interruption to her speech. A tap at the door, followed by—well, hardly the entrance of Miss Compton's "detrimental," for he only came as far as the threshold. Perhaps Paul Sevyer was not sure of his welcome—possibly he was uncertain of room in the little apartment, for the stalwart frame of a blue-eyed, light-haired young giant filled the doorway, and seemed to be encroaching on Aunt Deborah's peace, as those sturdy Norse rovers, whose form and features he bore, were wont to swoop down on the fair western coasts.

"Can I speak to you a moment, Dr. Compton?" Paul's voice was low and musical, but it seemed absurd for such a big man to be so shy and embarrassed. "I will not detain you, sir. But I am leaving in a few minutes."

"Certainly, certainly, my boy," cried his employer, but hardly with alacrity—although perhaps glad to escape himself. "I will join you in the summer-house in a moment."

As Paul, bowing to the lady, disappeared, Dr. Compton went to an old-fashioned bureau. He carefully unlocked it, and as carefully closed it, when he had selected sundry articles from its shelves. To an ordinary mind, there was an air of mystery over all this. Paul had betokened no surprise at the suggested place of meeting, although an open summer-house, in a bleak garden on the borders of Exmoor, with a light film of snow on the ground, and a fortnight before Christmas, might seem an uncongenial spot. And Miss Deborah looked on in a most matter-of-fact way, as her brother collected a powder-flask, two small, curiously-fashioned cannons, some tools, and half-a-dozen metal objects, for which there was no name. All those things he placed almost reverently in a bag, and then looked that. Did he fear danger from this young descendant of the Vikings? Hardly. There was not much to dread in Paul Sevyer's frank face, and honest smiling eyes; but, nevertheless, the doctor gathered his armoury about him, and so went forth.

It was not a cheerful place, Dr. Compton's garden, although it had one advantage in being sheltered from the wind by very high walls, screening it from all observation; otherwise it was a bare, desolate place, and assuredly not devoted to any purposes of horticulture. The few shrubs it boasted were leafless and scorched. The ground was torn up here and there as if by explosives. The sides and roof of the so-called summer-house were riddled by bullets, and blackened by fire, and there was also a large suicide-suggesting pond, and in the distance some targets.

"I suppose I know what you want, Paul?" said the master of this salubrious spot.

"I don't think you do, sir," answered Paul, whose embarrassment seemed to increase. "I wish you did, for I fear to tell you."

"You need not," and the older man was no more at ease. "But I have it not to give you. Fear not for your money. It is safe," and his voice gathered confidence as he spoke. "Every loan which I have had—not for my own sake—but borrowed in the interest of all humanity, shall be repaid in the days which are coming—repaid, I say, a thousandfold, not only in gold, but by the thanks, the gratitude, the blessings of the wide world."

"I did not purpose to ask for money, sir," rejoined Paul.

"Eh! what?" In the doctor's struggle with life, it was matter for surprise to be asked for anything else. "Eh! not money?"

"No, sir; I was not thinking of those trifling sums. The obligation is rather with me, that I have been able to aid you. I have to ask for something more precious still."

Paul Sevyer paused a moment. His hesitating words would hardly come, and the other made no effort to help him. In fact, the doctor seemed lost in thought, and had unpacked the bag, that his hand might fondle one of the cannons.

"I love Muriel—Miss Davenant—your niece, sir—and—and—I hope—that is—I believe—"

"Oh dear me!" The doctor relinquished his artillery to stroke his forehead in a bewildered manner. "Dear me! had you not better speak to her aunt? She arranges all these things, and—"

"No, sir." The ice once broken, Paul could go on. "No, sir; I am sure it would be in vain."

"I don't know," said the doctor, uttering a palpable untruth. "If you told Deborah—my sister—that Muriel returned your affection?"

"I have not dared to ask Miss Muriel yet myself, sir. I only crave your permission to do so."

"But," said the doctor, casting about for some excuse to shift the responsibility, "I am afraid there are obstacles. Did you ever—ever consider," desperately, "the disparity in your size? Why, my little maid will hardly reach your shoulder."

"She does not reach it, sir," rejoined Paul; "but she reaches my heart, and that is enough for me."

"And—and—besides that"—the old man had returned to his pet gun, and appeared to derive inspiration from its black muzzle—"there are other things. You are, like myself, a poor doctor—the difference is, that you are a poor young doctor, and I a poor old doctor. Now, answer me truly—do you think you are a fitting match for ten—fifty—nay, a hundred thousand pounds?"

The "poor young doctor" looked at him in sheer surprise. The old man's voice was full of hope, his eyes glittering with enthusiasm—or was it insanity which suggested itself to Paul? Then he went on:

"Muriel, if I live but a few days longer, will have this and more, or else the world has no gratitude. You have trusted me with your money—I trust you with my secret. Nay, let me speak," ere the young man could protest. "It is a relief. I have dreamt of it for years—thought of it day and night. I must tell some one, or go mad. I have many inventions, each one a fortune, but I have let them all go for this. Look," proudly uplifting the cannon, "two, three, half-a-dozen of these, and the proudest army which ever obeyed a despot's will—the noblest fleet framed to carry fire

and slaughter over the seas—only five minutes, and it shall be gone, melted, like a snowflake in the sun.”

“But stay, Dr. Compton—stay,” and the young man laid his hand upon the doctor’s arm, for in wild excitement he was flourishing about, and it was hard to say what devastation even so small a model might work. “You proclaim yourself a philanthropist, and—”

“Yes, I do,” he broke in. “Is not this the outcome of it all? What armies shall meet each other, when but a few seconds shall see utter annihilation? I tell you that this, the very incarnation of all the lust of war, is the inauguration of the reign of peace. There. Go! Like the world, I see you do not believe. There never was but one who had faith in Gabriel Compton, and she was taken from me. Dream your dream of love. I had mine once. Ah me! It is long, long ago.”

The doctor’s voice was solemn, as the voice of one mourning the dead past. The sigh was very sad, and the mists of the buried years, their hopes, and fears, and joys, were dimming his eyes.

“Seek Muriel if you will. For the memory of my own youth, I cannot say nay.”

“I thank you a thousand times, sir,” cried Paul. “You have made me very happy this day.”

“I am not so sure of that,” rejoined the old man doubtfully. “Muriel has been sent away, kept away, until you should be gone. My sister will never forgive me. Woo her, win her if you can. But I tell you, Paul,” and the doctor’s voice was an impressive whisper, “you have Miss Deborah Compton to fight against; and my gun, with the terrible shell it carries, is not capable of that.”

The interview was ended. It would have been cruel to hinder the old man, palpably anxious to commence his practice. His late assistant took his departure like royalty, followed by salutes of ordnance. But if the cannon were loud, Aunt Deborah was quiet. Her farewell was of the iciest, as she bowed Paul Sevyer from St. Peverall.

## CHAPTER II.

HE had haunted the platform of Dane’s Cross Junction for days, although it was seven long miles from the lonely vicarage where was his home, and hardly pleasant weather. As Christmas drew nearer, the cold grew more severe, and Dane’s Cross, bleak and unsheltered, lay open to a keen east wind, which seemed to mock the wintry sunshine.

Guards having grown accustomed to a blue-eyed young giant gazing wistfully into each carriage, had ceased to enquire if “he was going on.” The station-master realised that he neither possessed nor wanted a ticket; and the porters, misanthropical individuals, with communistic views touching anyone in a better coat than their own corduroy, had laid aside, in deference to superior proportions, a wild desire to run him down with the station wheelbarrow.

And his waiting had its reward. Patience brings many dreams true, and this was no exception. Paul Sevyer’s vision came to him at last—came to him in the shape of a smiling, happy little face, over which the envious cold had no power, save to tinge it with a more bewitching colour; in the shape of a pair of bright sunny eyes, meeting his own a moment in glad surprise, then shyly downcast; in the shape of a lithe graceful form, in a coquettish little hat, with one knot of scarlet ribbon, a grey, close-fitting ulster, and, alas!—why is there a drawback to all mundane pleasure?—further protected from the sting of winter by a railway wrapper, unmistakably a man’s, and that man—Sir Angus Garth.

Paul took the little hand extended to him, but had no chance to long retain it, for the girl’s travelling companion, rising from his seat, threw open the carriage-door.

As he stepped forth, the greeting between these two men was of the iciest.

“If you will excuse me, Miss Davenant,” said the baronet, “I must enquire about my own train at Beckarmith, where, I deeply regret, our roads diverge. We stay here, I believe, a few minutes. I will trust you, for so long, to Mr.—to Mr. Sevyer.”

The words were simple enough. There was nothing at which to take offence. Yet in some way—or was it Paul’s jealous fancy?—Sir Angus Garth seemed to imply some sense of proprietorship, and there was certainly a tinge of superciliousness in the pretence of barely remembering the other’s name. Yet he was not a bad fellow, Sir Angus. Paul was bound to admit so much. A good landlord, well beloved by his tenantry, whose heart and purse were open to distress, and who had been very friendly to himself until—well, all that was changed now—there was nothing of amiability in his brief recognition.

“Mr. Sevyer, where did you spring from? I never hoped—that is expected,” substituting the more formal word, “to see you here.”

“Why not, Miss Davenant? Esterton Vicarage is no great

distance from Dane’s Cross, and I would have walked much farther for this chance; the more so, as it may be the last time.”

“The last time!”

There was a little tremor—or did he only fancy it?—in the echo of his words. Then, with an effort, the girl steadied her voice.

“The last time? I do not understand; you have left my uncle, and—and”—she had very nearly said “me”—“have left my uncle and St. Peverall.”

“I have, Miss Davenant. There was nothing for me to do there, and the world is before me. I am leaving England in a few days.”

“Another surprise!” The girl knew he was gazing earnestly on the shyly averted face. She could not speak in affected unconcern, and meet his glance. “Another surprise, and I have not been from home so very long. These changes take place, and no one tells me. Aunt Deborah never mentioned it.”

“I imagine not,” with a shadow of bitterness. “Miss Compton would hardly deem the name of Paul Sevyer worthy to enter into her correspondence. I scarcely dared to hope it would interest you, Miss Davenant; but I thought, perchance, the doctor might have alluded to it when—”

“The doctor,” she interrupted with a rippling laugh. “He is very fond of me; I need scarcely tell you that.”

“You need not tell me, Miss Davenant.”

She blushed a little, but went on, ignoring the meaning in his words:

“He would not write to me if I were away six months instead of as many weeks. He is too immersed in his inventions and plans. Ah, dear old uncle! he is always devising something. Do you think, Mr. Sevyer, that there is really anything in it all?”

“I may not presume to express an opinion,” the young man rejoined, and his tone was a little formal. He had not walked seven miles that morning, mostly through deep lanes—only sheltered from the frosty air, in order, where not slippery with ice, to be thick with clinging mire—to find Muriel attended by Sir Angus Garth, and disposed to talk of the doctor and his doings. But with feminine intuition of what might come, and with a nervous desire to avoid it, unexplained to herself, she went on:

“He has tried so many things. They all cost him money, and turn out failures. When I left he was just thinking of some wonderful cannon which was to bring universal peace by killing everybody; before that there was a perfect substitute for leather; and before that, again, a wonderful perpetual-motion, self-acting tricycle. Will none of his schemes meet success?”

“I do not know. Disappointment in all things, little and big, seems the lot of most of us in this life. I have been here several times, knowing you must pass through Dane’s Cross, in the hope of seeing Miss Davenant.”

“And have at least met with no disappointment,” she interrupted hastily. “Miss Davenant is here.”

“And not alone,” Paul said, with a meaning glance to where Sir Angus was approaching in the distance. “I came, Muriel—pardon me, let me utter the name once—to say something, surely you may guess what—and now words fail me. I would have asked you—would have said—”

“Now, sir, if you please, are you going on?” An utterly unympathetic guard had interposed and the baronet was drawing nearer.

“I have an appointment as naval surgeon,” he went on desperately. “A few days after Christmas the sea will roll between us, Muriel, and if I dared to hope—if I might only look forward to—”

“A merry Christmas and a happy new year, I think you may, Paul—Mr. Sevyer.”

Muriel’s presence of mind came to her aid, barely in time, as Sir Angus was close upon them, and surely there was a meaning in the last low-spoken words.

Did Sir Angus note the bright flush upon her face? It was plain enough to Paul, and his pulses were bounding wildly at his own name, never breathed by those trembling lips before.

It was over, the meeting for which the young man had walked so many miles, and had waited so many hours. The baronet, lord of the manor at St. Peverall, owner of many miles around, was adjusting the wraps, with perhaps a little unnecessary *empressment*. There was a slamming of doors up and down the train, and already it was moving.

It was over, but the memory of that last interview, conducted amid such incongruous surroundings, was stamped on his mind.

Over! Already the train was afar off, growing dim in a dull mist, which was sweeping in from the sea to hide the sunshine. Born of the gloom, a dull fear was at Paul’s heart as he turned away to traverse those lanes and bye-paths, more cheerless and forbidding than before. With the changed face of Nature, a wailing breeze had sprung up, and seemed sighing for the vanity of human

aspirations. And in his excited fancy, the trees were waving their leafless branches in derision of his hopes.

A young naval surgeon, against Sir Angus Garth, his title, and his rent-roll? Folly! Presumption! A merry Christmas? It was but mockery. And yet—and yet—

### CHAPTER III.

"GLAD to see you back again, miss," and the station-master lifted two fingers to his cap, in stiff military salute. "I feared you would not be able to get here so soon."

Muriel Davenant looked at him in surprise. The parting shriek, as it moved away, of the train which had brought her to St. Peverall, rendered the official's last words nearly inaudible, yet she wondered at his grave face.

"I suppose I am here sooner than I was expected, as there is no one to meet me. Will you send up my things when you can;" and indicating her not too numerous belongings, the girl passed through the wicket; but she turned again with a parting smile. "A merry Christmas and a happy new year to you and Mrs. Tregaskis, and all the little ones."

"Thank you, miss. Thank you kindly. The same to you, I am sure."

John Tregaskis's voice was solemn as his countenance, which was usually so beaming. He watched her step forth from the dull and quiet station into the dull and quiet road, and the official glance of admiration was strangely puzzled.

"I think I see how 'tis. She can't have heard. Reckon I ought to have broke the news some way. But how could I dash the light out of that winsome face? Christmas, too, of all times. Alack! what a world it is."

It was easy to mark her passing through the few other passengers, one and all making way in grave, silent respect. Moving with lithe, free grace, so different from the lumbering gait of those "children of toil," the girl seemed almost the denizen of another world. Her road had not long to run with theirs. For soon, turning aside from the highway, she held her course down a rarely frequented path, at times merely a track across the moor, a wild uncivilised kind of track too, revelling in devious and unlooked-for turns. And after one of those unexpected flights—when it had twisted round a granite crag, to double sharply back on the other side; had dived head-first into a steep little dell, for no apparent reason, save to zig-zag out again, frightened by a babbling ice-fringed brook—it suddenly grew trim and orderly, almost precise, and here, passing a pair of untended gates, Muriel was at home.

It was not a grand habitation. The dwelling of Dr. Compton was little more than a large cottage, whose quaint windows—no two alike—festooned in summer-time with creeping plants, looked out upon an old-fashioned garden (the doctor's artillery practice was carried on behind), where, in their season, hydrangeas, myrtles, and rhododendrons grew in rare luxuriance. But now it all seemed sad and desolate. The trailing branches drooped over the casements, dead leaves lay thickly on the paths, and over all was a brooding air, as of sorrow, which, for an instant, struck Muriel's heart with a strange, undefined dread.

"I am growing timid and silly," she murmured, with a light laugh in which was no merriment. "Of course it is dull after London and dear Katie's" (the old school-fellow whom she had been visiting), "quiet, indeed, after her noisy little ones." Then, sinking her voice to as deep Shakespearean accents as its sweet tones could compass: "What, ho! within there! Will no one welcome the wanderer? Nay, then, there must be something amiss. Your nose, Ponto, is abnormally cold—as chilly as the weather—and your tail dolorous in its wag."

She stooped to caress the faithful house-dog coming slowly to meet her—a shaggy old collie, who, never far from the doctor, apparently always taking keen interest in his master's experiments, had escaped destruction by a miracle a dozen times. Ponto lifted a great paw in greeting—an acquirement taught by Muriel, and the girl noticed not the sorrow in his eyes—the sad instinct telling him that something was wrong.

"Come, old man, this place is full of melancholy. Let us have a waltz."

It was another of his tricks to let her whirl him around, always in a diffident way, as if such levity was unfitting a dog of mature age; but now there was such mute protest in his reproachful glance, that she let him go, and looked up to see the doctor's sister standing in the porch.

"Why, Aunt Deborah, here I am, home again. It is all so quiet, I thought everybody was asleep or dead."

Miss Compton shuddered visibly at the word.

"Muriel, do not speak so lightly. Have you not heard? Did you not get my letter?"

"I have had no letter," she cried with a quick catching of her

breath. "What is there to tell me, that you look like that? Surely, no bad news, and at this—at Christmas-time?"

Then she remembered the grave faces on the road, the station-master's strange manner, and a sure foreboding of coming sorrow was at her heart.

"Oh, aunt! what is it? In pity tell me! Is it—is it my uncle?"

Aunt Deborah laid a gentle hand upon her shoulder.

"My poor child!"

It was all she said. Only three words. But something in their tone, their solemn sadness—so different from Miss Compton's usual incisive utterances—was a revelation.

"It is my poor uncle, then. Is he dead?"

"He is not dead, child," was the sorrowful answer, "but dying fast, and you are barely in time. I always hated my brother's inventions and patents," with a sudden bitterness, "and now they have killed him."

A few words—a hurried explanation—and her incoherent speech was made clear. The previous day, that cherished model, the gun which was to do so much, as if animated by the demon of war, which it was to quell, had turned upon its inventor, and the doctor staggered in from his last experiment, bleeding and dying.

With a calmness at which she wondered afterwards when all was over, the girl, with hushed footstep, stole to her uncle's bedside.

Dr. Compton lay as he had lain there ever since, caring not to move or speak, but a glance of kindness in his eyes, a faint smile, told that he knew she was there, and that he was content.

So he remained all through the night and the next day and again the next. He merely showed a gleam of consciousness when the neighbouring practitioner from Beckarmith made his visit, then the thin lips wreathed unmistakably in depreciation of his rival's skill.

Darkness was falling. In the frosty air the stars came forth to shine upon the earth, even as that one shone in glory and in promise so many centuries ago, and the village bells were chiming for Christmas Eve. Then the dying man spoke:

"I am going, Muriel—going fast. Once again I have proved my professional brother wrong. Poor Kirkby, he only gave me a few hours. But it is over—over now. No, dear, not Deborah, do not call her. She only rails against my gun."

He was silent a while; the grey shadow of death was on his face; and with a strange awe the girl knew that the destroyer was near.

"Dear child, it is hard to go just now. That cannon would have done so much—have brought wealth and fame. I told Paul so when he asked your hand of—" The doctor ceased abruptly, then went on: "Do you love him, Muriel? Never mind—tell me when I wake."

Aye, verily, sleep had come—the slumber which must visit each one of us—and all the problems and questions which had vexed the doctor's mind were to be answered in the awakening.

When the brightness of spring was born it shone upon two graves, for Aunt Deborah was laid by her brother's side.

The latest snowflakes of the lingering winter melted away—vanished as utterly as many friends of happier days. To Muriel these things meant ruin and poverty. She knew not how complete, until the stroke fell.

Surely the knowledge grew—a cruel revelation, that even love, the love which she had cherished, now that she was poor and friendless was hers no more. Rejected at first, the thought became a certainty, and with it was a bitter mortification, an angry resentment. For in the months—nay, years which followed, Paul Sevyer sought her never, made no sign, appeared not at St. Peverall.

### CHAPTER IV.

THEY were coming on deck at last, the woeful passengers for India, in that swift clipper, the Eastern Queen. For many weary hours, the cruel hand of Father Neptune had lain heavily upon them. They had tossed and tumbled in their berths, in unison with the tossing, tumbling waves around, whilst plaintive voices from the saloon-cabins had requested that the speakers might be thrown overboard without delay. But the wind had moderated. The wild waters had settled down to a heavy roll, making locomotion difficult, instead of impossible, and in honour of the hallowed time so near, those distressed victims were beginning to bestir themselves with heart of grace, for it was Christmas Eve.

As each, till now, unseen one came in view, a bronzed and stalwart personage, described in the company's bills as "an experienced surgeon," gave a keen glance—a glance of disappointment, and yet relief.

It was three long years ago—he remembered it with a bitter smile—since he had watched and waited for a face at Dane's Cross station. It had come then at last—even as it would come now. For Paul Sevyer knew that Sir Angus held a diplomatic appointment

in India. In the passengers' list was the name of Lady Garth, and for an instant he had caught a glimpse of a well-remembered, never-forgotten figure, which he had seen but once since that day. He had schooled himself for this, had called upon his pride to beat down a lingering tenderness, which he scarcely owned even unto himself. Muriel was dead to him. He knew it. He must forget it all, and let them meet almost as strangers.

It came at last. She was on deck, and alone. As he was pacing backwards and forwards, she was in his path. Why turn aside? It must be, sooner or later, and so—Paul was face to face with Muriel.

He saw her glance of surprised recognition, and lifted his cap in proud reserve. He knew that his face was too bronzed to tell tales, but hers was burning crimson.

He would have passed so, but something of sorrow, of mute reproach, in those eyes, once so happy, smote him, and he spoke, but only in measured official accents.

"I am glad to welcome Lady Garth to the fresh air. As medical officer, I may say that the demon of the waves is always cowed when bravely met."

In her first impulse she had almost extended a little hand, but he made no answering sign, and, perhaps, in the wailing of the wind, the dashing of the waters, she did not fairly hear him. But there was no mistaking his set countenance, and her voice was cold as his own.

"Thank you, Mr. Sevyer. I am much better" (he had placed a seat for her in a sheltered spot). "I fancy some of the other ladies will need your assistance more than myself."

In the quick eagerness of Paul's resentment, he had misconstrued her, and turned proudly away.

"I understand you, Lady Garth, and will not intrude."

"One moment," and she stopped him with a slight motion of the hand he had rejected. "You called me—you called me—"

"I called you Lady Garth," he interrupted, "and must apologise for an impertinence. I have never been honoured in meeting your ladyship as aught but Miss Davenant; but I did know that Lady Garth was one of our passengers, and I deemed that the title would be no more unwelcome than the brilliant destiny on which I have to offer my humble congratulations."

"You are quite right. The wife of Sir Angus Garth should be happy, for he is a good, and true, and honourable man." The words were uttered pointedly enough. It was her turn now to administer a small stab. "Right, also, in that Lady Garth is on board, as a mother going to join her son."

"Then you are still Muriel—I ask pardon—Miss Davenant," stammered Paul. For just one moment a wild longing hope was stirring his heart; but it died away before the set calm of her face.

"I heard—that is—they told me—you were—Sir Angus was—"

"Doubtless you heard various things, Mr. Sevyer. Excuse my saying their recapitulation can scarcely interest me."

"I am rebuked," he rejoined humbly; "and yet I was not treated well. And now I find Miss Davenant with Lady Garth—his mother—sailing for India. I can only suppose that those rumours which came to me were true, and that—"

She interrupted him again, and with a repressed scorn in her voice, all foreign to her gentle nature:

"Miss Davenant can hardly imagine that her doings are of any interest to Mr. Sevyer. But she is voyaging to India to earn her bread under Lady Garth's protection. Sir Angus has been a good friend to one who, when poverty and sorrow were her portion, had few friends left. The situation she has to fill is of his procuring."

"To earn your bread? I never dreamt of this when my dear old friend the doctor died. Then all his schemes and inventions were worthless?"

"More than worthless. They kept him poor all his life. Few people believed in them." Then, with a shade of bitterness; "Mr. Sevyer at least should know that—who attached so much faith to them—once."

"Miss Davenant, have I deserved this?"

He put the question desperately. The girl had turned from him, and in the action was an obvious dismissal.

"Why speak to me so? If I dared at St. Peverall to dream—"

"It was in bygone days, for lack of worldly prudence," she interrupted in deeper scorn.

"It was so long ago—yes, long ago," he sighed. "And then I heard—I thought—"

She rose to leave him, and words which would not come at his will remained unspoken.

"Pardon me, Mr. Sevyer. Doubtless your thoughts were quite correct then. Certainly it is not my province to combat them now. Further, let me say, that had I known you were surgeon of this vessel, I would not—"

"Have been a passenger." In a voice as frigid as her own he completed the sentence. "Be under no apprehension. I shall not

presume upon my position. In the meantime, in my official capacity, may I advise you to go below? There is very heavy weather coming."

The girl bowed and turned away. She saw, where he pointed, a low mass of dense black cloud, against which the flying foam showed ghastly white. Quivering here and there, the fire of heaven, a keen blue spark, was leaping to the sea, and in a few seconds the fury of the gale was upon them.

It was an awful night. A Christmas Eve long to be remembered, to be thought of in after years, when the clouds and gloom had passed away from her life; to be thought of with deep, heartfelt gratitude for the brighter dawn which was to follow so soon upon its darkness.

An awful Christmas Eve! In the dear old England, left so far behind, lights were gleaming from peaceful cottage windows, fires burning brightly in happy homes. Friends met friends in love and kindness. And, perchance, as in the pause of mirth and song the storm was heard, some gentle hearts thought with pity of "those at sea."

An awful Christmas Eve! A driving hurricane of hail and rain stinging the face like whips. A wild wind wailing, shrieking, groaning, as with the voices of the lost. A chaos of maddened waters, with huge waves uplifting themselves as in derision of man's hardihood in daring to oppose their might; and below, the creaking of timbers, the cries of frightened women, the shivering of glass and china, and occasionally the heavier crash of some unsecured article.

Wearily the night wore away. There came a lighter grey in the east. A flush of pink growing stronger, yet stronger—a streak of crimson quivering through the storm-wrack—and so was born Christmas Day!

Through the night, until the wrath of wind and sea abated with the morning, Paul Sevyer had been on deck. The storm held no terror for him. In the tumult of his mind sleep was impossible. He still stayed where Muriel, with those last cruel words, had left him, and there, as the day advanced, she came to him again. He saw and wondered.

The face so cold and proud was proud no more, and her voice was strangely humbled.

"Mr. Sevyer, I did you an injustice yesterday. I ask your pardon."

"Miss Davenant! Muriel! My pardon!"

"I found this. Only now—until this Christmas morning I have never seen it."

No eye save hers was to see it after. Snatching it from her hand, the wind whirled it away, and Father Neptune took unto himself—a Christmas Card and a letter! The young man had recognised it. Each word was well remembered. The story of his love, which had met—only silence.

"I sent that, Muriel, three weary years since, after we parted at Dane's Cross. You have never read it?"

"Can you think it would have remained unanswered?" she cried. "Even if—if—"

"If what, Muriel?"

The girl's face was blushing furiously under his glance. Answering not the question, she went on:

"Remember at what time it came. When my dear uncle was lying dead, when our peaceful home at St. Peverall was full of sorrow. Aunt Deborah pushed it aside—what time was that for Christmas Cards, joy, and merriment?—laid it away in her desk with a dozen other missives. There it has been, unseen until now, when that desk has fallen—is smashed to atoms."

Loyal to the memory of the dead, the girl did not tell him that it had been the only one opened, and placed in the most secret drawer of Miss Compton's desk.

She stood before him, panting and flushed, as she had stood years ago, and with a great rush of tenderness Paul's heart went back to the past.

"And so you thought that your changed circumstances had changed me! It was long after, when my voyage was done, that I even heard of Dr. Compton's death."

"It was the egotism of grief," she murmured. "I thought that everyone must know what affected me so keenly. And—and you never came near me."

"What was I to imagine?" he rejoined. "I heard nothing from St. Peverall—no word, no line—save a few pounds in discharge of the doctor's obligation. My poor darling, and you wanted the money! But I came—I came, Muriel, and in the dusk of a summer's eve. I saw a man by your side, saw him bend down to kiss you, and I stole away unseen, for that man was—Sir Angus Garth!"

"And my good friend," she interrupted, "a brother to me ever since—since that very night, when he knew he could be no more."

"My darling!" and the young man's voice was deep and earnest

with the old love, "my darling, I asked you a question at Christmas-tide three years ago. I ask you now again, at this most blessed Christmas. Muriel, will you be my wife?"

She answered not, for blustering old Neptune managed it all, managed it with a huge wave, a mighty roll, and the girl, staggering a moment, was in Paul's arms.

No one saw this save the "man at the wheel," and if he was impertinent enough to think she stayed there unnecessarily long, it would have been better for him to mind his steering. As a matter of fact, it is open to doubt whether a rough coat, soaking with rain and sea-water, could make a comfortable resting-place. But Muriel Davenant's fair face nestled closely to Paul's heart, and she was content.

Far, far away on the shore of old England, the glad chimes were pealing forth the message of "love, and peace, and good-will" to man; at sea, the solemn requiem was sung by wind and dashing wave. But it was a "Merry Christmas" for all that, and the fulness of time brought to Paul Sevyer and his bride many "Happy New Years."

May it do so to us all!

## Old China.

I SEE your eyes are on that shelf;  
You're fond of bric-à-brac yourself?  
You like old china? So do I,  
As my dear wife will testify.

That shepherdess is Dresden ware—  
Good early specimens are rare;  
It needs some little skill to tell  
The genuine; shams are made so well.

That blue-and-white is from Mooltan;  
That dragon is of old Japan;  
That figure of a praying bonze  
Is Chinese—lacquer over bronze.

That Sevres vase is rather good,  
Once in the Tuileries it stood;  
That's Henri Deux; I needn't say  
You can't pick those up every day.

That quaint old dish is ancient Dutch  
(I'd rather that you wouldn't touch);  
I'm told that India lacquer-jar  
Was in the palace of the Czar,

You like them? Yes, they're rather nice;  
I fancy they will fetch their price,  
I think my plates and jars will pay  
When Christie knocks them down some day.

O gentle reader, drop a tear  
O'er man's hypocrisy in art;  
For two pounds ten (and that was dear)  
He'd bought them at an auction mart.

## Snowdon House.

(A SHORT SERIAL STORY.)

### PART III.

OF course Mr. Wayre was immediately shown in, and Miss Fulham acknowledged his greeting with a little confusion, which was natural under the circumstances, and which became her very well. She made some trifling remark, hoping that he was well, and so forth, then the doctor proceeded to speak upon some indifferent subjects; but Mr. Wayre cut him short, and saved all trouble, and removed all difficulty in approaching the theme which was in the minds of all three.

"Dr. Fulham, you have not forgotten our conversation of an hour or two back. That is impossible. But have you mentioned it to your daughter?"

"I—I was just speaking to her about it, and was trying to explain—" began the doctor, who in despite of as much self-possession as falls to the lot of most men, was taken somewhat aback by this unexpected opening.

"That will do," continued Mr. Wayre, accepting the unfinished answer. "I am pleased to find, Miss Fulham, that your father has prepared you for the business on which I am now here."

"He said—he—" stammered Agatha, who was as much and unexpectedly embarrassed as the doctor had been. The latter had contemplated leaving his visitor to make his proposal, while he himself slipped into the surgery on some feigned excuse, but this seemed impossible now.

"I have no doubt, Miss Fulham," returned Wayre, "that he

told you how I, a man much your elder, had felt that my home was lonely without a wife, my household incomplete without a head. This was my charge to him, and I am here to assure you that if you will listen favourably to me—I know what a sacrifice I am asking of one so young, so beautiful as yourself—if you will enter Snowdon House as its mistress, my life shall be devoted to show my gratitude and my love for you."

Agatha's secret fear had been that when the critical moment came, she should be found too calm, too self-possessed. She had been so long preparing, and a previous experience had, she thought, so utterly destroyed all the romantic element of her mind, that she dreaded detection. Under these perplexing circumstances, however, there was no fear of an excess of calmness; her colour went and came, and when she strove to say a few words, they were as incoherent as any girl of sixteen could utter.

"Do not let me press this choice upon you too suddenly," continued Mr. Wayre; "I should not have dared, who am so little calculated to win the love of such a girl—I should not have dared to make you this offer, but that I learnt from your father that you were free to choose, while I believe I have his good wishes."

Fulham in his turn stammered out some incoherent fragments, while, as Mr. Wayre alluded to her being free to choose, a rush of memories came over the girl; all that had happened during the last year was in an instant visible, and her firmness gave way. Her emotion was of course misunderstood, and attributed to a very different cause.

Wayre again told her, in softer, gentler accents than Fulham had ever before heard him use, that he did not press for a decision then, he would only ask her to consider what he had said. The doctor was in agony lest this temporising policy might prevail, and the golden opportunity be left in suspense, subject to a thousand malignant chances and disappointments. But the interval, brief as it was, had sufficed for Agatha. With the invariable quickness of a woman, she decided that if she were ever to accept Mr. Wayre's hand, now was the time; that under no circumstances could the offer be more favourably presented; and she spoke.

"I have no reason to ask for delay, Mr. Wayre," she said, in a voice so low at first as to be scarcely audible; but she gathered strength as she proceeded: "I have seen so much of you, and we have experienced so much of your kindness, that—that there is no one I esteem so highly as I do you. If you think that a person so inexperienced as myself, but who is willing to learn, is fit to—can aid you to—can—" She really could not complete this sentence, but the effect was perhaps better than a mere formal ending, when she abruptly added: "I will do my best to deserve your kindness, and make you happy."

In all the records of marriage proposals ever existent, at any rate where royalties and ambassadors were not concerned, there surely was never such a proposal made as this in the presence of a third party! The only tinge of romance in the whole proceeding—apart from all such elements as may have been hidden in the minds of the respective parties—was shown in Mr. Wayre taking the hand of the girl in his own, kissing her forehead, and returning her pledge by promising, in a solemn re-echo of her words, to do all in his power to make her life happy.

After this the conversation changed sufficiently to allow Dr. Fulham to breathe rather more freely. He had felt hitherto, and with good reason, that he had never been placed in so embarrassing a position in his life. Mr. Wayre's visit was not a prolonged one, and when he left, he wrung the doctor's hand heartily, and kissed Agatha at parting, as an assured and accepted suitor should do.

The channels by which information, or, it may be better to say, knowledge, leaks out, are numerous and subtle, and sometimes are so impossible to be traced, that one would almost fancy that the air must have a mysterious or mesmeric power of conveying intelligence. If this were not so, how can we account for Ezra going to his supper at the lodge, after driving his master home, "in an awful taking," as his wife remarked, when she got a chance of imparting the news to a sympathising female ear, "swearing and going on," until he said:

"The old fool is going to be married to that gal—that doctor's gal! Old Fulham's daughter, who hasn't got a penny; as poor as church-mice, they are. I know Grits the baker has stopped their credit, and old Spraggs the butcher means to put 'em in the court."

"Lor, Ezra! what makes you say such a thing?" exclaimed his wife. "Master would never take up with such an ungainly maux as she is. It must be all your fancy."

"Fancy or not," returned her husband; "that's what he have been into Bridgeley town for to-night. You mark my words, Sukey. I should have thought that he had seen enough. But, of course, it's no business of mine."

It must be owned that Mr. Ezra's guess was not very wide of the mark.

We may run ahead of our story while we say that what was but



conjecture on the lodgekeeper's part soon became known as an approved fact in Bridgeley, where the news gave rise to a great deal of sarcastic criticism on the young lady who had accepted a man actually older than her own father. Yet she was envied much more than she was criticised, for Mr. Wayne was known to be wealthy, and his wealth was magnified many times by report. Therefore, old though he was, recluse and misanthrope though he was said to be, it is hardly doing any injustice to the residents of Bridgeley if we say that he could have chosen from a score of eligible young ladies in the town.

Lawyer Darley of the High Street was as discreet and reticent as a lawyer should be, but he went so far as to say to a friend or two, who lost no time in disseminating the information, that in the whole of his career he had never seen anything more liberal than the settlements he had drawn up for the marriage of Mr. Wayne, and this not only as concerned the bride, but her father also—and that was not all. The solicitor did not explain further, but it was understood that he referred to the will of Mr. Wayne. Certain it is, that from this time Dr. Fulham became of more importance in the town; his credit, which, as we have learnt from Mr. Ezra Crane, had not been high before, was now limitless; and his practice improved. And, as we have hinted, there was scarcely a girl in the town who did not satirise Miss Agatha, and there was not one who did not envy her.

However, as we have said, this is running a little ahead of our story; perhaps it is an advantage to do so, as it clears the way a good deal, and saves explanation.

That Mr. Wayne was thoroughly in earnest there could be no doubt, and he showed that this earnestness comprehended a great deal, for, among other things, the old-fashioned vehicle which had served him during his residence at Snowdon House was now discarded for an open carriage of a very much smarter character. To draw such a chariot as this something better than the bony horse which had hitherto done duty was required, and Agatha, who had been asked to choose the carriage, was also asked to see Mr. Dutton, the chief livery-stable keeper in Bridgeley, and bespeak a pair of ponies.

As this negotiation was of course in Mr. Wayne's name, a message was sent to that gentleman, one afternoon, to the effect that two desirable steeds were now on hand, and such interest did Mr. Wayne take in the matter, so eager was he to give pleasure to the girl—so absurdly infatuated, the critics said—that, as the doctor and Agatha had paid their daily visit to Snowdon House, and gone home, he drove into Bridgeley in order to take on this message, and to arrange for an inspection of the ponies on the following morning.

As he was leaving he said:

"I forgot to mention, doctor, when you were over to-day, that those factory-fellows are hanging about my place again. The people have taken on a lot of new hands, labourers chiefly, and of course the very scum of the earth. It was cloudy last night, as you know, but I happened to glance from my room during a gleam of moonshine, and I certainly saw a man on the wall. I am not sure that he dropped into the grounds, but I have no doubt he did."

"Where was Nero?" began Dr. Fulham; "surely he—"

"Oh, I dare say Nero would have given a good account of the fellow, if he had ventured far into the grounds," returned Mr. Wayne; "but I was sorry to see the nuisance beginning again."

No more was said about this, and Mr. Wayne departed, having arranged for an early visit on the next day from the doctor and Miss Agatha.

It so happened that on this evening Dr. Fulham was engaged until very late in his surgery. As a rule, all lights but the dull jet which burned in the red lamp over his surgery door, were extinguished pretty early; this latter light burned, of course, all night, as professional custom is.

Bridgeley, too, in spite of its size, is an early town, yet on this night, without anything serious having presented itself, the doctor was engaged until nearly midnight. His boy—his only attendant—had long since gone home, and the night being especially calm and tranquil, the doctor was tempted, when he went to close and bolt his outer surgery door, to linger there for a few minutes, enjoying the fragrance of a cigar and indulging in the meditation to which smoking is so favourable, and the doctor had now a variety of subjects to occupy his mind. Some of these have been already indicated, but there were other matters growing out of them, which were scarcely less interesting.

At last his cigar and his train of thought were each nearly exhausted, and he turned to go into the house, closing the door as he did so. As he was in the act of doing this, a step which he had previously noted as echoing along the solitary and silent street, broke into a run. The doctor paused to listen, and the next moment a man presented himself at the nearly closed door and exclaimed:

"Just in time!—that's lucky. You are Dr. Fulham, I believe, sir?"

The speaker was a rough-looking fellow, evidently of the labouring class, with a face grimed and black, as though he were used to an atmosphere of smoke, while his dress was shabby and worn, as such a man's was likely to be. But in the first glance Dr. Fulham saw upon the man's cheek stains and marks which no atmosphere of smoke could ever bestow, and saw that the coat, though old and worn, had rents and tears in it, such as age and wear alone had not given.

"Yes, I am Dr. Fulham," he replied. "Do you want me?"

"Let me come in," said the stranger, and with some exertion of force he pushed open the door.

The doctor had no desire to see another patient at that time of night, especially one so unpromising in appearance as the present applicant; yet he had not the slightest sensation of fear at the intrusion; so, as the man was actually in, he led the way to the surgery.

"Now, what is it?" he demanded. "You are one of the hands at the factory, are you not? You have met with some kind of accident, I suppose? but they are not working there so late as this."

"I'll bet any money you are a knowing card," returned the other with a grin. His language was low, and perhaps sufficiently coarse, yet there was something in his speech which at once told the doctor that this was not an ordinary illiterate "rough." "You have spotted all the facts," continued the man. "I am working at Shaletown. I have met with an accident, but not in the works, which, as you say, are closed. I have met with an accident through—through losing my way—and I—I fell into some glass frames, where I cut my hands and tore myself a good deal. Look here!"

The doctor was tolerably cool and self-possessed in such matters, as most doctors are, but he could not repress a little exclamation of horror as the man opened his hands and spread them towards him, and then untwisted a rough tie from his neck. He showed his neck and throat terribly torn and lacerated, while his hands were mangled, raw, and bleeding.

"There's more of it inside," resumed the stranger, unfastening his coat, and displaying rents in his waistcoat, corresponding to those in his coat, while ugly bloodstains, quite recent, were seen in several places.

With professional skill and delicacy of touch Fulham dressed the lacerations on hands, neck, and ribs, glancing ever and anon into the man's face. These searching looks disturbed the patient, and his cheeks reddened, as could easily be seen through the grime and the uglier smears already spoken of.

At last the operations were completed.

"Thankee," said the patient; "I do feel a little more comfortable than I did when I first came in. These will get well, I suppose?"

"Now, how about the wounds on your thighs and knees?" interrupted Fulham. "Do you not want me to dress them?"

"My thighs and knees! What is the matter with them?" returned the man.

"Why, your trousers are stained with blood worse than any part of your clothes," said the doctor; "although, luckily for you, the glass has not torn them at all."

"That—that isn't my—I mean——" the man corrected himself as he looked down at the patches, which were certainly larger and more ominous there than anywhere else. "I mean that I am not torn—cut there—at all."

He corrected himself again in this last phrase, looking sharply at the doctor in his turn as he did so.

"You are lucky, then," replied the latter; "but it was a curious accident. I should have thought that a man, stumbling into glass garden-frames, would have suffered more in his legs than anywhere else. There are some other curious features about your accident, such as are not often met with from lacerations by glass."

"I dare say not," replied the other; "it was, as you say, a curious accident; but, of course, that is my business—no offence, you know. I was going to ask you if you thought I could manage to dress these hurts myself. I don't want to come here again if I can help it."

"Perhaps you could," said the surgeon; "bathe them with warm water when this dressing comes away, and buy half a yard of adhesive plaster. Are you afraid of any further consequences?"

"No," returned the man after a slight pause; "I am not afraid of consequences in this or any other matter."

"Very well; come again if you think fit," returned the doctor. "I have not treated you in what I think the best way—are you at all anxious to know what that treatment would have been?"

"No," said the man bluntly.

"I thought not," retorted the surgeon; "then I need not detain you any longer."

The man paid the doctor his fee, and went away.

It was now very late; but the surgeon went to the outer door directly after his patient had closed it, first turning the gas in the surgery quite out, so that no ray of light should betray him,

watched the man up the street, and listened to his retreating footsteps.

But the patient had perhaps his own reasons for wishing to keep the way he went a secret, and was not deficient in foresight, for, ere he had gone half-a-dozen doors, he left the pavement, and walked in the middle of the road, on the softer earth of which his feet made no sound, and where the very spare gaslight, in which the thrifty authorities of Bridgeley indulged, did not show his retreating figure.

Baffled as he was in his attempt to watch his patient, the doctor smiled in recognition of the man's superior shrewdness; and, as he finally bolted the outer door, muttered:

"I have not heard the last of this case. There will be some news afloat in the morning. He is a resolute fellow; but he must not play this game too often."

On the next morning Dr. Fulham and his daughter went over to Snowdon House early, according to appointment—an appointment they were not likely to forget or neglect. Mr. Wayre was ready, as was Ezra with the carriage, the vehicle not improving by its contrast with the brand-new smart one which was destined for the new ponies.

At the first glance, however, Fulham could see that something had occurred to annoy his host, and being by this time tolerably familiar with his temperament, he took the first opportunity to ask him at once, point-blank, what had happened.

"Something very mortifying—perhaps serious—has happened," returned Wayre. "I was just about to speak of it. You remember that I have complained of the factory men again—have told you that I had seen them on the wall?"

Fulham of course said that he remembered this; he had the communication more vividly in his mind than Wayre expected.

"We heard no particular noise last night," continued the speaker; "but a desperate struggle must have taken place in the grounds, for we found, this morning, just inside the wall, the earth trodden and disturbed, with many blood-marks on the wall itself, as if some wounded person had climbed it. There were also fragments of clothes scattered here and there."

"Nero evidently was on the watch," said Fulham, "and must nearly have caught the fish."

"Undoubtedly," returned Wayre; "but the dog is severely hurt too; he is stabbed, poor fellow, in at least a dozen places. We do not think any of the wounds will be fatal; but he is terribly cut about, especially over the head and shoulders."

"I will go and look at him," said the doctor.

"I don't think you need do so at present," continued Wayre. "Ezra is a pretty good hand at such surgery, and we have attended to the poor fellow; but it is Ezra's opinion that the dog will never again be worth anything as a sentinel. He will be cowed at the sight of a knife, at all events."

"That is awkward, under the circumstances," returned the doctor.

"Yes; we must have another dog," said Wayre, "and this time we will say nothing about it. We took the ruffians into our confidence the last time, thinking to frighten them; we will do better now. I wish the law did not forbid the use of spring-guns. I would have these grounds a network of wires. I must depend upon you again, doctor, so write to your agent as soon as possible."

Miss Fulham, who had been absent with Sukey Crake inspecting certain improvements and alterations which were in progress, here returned.

As Wayre did not wish to frighten her with any hint of a midnight fray, or to let her see the wounded Nero, he said no more upon the subject, and the party set out on their visit to Mr. Dutton's farm, where were to be seen the ponies intended for the new carriage.

The owner extolled the merits of the animals, and declared that their superiors in pace, or their equals in beauty or matching, were not to be found in the county, and there were really fair grounds for this praise. They were a beautiful pair, jet-black, docile, and graceful, so that Agatha could not restrain her outspoken admiration, for she was fond of horses, as nearly all women are, and on this occasion, at any rate, she needed not to simulate enthusiasm.

This elated the dealer, who naturally encouraged her admiration. He knew the relation in which she stood to Mr. Wayre—who, indeed, in Bridgeley was ignorant of it?—and, like an astute dealer as he was, saw that the way to please the owner of Snowdon House was to gratify the young lady. As for Wayre, he would scarcely have looked twice at the ponies had he been left to himself, but, half amused by Agatha's warmth of expression, he became half in earnest in his own criticism of the animals.

There was nothing to wonder at in Agatha's pleasure; her father had never, of late years, kept any kind of vehicle, not even a gig, while Drs. A—, B—, and C—, his nearest rivals in Bridgeley, each boasted a neat brougham. He owned but a mean-looking horse, which carried him on his rounds to the outlying farmhouses, where he had, until recently, found the bulk of his practice, but this,

with other things, was to be changed in the near future. So the pride of owning the smartest carriage and the handsomest pair of ponies in Bridgeley was enough to delight Agatha, and, as she was pleased, her companions were pleased also. The doctor was, perhaps, pleased in the greatest degree, and more than he showed, for often, even while his plans seemed so successful, he had felt some misgiving at certain depressions and peculiarities of temper in his daughter.

So he was rejoiced to see her heartily pleased, while Mr. Dutton, the vendor, was in as thorough good-humour as any of them. He sold his ponies with no trouble, and at his own price, receiving Mr. Wayre's cheque on the spot. If there were any drawback to his enjoyment—and human felicity is never complete—it was to think he had not asked another twenty guineas, although, to do the worthy dealer justice, he had little to reproach himself with on that score.

The inspection finished, the bargain struck, and the cheque given, the party turned homewards, Dr. Fulham, who had some visits to pay, being dropped, by his own request, at a suburb of Bridgeley, while Agatha went on to Snowdon House with Mr. Wayre, there to partake of a luncheon which had been prepared by Sukey Crake in honour of the trip. Mrs. Crake and a young subordinate who had been recently added to the staff of Snowdon House, and who was of a somewhat smarter type than the other handmaiden, were in attendance, while Ezra held himself in readiness to take the young lady over to Bridgeley after the repast.

Agatha had never felt herself so thoroughly interested in her future husband, or so kindly disposed to him as on this day. The reader knows why her pulses beat so indifferently as regards Mr. Wayre, but on this day she was changed. It was not only from the renewed evidence of his wealth, or from the enviable display of it that she would be able to make—a consideration always dear to the feminine mind—but she was affected beyond the power of this feeling to move her.

All through their intimacy, but upon this morning especially, Mr. Wayre had shown such anxiety to gratify her, had been so evidently pleased when she was pleased, and had so striven to anticipate her every wish, that she could maintain her indifference no longer; not that she had ever shown this feeling, but at her best it had been in her heart. She brightened more than she herself knew, perhaps, under the change, and was so cheerful, that Wayre noticed it with as much wonder as gratification.

There was yet another reason for this change, of which he was the cause, but had never spoken, nor had Agatha known of it until that day.

"You must have thought me, from my silence, very ungrateful," she began, when Sukey and her assistant were out of the room; "but believe me, my dear Mr. Wayre, I did not know of your kindness until this morning."

"What kindness is that, Agatha?" returned her companion; "I have not been allowed to show you half the kindness I would fain have indulged in. You are always so reluctant to accept—"

"Oh no, not to me!" exclaimed the girl; "not to me! although I know it is on my account that you do it. I must almost blame you for your excessive generosity, while I thank you, although ever so imperfectly, for it. I speak of your munificence to my father."

"A trifle—a trifle, Agatha," returned Wayre, whose own eyes lightened with pleasure at the girl's energy and warmth. "I could afford it—I hate to use such an expression in anything in which you are concerned, or yours; for I should not pause to consider that, as I hope you will come to know. But there is really nothing in it."

"Nothing! Oh, Mr. Wayre!" said the girl, "who in the wide, wide world but yourself would have done such a thing? My father has for many years been a struggling man, unfortunate, and of late quite hopeless. For want of friends he has never been able to take such a position as would enable him to move with the successful in his profession, and now, when I know he had given up all hope of retrieving his fortunes, now your generous help removes every difficulty."

"I would have done a great deal more than this to give you half the pleasure you evidently feel," replied Wayre; "but I have taken Dr. Fulham's bond, so I am safe for the little advance I have made."

"Ah, Mr. Wayre," said Agatha with a smile, which was not very far removed from a tear, "we cannot think two thousand pounds a trifle; to us it is a sum which—besides, I am business woman enough to know what value my father's bond will possess, should the speculation fail. Should he buy this offered practice and be disappointed; should his health fail, you need not tell me then how much your bond is worth. I am more grateful to you than I ever thought I should be to any person in the world."

"Although I tell you you think too much of the business," returned Wayre, "yet I would not at this moment have your sentiment in the least diminished, and although I should have preferred

the transaction remaining unknown, yet I am unfair enough to make use of the pleasure it has given you, and to ask a question which I have thought of day by day, ever since the fortunate night when I spoke to you in presence of your father."

Agatha's colour changed slightly, but not so much as it would have done on any day before.

"Everything is completed, or nearly so, at Snowdon House," he continued. "All has been done to your satisfaction, the workmen have gone, and all is now dull, quiet, and tedious to me. The house waits its mistress, and, Agatha, I should like to bring her home soon. Let me do so within the next few days."

The great crisis was passed when she had given her consent to be the wife of Mr. Wayne; after that, all other arrangements followed almost as a matter of routine; yet there was a momentary pang, and a barbed shaft of memory pierced her mind for an instant. It was gone; she was again herself, and faltered not in the conversation which followed, and which ended in her promising as early a marriage as even Mr. Wayne solicited.

In fine, the wedding was to take place within a fortnight, and as she rode home in the old chaise, so soon to be discarded, she could not help looking a thousand times, even in that short journey, at a bracelet which had been clasped on her wrist by Mr. Wayne—a bracelet the like of which she had never expected to own in her life.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 138.)

## The Doctor's Two Patients. A Yuletide Yarn.

### CHAPTER I.

Some gave them white bread,  
And some gave them brown.

CHRISTMAS DAY would be on Thursday, and this was Sunday, and St. Thomas's Day as well; a day devoted by the peasantry in many parts of the country, and more especially in the Midland counties, to a round of begging visits. With empty baskets, sacks, and pockets, lugubrious faces, and whining voices, the women and children, who would scorn to beg on any other day of the year, tramp from squire to parson, farmer and shopkeeper, ever onward in a gradual and downward scale, asking, or rather demanding, a largess—that is to say, a present in money or in kind, in honour of the saint, until they have no more face to beg of those who are nearly as poor as themselves.

The weather was seasonable and cold, the ground as yet hard and crisp with frost, but the thick white clouds above spoke plainly of the coming snow. Nature would beautify all within her reach with her pure white mantle this Yuletide.

The village folk had been their rounds in good time. They had gathered a goodly store, both in money and kind, and having deposited their various bundles in their own houses, emptied their pockets and "cleaned" themselves, they all, with one consent, disregarded the heavenly warning which, on any other day, would have been a good excuse for staying away, and went to church.

They gathered in goodly numbers, both within and without their fine old church. They were habitually good church-goers in the simple little village of Monksthorpe, but had they not been, not one of them would willingly have missed on that especial day.

Some loved their pastor; some cared nothing for him one way or the other; a few of the worst disliked him, without any very present reason in their own minds; and one hated him. Nevertheless, all came to church on St. Thomas's Day.

There were loaves given away after each service on the saint's day, Mr. Chamberlayne had given even more liberally to the St. Thomases than his means warranted, and it takes but a small matter in a country parish to bring the folk to church. An odd gift or so, judiciously distributed, will have a wonderful effect. But it was neither the dole of bread nor their clergyman's liberality that drew the Monksthorpe folk in one eager throng to church on St. Thomas's Day.

The loadstone was this: On that particular Sunday the papers setting forth the sequestration of the living of Monksthorpe would be nailed on the church doors, and the parishioners, for various reasons, prompted by their various ways of regarding the Rev. Edgar Chamberlayne, and by a general curiosity, came to see for themselves how their pastor, the old man who had lived and worked amongst them for so many years, would bear the blow.

Would he hold up his head bravely, as if to say to them: "This is no disgrace to me; it is no fault of mine. I was surety for my brother. Upon those who ruined him be the disgrace. 'He that hateth suretyship is sure';" or would he hang down his

white head and shuffle past them with averted eye and faltering steps?

And his daughter, the girl of nineteen who had been born amongst them, whose mother's bones lay under the simple white headstone by the chancel-door—the sweet babe who had grown into sweeter girlhood in their midst—gentle dark-eyed Cicely? Surely this blow would fall heavily upon her also. She had been so fondly proud of her father, and had carried her head so high.

This last remark would come from those of her own sex and age—those who wore, and could afford to wear, far smarter attire than Miss Chamberlayne, but could not emulate the native grace of her beauty and simplicity.

They were all there. It was too cold to sit much, but in spite of the cold, one or two occupied the "stone to sit upon," under which "W. Fenn, a martyr to his God and king," was interred in 1653. And the porch, large as it was, was full. Several stood in the doorway, recalling the events of the past week in voices by no means modulated into harmony with the sacred building.

At length the little swing-gate above the two old mill-stone steps clicked twice. They were coming, and the sudden hush of expectation about to be fulfilled fell upon the little company.

Some went into church, and those who remained in the porch ranged themselves on either hand as their vicar and his daughter passed through a sort of gazing wall, and to their eyes there was no difference either in his manner or appearance, except, perhaps, what one half of them never noticed—a slight flush on each cheek, just below the eyes.

His tall slender form was as erect as ever, his smile and greeting as kindly as they had always found them for thirty years.

No, there was no perceptible difference. He evidently did not feel the shame, or appropriate the disgrace that these papers he was passing implied. He even lifted his dreamy blue eyes to them just once.

No, it did not affect him! But—Miss Chamberlayne? She seemed unable to meet an eye of all those around her. Her colour came and went quickly as she anxiously watched her father's face, walking by his side, and her clasped hands trembled with an agitation which she could neither control nor conceal.

"Aye, she feels it!" was the silently universal remark as the two passed into the church.

The vicar went into the vestry, his daughter to her accustomed place near the village choir, where her voice generally rose clear and sweet above the rest; but to-day it was dumb, and Mr. Leigh, the young surgeon, who lived in the village of Monksthorpe, met a pair of soft brown eyes, as she rose from her knees, that were swollen and heavy with crying.

"Poor child!" thought he, "she has a terrible weight of trouble for so young a creature—her father's long illness, their poverty, and now this painful business. Oh, that I were a rich man, Cicely, and could tell you of my love, and ask you to let me share your troubles! I hope—I think you would come to me, little darling."

His eyes lingered on her sad young face with an earnest sympathy which he could not repress. She saw the look, but her heart was sore with wounded pride, and she misunderstood it, and flushed again with the painful consciousness that her father owed Mr. Leigh a considerable sum. How could that be paid, now that their small income was reduced to a mere curate's stipend?

And yet it was not their fault—except, perhaps, that her father had too easily consented to be surety for his brother. He was always too ready to be kind to others at his own expense; but the pain was very keen, nevertheless, that burned poor Cicely's cheeks, and blinded her swimming eyes to the sorrowful sympathy that glowed so warmly in the young doctor's face.

Another pair of eyes, by no means so friendly, were watching the parson and his daughter from the Hall pew, a musty, fusty chamber, enclosed by four wooden walls, furnished with moth-eaten cloth and mouldy cushions, worm-eaten and cobwebbed.

In this pew sat a wizened little old woman, exceedingly small and thin, with a sharp hooked nose, and a pair of keen dark eyes, as restless and fiery as their mistress; a common ash-stick, as it had been cut from the hedge, lay on the seat beside her, in company with a wooden crutch.

Her dress said plainly that the wearer was either very poor or very penurious. It had once been black, but was now green with age, stained, worn, and uncleanly. The gloves, far too large for her attenuated hands, were stiff with age and grime.

There was no mistaking the evil expression of her dark, quick eyes, as they rested, quivering with eagerness and excitement, first on the clergyman, and then on his daughter, who turned uneasily away.

"We owe her nothing," said Miss Chamberlayne to herself; "why is she always so ill-natured and spiteful?"

She was more than glad when the service was over, to be able to escape from a surveillance that wounded and irritated her.

The solitary occupant of the Hall pew, after the main body of the congregation had left the church, followed them to the church porch, though her usual mode of egress was by the chancel door. She dragged one paralysed foot after her with great difficulty, as she leaned heavily on her crutch and stick, and her feeble frame, had it been governed by a less indomitable will, would have given way long before she had reached the goal she had set before her.

But "where there's a will there's a way," and Miss Hext had an invincible desire to read those papers in which the sequestration of her pastor's small benefice was made known to the world.

She scowled back the reproach contained in the eyes of the few who passed her with interest; little she cared for what they thought of her, though she knew it was something akin to this:

"A bad old creature, to come out of her way to read them papers, just to hurt parson's feelin's; that's just what she does it for. She has no feelin' for nobody, a mean old creature; never a penny nor a scrap did she give to one of us this St. Thomas's—she turned us all away empty-handed. Shame on her, to come trailin' her dead leg after her all adown the church, just to vex parson!"

She propped herself in front of the documents, nailed on either door, as best she could to avoid falling, for she was both feeble and aged, and then put on her spectacles with feverish haste. Her hands trembled so that the glasses fell on the stone floor.

She muttered something between her clenched teeth and turned angrily upon the young doctor, who stooped as he passed, and gave them into her shaking fingers.

"Oh, it's you," she said as she recognised him. "Confound the parson! What a bane the man is to me from first to last! They are done for—my last pair."

"Isn't it almost what you might consider a case of retributive justice, Miss Hext?" he asked. "When you go out of your way to feast your eyes on his sorrow. Allow me to assist you to your chair."

He offered his arm, and laid one hand gently on the crutch, but she shook it off rudely.

"Not till I have read that," she said. "What you call his 'sorrow,'" she added, pointing with one cramped finger to the paper carefully tacked on the church-door, "is joy to me. I mean to read it before I go."

"You cannot," he said; "your glasses are useless."

"I will," she retorted angrily. "I will read every word of it, if I have to pull it down to do it."

"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," Miss Hext, said the doctor gently, as he saw the few faint beams of the setting sun fall upon them in rich colours through the stained-glass window above their heads.

"Stuff and nonsense!" she exclaimed. "I am too old to learn that now, Mr. Leigh, and you are too young to be my teacher. Time was, perhaps, when I might have learnt, with such a teacher, but, as times are, the sun will rise and set on my wrath daily till I see him punished. Read that paper to me, Mr. Leigh. Your eyes are good enough to see without spectacles."

"Not good enough—or, rather, bad enough—for that, Miss Hext. I know and respect Mr. Chamberlayne, and should be very sorry even to seem to gloat over his misfortunes."

As he spoke, the clergyman and his daughter came out of the vestry, and passed close by them as they stood in the porch together. Miss Hext glared at them through the empty framework of her spectacles. The vicar bent his head to his aged parishioner, whilst his daughter bowed distantly, and slightly coloured as she saw who was the old lady's companion.

Miss Hext did not return his courtesy, but she raised her withered face to his as he passed her.

"This is a glorious St. Thomas," she said, and laughed grimly, with a wicked look in her eyes. "You must be feeling bright, too, the day, Archibald Chamberlayne, with all your honour and glory set forth in these papers. I can't see the details, for I've broken my spectacles, but the doctor is going to read out to me the list of your charitable bequests to the poor. I've crawled all the way down the church on purpose to hear it."

Mr. Chamberlayne paused for a moment in front of her, and the patch of red on each cheek grew a little deeper; but his daughter drew him on hurriedly before he could speak.

"My father's blessing, Miss Hext," she said, as she turned from her indignantly, "is of more weight than any ill-will you can bear him. Those of his flock who love him will always have that."

"Minx!" growled the old lady, and turned to the doctor. "I hope you don't admire that proud piece, doctor," she said. "And now read me that paper, as you promised."

"I did not promise, and I shall do no such thing, Miss Hext," said he. "I will assist you to your chair, if you choose; but as to gloating over a kind and good man's misfortunes, I will not do it, and I hope you will think better of it. It is cruel to add to his suffering, which must be intense without any further aggravation. You will only take cold if you stay here any longer."

There was no help for it, and she suffered herself to be led to her dilapidated hand-chair, which an old man, almost as decrepit as herself, shivering with cold in a torn coat, stood ready to wheel.

The doctor closed the door, and hurried after the clergyman and his daughter; but no sooner had he disappeared, than Miss Hext ordered the old attendant to wheel the chair back into the porch, and made him read, as well as his chattering teeth would permit, every word of the paper from end to end.

# CHAPTER II. "LET MY LAST END BE LIKE HIS."

"ARE you waking, sir?" clamoured a voice, just under the doctor's bedroom window, wheezy and hoarse from age, haste, and the bitter cold, for it was snowing steadily, and drifting too, under a keen and gusty north wind. "Are you waking, sir; t'ould deevil up at t' Hall's takken worse, and you're like to come out of your warm bed, or she'll be gettin' into a could one."

"Who's ill?" said the doctor, putting his face close to the glass, but not opening the window, for he could see the snow hanging to every ledge round it. Before the same messenger could force his frozen lips to answer, a shrill scream sent up another form of petition close beside him.

"Is that you, doctor? It's Molly White, sir. Th'ould saint down yonder at the vick'rage is just dying, I'm feared, and Miss Cicely sent me to tell you to come right a-ways. He's awful bad, sir."

Mr. Leigh opened the window slightly, brushing down a cake of snow in both their faces as he did so.

"Did you say Mr. Chamberlayne was ill, Molly?" he asked; but the first petitioner had thawed his lips by this time, and answered in her stead:

"No, sir, no. I said t'ould lady at t' Hall—Madam Hext, sir. As queer and close an ould deevil as you'd meet with in a day's rounds. She's caught could, sir, wi' stopping in th' church this afternoon, listening to me reading them papers, sir; and she's been shivering and shaking ever since like an ass-upon-a-leaf, and when I come for you she wor gone right off, and no life left in her at all—at all. She'll never last while morning, sir, and nobbut ould Deb wi' her, and she's a'most deed wi' fright. She promised to stay wi' her mistress while I come back. She was skeered; she said the deevils would be coming for madam's soul, as soon as the breath left her body, for she's an awful hard and wicked woman, she is. Never a bite nor a sup would she let Deb give the St. Thomasers. She swore like a gauger when Deb said there'd be no luck in the house for a year if she didn't give nowt. Ay, she's that mean. She says she's clemmed wi' poverty; but it's my belief she clemms herself because of meanness."

"Well, Dickon, I can't stand here any longer; go to the back, and I'll let you into the kitchen. Tell me now," he said, as the two came into the cosy little place, and simultaneously rushed to the grate, where the warmth still lingered kindly round the smouldering embers, and began to thaw their well-nigh frozen limbs; "tell me, Molly, is Mr. Chamberlayne very ill? What is amiss with him? What is he like? For I must go where I am most needed—I cannot go to both at once."

"Oh, sir, you'll be like to come to the poor old gentleman. He went to bed, sir, soon after you left, and miss, she sat and watched him till he woke and wouldn't let her sit up no longer, so she left him; but a bit sin' she came to tell me he were took queer, and sent me off for you, sir."

"Did you see him? Do you know what it is?"

"Deed, yes, sir. It's just the same as my poor old master were took wi', and never——"

"Ah, I guessed as much—paralysis, from the strain—physically and mentally overtaxed. Now, Dickon, what is the matter with your old lady?"

"Old lady, you may well say, sir, if ould lady is faymale to t'ould gentleman; for I never knowed a wuss un, and that's gospel truth, it is, sir. I telled you just now how she wur, sir—she's alive one minnit, and deed the next. She lies like a log when she's deed, and she's shivering and shakin' like a earthquake when she rouses. She's took awful bad, sir, and no doubt; and her face is grey-like, and sharp i' the nose. My missus is wi' her, sir, and that's all—but me."

"There are servants, I suppose, in that large house?"

"Servants, sir! ne'er a one, sir, but myself and Deb; and as for t' house, sir, it's as empty as an egg-shell when the chick's left it, sir. Madam have made away wi' and sold everything she could lay her hands on. It's a poor look-out for t' heir, if there is one, for theer's little else i' t' house but what's in her room."

"I think I must go to Miss Hext first, Molly," said the doctor. "You know my rule, to attend to the poorest first; but in this case, one is as poor as the other, and it seems to me that Miss Hext needs attention most."

The woman broke out into loud lamentations.

"Never, sir," she cried; "you never would go and leave the good old gentleman to die—and he as good as an angel—to go first to that wicked old creature. They do say she hoards up her money and starves herself, and all besides, to addle gold together, and counts it over on a Sunday. Eh, dear sir," she continued in a shriller tone still, as she saw the doctor filling his basket, and paying little heed to her, "she is a bad and wicked old woman. I saw her yesterday, sir, come all the way down the church, a thing she never does, sir, just to look at them papers, and vex the parson, for naught else, sure."

"Aye, sure," repeated Dickon, "she made me wheel her back, after master here left her, and read her every word, but I had her, for when I'd read her all their was on the papers, I put in a bit out of my own idee. 'The measure as you mete wi', says I, 'will be measured to you again.' The glare went out of her eyes when I said that, and she ordered me, sharp-like, to wheel her home. She was took in the night. Deb and I sleep near her, and hearing a lumbering, Deb went to see if aught was the matter, and found her welly nigh froze to death on the cold floor. She's that shabby mean, she won't allow herself a fire."

"Yes, Molly, I ought to go with Dickon. Miss Hext's life may be saved by prompt remedies, and Mr. Chamberlayne has, I fear, had a stroke of paralysis. I can only try to comfort his poor daughter—remedies are useless in such a case."

"Oh, poor Miss Cicely!" ejaculated Molly White, with her apron to her eyes; "what will she do when I go back without the doctor? 'Molly,' she says, the last thing to me, 'if anybody can save him, Mr. Leigh can, and I know he will come, although we do owe him a heavy bill.' Poor lamb—poor Miss Cicely!"

The doctor had almost left the house, but he turned at the twice repented name.

"Come along, Molly," he said, "it will not take a minute, as I pass, just to look at him—and it may be a comfort to the poor girl," he added to himself. "Run in at once, Molly, and tell Miss Cicely I am here. I must not delay a moment longer than is necessary."

In another minute he was in the sick man's chamber. The light on the table near the bed showed him that death was near at hand, and that paralysis was only his messenger, come to prepare his way and bring his warning.

Cicely was sitting on the bed, holding her father's lifeless hand in hers, trying to chafe a little warmth into it from her own. She raised a pitiful face to Mr. Leigh, as if entreating for a hopeful opinion, but the doctor shook his head gravely.

"When was he taken?" he asked, gently leading her a little apart.

"About two," she answered.

"And has been insensible ever since?"

"Oh no, he has spoken several times. Just before you came he asked had I sent for you, and hoped I had not because—because—"

"I know. Is he sensible now?"

Cicely bent her head, and they both returned to the bed.

"Dear father," said the young girl, kneeling by his side, and tenderly stroking back the thin grey locks that had fallen over her father's forehead, "Mr. Leigh is here; he will try to cure you, if you will tell him how you feel. Can you speak to him, dear?"

Mr. Chamberlayne made a great effort to speak, and after some indistinct muttering, he said slowly:

"I know I am dying, doctor; you must tell my poor child; she will not believe it. It is God's will, but to her it seems hard. How long will it be, do you think, doctor, before the end? Is it fair to ask you, for her sake, to remain here till all is over?"

Mr. Leigh leaned over the dying man.

"I would stay gladly," he said, "but I must go to Miss Hext, at the Hall. She has been taken very ill, much in the same way as yourself from what I hear, but there may be a chance of my being able to restore her, at all events for a time. I must leave you now, at once, but I will return as soon as I possibly can. I would stay now, but I think you understand."

"Yes, yes," said the old man, "it is of no use to stay here. I am very sorry to hear of my poor old parishioner's illness. You must not delay to go to her. As you know, my case is a hopeless one."

"Oh, father, how can you be sorry for her, when she has been so cruel and spiteful to you?" said Cicely, the tears in her eyes at the recollection of what her father had been made to suffer at Miss Hext's hands.

"My child," said her father, speaking with great difficulty, "I should wish to die as a Christian, as I have tried—but failed—to live, repenting all my former sins, and in charity with all men."

"Oh, father, father," cried the girl, throwing herself on the bed, and clasping him in her arms, "you must not die, you will not die, and leave me. Oh, father, try to live for my sake—father, dear father!"

She buried her face in his pillow and wept bitterly.

Mr. Leigh turned away. He was used to death in its various forms,

but Cicely's sorrow touched him to the quick. It was so pitiful, and her case was so sad. In a few hours at most, she would be an orphan, alone and utterly unprovided for. He loved her, but he could not ask her to share his poverty, and he felt bitterly that every word of his must be the death-knell to all her earthly happiness, as far as her father's life was concerned.

It was with difficulty that he tore himself away from her presence, and buttoning his thick coat up to his chin, once again faced the bitter cold and snow without.

### CHAPTER III. THE RULING PASSION STRONG IN DEATH.

MR. LEIGH and his old and breathless companion made their way as best they could through the thickly falling snow to the Hall. It was a fine old house, but in a terrible state of dilapidation and disorder. Dickon made his way without ceremony through the icy-cold, stone-paved hall, where the large fireplace looked black and cheerless on this winter's night without a spark of fire. Mr. Leigh followed him, and they passed up the grand staircase, tramping over the bare stone steps and along the corridor above, Dickon noisily and carelessly, Mr. Leigh noisily in spite of all his care. The man threw open the door of an ante-chamber, and beckoned the doctor to follow him.

"She's sold all t' furnitur', sir," he whispered, seeing the doctor's look of amazement at the poverty-stricken house; "she's sold every stick in t' house. She says she's a pauper, and that when she dies there'll not be enough money to bury her. This is her room, sir," said the old man, opening the door of a large room very scantily furnished with the barest necessities.

"There must be a fire at once," said the doctor; the room was bitterly cold, and felt all the colder from the unmitigated squalor of its appearance; "the cold alone is enough to kill her."

"She won't have a fire, sir; you may see Deb tried to light one, but she raked it out afore she was took, and I've had no chance to light it again. Indeed, sir, I don't think there's over much coal, for she'll only have in a handful at a time, and it's three weeks sin—"

"Doctor," said a feeble voice from a wooden stretcher-bed of the meanest description, "don't listen to that old fool, but come and see if you can bring me back to life again; there's something amiss with my limbs, I can't feel my feet, and the cold seems creeping up to my heart. Can you do nothing for me?"

"We must have a light and a fire, madam," said the doctor authoritatively; "the cold in this room is intense, and this one candle will not give me a sufficient view of your face."

"Surely one light is enough for one body," querulously answered the old lady; "but there is another candle in the drawer there. Dickon knows. I sent Deb away—she would say she was cold, and I'd rather be alone than hear folk grumbling when they've everything they can desire."

Dickon was gone to get the means of lighting a fire, and the doctor, after vainly searching for "the other," determined to lose no more time, but examine his patient by the thin dip-candle he held in his hand.

He lifted it above the crouching form, which was huddled in various wraps, all more or less in keeping with her general surroundings, and betokening the most abject poverty.

The old woman's face was shrunken and grey, and the doctor, after a short inspection, put the light on the rickety table, and sat carefully down in an old armchair by the bedside. He took her hand, and felt the death-damp already upon it. She seemed to read his thoughts, and moved impatiently.

"Well," she said, and her chattering teeth made her voice almost inaudible, "can you do anything, or must I die?"

"You are very ill," said Mr. Leigh.

"I know that," she replied testily; "you needn't tell me I am ill, or that I am ill as I have never been before; I can feel that. Tell me if I must die."

"Are you afraid of death?" asked the doctor; he feared to alarm or shock her in her weak state.

"I don't want to die," she said, "though why I shouldn't I don't know. I have no one belonging to me that cares for me, and I hate all my kith and kin."

"Then you cannot expect much love in return from them," said Mr. Leigh. "Love begets love."

"And hatred, hatred," muttered the old lady. "I should like to see my revenge worked out."

"Your revenge, Miss Hext?" exclaimed the doctor, inexpressibly shocked. "Can you give your last moments to such thoughts as those?"

"My last moments?" she repeated. "Then I am dying? You think I shall not recover? But I have been a strong woman in my day—slight, but wiry and strong. My family have all had good constitutions," she said as eagerly as her strength would allow.

"I think that you are in great danger, Miss Hext. Your wilful



determination to read that paper in the church yesterday has probably cost you your life."

She looked earnestly at him, but her eyes were already fast losing their powers of observation, and conscious of it, she closed them with a sigh.

"I am growing blind," she said; "is that death's doing, doctor?" she added, with a fresh effort to speak plainly and look at him. "Doctor, I have had a hard life, and a lonely one; no one to care for or love me. The only man I loved scorned me, and I have never forgiven him, and never will; I rejoiced to see his shame yesterday." She paused and Mr. Leigh did not speak; but he guessed that she meant Mr. Chamberlayne. "I have always rejoiced when I have heard of his sorrows or his shame."

"Do you ever pray, Miss Hext?" enquired the doctor abruptly, stirred out of his wonted professional calm by these bitter words; "do you ever pray?"

"Sometimes, sometimes," she murmured—hesitated, and then said with a sudden impulse: "Pray for me, man; I feel it will soon be over with me. They say that you are good and charitable to the poor—that you will go first to a poor body. I am a pauper. It was kind—it was good of you to turn out of your warm bed to visit a pauper—to try and cure me; but it is too late, too late!"

"Not too late to pray, Miss Hext. I will not try to hide the truth from you; you are, at most, within a few hours of your last moments on earth; but you cannot pray, with any hope that God will listen to your prayer, if you do not forgive as you would be forgiven. I do not know what you have against Mr. Chamberlayne, but no matter what it may be, you must forgive him, or you can hope for no forgiveness from God."

She moved impatiently from him; but she could not turn herself, and her dimmed eyes still rested on his face.

"I did not know you were a parson," she said bitterly; "I only asked you to pray for me, not to preach to me. I thought that you at least were different, or I should never—I see, I see, you are all alike. I wish—I almost wish I could undo it. Ah!" she moaned as a sudden pang darted through her, "death is stealing on me—pray for me—you, at least, Walter Leigh, should pray for me!"

"What good would it be for me to pray, when I know that you do not forgive?"

"I shall never forgive him, never—never!" she said. "It is all one to me, whether I am forgiven or not; but I shall never forgive him."

"And yet in a few hours—perhaps, in a few moments—you may stand before a Judge, whose first question will be, 'Anne Hext, why did you not forgive Archibald Chamberlayne?'"

She smiled upon an evil curl on her thin drawn lips.

"Archibald Chamberlayne! Yes, I threw my heart at you, Archie, and you scorned the gift, and gave your own to a penniless girl. I vowed I would wish you evil all the days of my life, and I have done so—and it has worked you woe, Archie—worked you woe. Your own life has been an evil one. I laughed when I heard of your young wife's early death. I laughed when I heard of her children's deaths, one after the other. It was sweet to me to know how you suffered all that time—sweet, indeed, to read the story of your shame yesterday."

"Woman," said the doctor, moved beyond his patience at her words, "do you know that you are dying? Do you know that the man you so cruelly hate is dying also? Aye, Miss Hext, dying with the words of peace and charity in his heart, forgiveness and sorrow even for you on his tongue. Think in how short a time you may be a lifeless corpse! What will become of your soul if you die with such wickedly revengeful thoughts and wishes in your heart?"

"He is dying!" she murmured, raising her head towards him. "Ah, then to the last I am revenged!" She fell back on her pillow, and Mr. Leigh saw that she had died as she ceased speaking.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

THE Christmas bells were ringing merrily over the soft white snow. There was Yuletide mirth and happy laughter in most houses, great or small, in Monksthorpe. In the little vicarage, however, there was silence and sadness, and in the Hall silence without the sadness. There was the deep stillness of death in the house, but no mourning for the dead. Deb and her old husband had indeed lost the small weekly payment they had been grudgingly given by the dead old woman, but this gave them no concern. Like many of the English peasantry, though Dickon had never heard of the rule of three, he could put three and three together for his own advantage; although he had never learned practice or interest, his practice was sharp enough if it were a matter of self-interest, and Deb and he calculated by a ready-reckoner of their own that they should make a

little harvest in the month's care of the house promised them by the lawyer, who came to take away the papers he seemed to know by instinct would be found under their mistress's pillow after her death.

"And wor she really as poor as she'd have us to believe, sir?" said old Dickon slyly. "Will there be owt to bury her wi' decent, d'ye think, sir?"

"Enough for that, I should think, Mr. Saunders," replied the canny lawyer, and more than that they could not get out of him.

Two funerals passed from opposite directions up the broad pathway to the west door of the church, in the great square tower which only opened to admit the dead at their last visit to the sacred edifice.

First came the coffin uncovered and bare, according to her written desire, containing the remains of Annie Hext, spinster, followed only by Mr. Roberts, the lawyer, Deborah Saunders, and her husband Richard. Not another Monksthorpian vouchsafed to show by their presence, either sympathy with the deceased old lady, or sorrow for her sudden removal from amongst them.

She had been a hard taskmaster, an unjust mistress, a friend to nobody, and a most bitter and relentless foe. Had they been asked to tell the truth, and had told it, they would have said:

"She wor a bad 'un, and we're glad she's gone. She wor hard on all, but she wor hardest on the poor."

A stranger officiated, and the old clerk threw three heavy handfuls of earth on the hollow-sounding coffin with a vicious bang.

"She flung many an angry word at me when she wor at t' Hall, and I had to call and ax for a Heaster due or a 'scription to ony charity, and now I'll have my fling at her."

Deb held a large white handkerchief to her face, with the usual hypocritical assumption that she was crying bitterly under its shelter; but her eyes in reality were eagerly scanning the lawyer's face, wondering what those papers found under the dead woman's pillow contained, and wishing she had had the sense to look for them before the lawyer had popped them into his deep blue bag. Dickon was mentally cursing his late patroness, because she had done him and his wife out of even a hat-band, not to mention the remote hope they had always cherished of a scarf and gloves, as some sort of consolation at her death for the life she had led them.

No sooner was the blessing given, and the clerk had said a hurried "Amen," than Mr. Roberts turned away from the grave and followed the clergyman into the vestry. The clerk shovelled a few spadeful of earth into the grave, then flinging his spade in after them, went to toll the bell for the second funeral.

Deb and Dickon scuttled off to the vicarage, that they might be in time to meet the procession, and show their dutiful respect to the old gentleman, whom they venerated in spite of their old mistress's antipathy to him.

They met the funeral as it was already slowly wending its way up the village street. There was no doubt of the sincere sympathy shown by those who followed the simply-covered coffin. Old men, stalwart still, but grey and hoary, carried their beloved pastor to the grave, not for greed of gain, or love of feasting, but of their own free will and choice. Slowly and reverently they bore him on their shoulders.

"He bore a many of our troubles, he did, when he wor amongst us. He wor always the best friend we had in sorrow. A kind master, a friend to us all, and only a foe to himself. He wor a good man, and we're heart-grieved he's gone."

Cicely Chamberlayne walked close behind her father's coffin. Mr. Leigh had seen her for a few moments before the little procession left the vicarage, and, not thinking her fit to undergo the trying ordeal, had begged her to remain behind. But the girl shook her head.

"I cannot," she said with a quivering lip, "I must see all I can—to the last."

She followed them up the road with clasped hands, bent head, and tottering steps, her tall slim figure passing like a dark shadow over the white snow; but when they came to the little swing-gate that she had been used to open every Sunday for her father, the recollection overcame her, and she turned faint and staggered. Mr. Leigh, who had watched her with some anxiety as he walked behind her, came forward and quietly drew her hand within his arm.

"Will you return?" he whispered, for he felt her whole frame shiver as she clung to him for support, alike from weakness, and the fact that he was the only friend she had there.

Her father's poor parishioners were all there, all eager to show their kindness and sympathy in her sorrow. But of her own class there were none, for she and her father had been too poor to go into society. The poor are soon forgotten by their wealthier neighbours if there is no reciprocity.

"Will you let me take you home again? I am sure it will be too much for you."

But she shook her head again.

"I must see the last," she answered. "I cannot let him go alone. I cannot leave him till it is all over."

But she had miscalculated her strength. Her broken rest, bitter sorrow, and utter loneliness—for even Mr. Leigh had not ventured to intrude upon her during these few first days—had told upon her more than she knew. And when the coffin was lowered into the grave, and all that remained of her one earthly relative was taken out of her sight for ever, she clasped her hands together with a low and bitter cry, and fell forward in a swoon.

Mr. Leigh, whose eyes had never left her, caught her as she fell, and with Molly White's ready help, carried her into the vestry.

"I knew it would be too much for her," he said as Molly sprinkled a little water in her face. "I wish I had utterly forbidden her coming."

"Aye, dear heart alive, sir, I don't believe as she would have taken any man's bidding or forbidding about comin' to her dad's funeral; but look'ee, sir, she's coming round; her colour's comin' back. You go and tell 'em to bring the clergyman's carriage round to take miss home in. Let me have her, sir. She'll feel more home-like, comin' round, to be on my knee. She'll be all right in a bit, never fear, sir. I'll take her home, and see that she has a cup o' tea and a bit o' somethin' to eat. It's my belief she pinches herself, lest she shouldn't have money for all."

"Don't let her do that, Molly, there's a good soul. I know you're trustworthy; take this, and get whatever she wants. I will bring the carriage. I know Mr. Morley will gladly lend it for such a purpose."

He met the clergyman returning from the completed service and proffered his request.

"Most gladly," was Mr. Morley's answer. "But you will not be required to attend Miss Chamberlayne, shall you? For Mr. Roberts asked me, after that old lady's funeral, to request you to go to the Hall as soon as you conveniently could. We can wait for the carriage to return, and I will drive you, if you like, as he also wishes for my presence as a witness."

"I don't know why he should want me," said the doctor. He would far rather have gone with Cicely to her desolate home. He knew she would feel her loss doubly, returning to the empty house weak and helpless. This stupid idea of the lawyer's would not only prevent his trying to cheer her loneliness now, but probably make him too late back from his other patients to be able to enquire after her again that evening. "I was not at all well acquainted with Miss Hext. In fact, I am thankful to say I knew very little of that unchristian old body. I attended her in her last illness, to be sure, and I had met with her before, but I knew nothing of her ways or doings until I was called in the middle of the night to attend her just before she died. I was called upon to go to poor Mr. Chamberlayne at the same time—both messengers came at the same moment."

"How do you doctors decide which patient to attend when both messengers come together?" asked Mr. Morley.

"It rarely happens," answered the doctor, "but in this case Miss Hext's messenger had really arrived on the spot first, though I heard them both together. I generally make it a rule to go to the most pressing case. If there is no choice, then, as parish doctor, to the poorest patient. In this case both were poor, but I had attended Mr. Chamberlayne during a long illness, just lately, and I knew that a stroke of paralysis would in his case be fatal. I had warned Miss Chamberlayne that her father's preternatural calmness would probably end in a reaction, and cost him his life. Of Miss Hext I knew less certainly what ailed her, and hoped by prompt measures to restore her. I don't see of what use I can be to Mr. Roberts, for I can give him no information whatever."

"He is going to read her will," remarked Mr. Morley.

"Her will!" exclaimed Mr. Leigh; "what a farce—the will of an old body who begrudged an extra dip-candle that I might look at her face, and hadn't a spark of fire in the grate, that bitter night. I understood she was a pauper. Her old attendant, Saunders, told me that she did not expect to leave money enough to bury her, but, anyhow, her will has nothing to do with me. I can see no reason for my presence."

"I don't know what circumstances she died in," said the clergyman; "I have understood that she was an evil-minded old woman, always averse to helping any good work, and a great hindrance to her poor vicar. Perhaps, however, she repented in her last moments; let us hope it was so."

"I am afraid there is little ground for any such charitable hope," said Mr. Leigh. "I was with her when she died, and to the last she remained hard and cruelly unforgiving. She certainly did express a wild sort of wish that she could undo something she had done, but it did not appear to me that the wish arose from any feeling of penitence on her part, but rather from a sense of irritation and disappointment. I am quite sure that my going will be a mere waste of

time, but, if you will give me a lift so far, it will save time, and oblige me very much."

The Christmas bells were still chiming sweetly over the falling snow, as Mr. Leigh returned from the Hall.

"How sweet those Monksthorpe bells are," he said to himself, as he ploughed his way heartily through the slush and drifts. "I never heard them chime so sweetly before. What a difference it makes to a man to have a little hope before him! This morning—even this afternoon—all seemed so dark, and gloomy, and hopeless. Those two funerals seemed to change the Christmas feast into a day of mourning, and now—what a change! Poor, poor Cicely! her sorrow pierced my heart; how I longed to ask her to come and share my poverty, and let my love atone for it; to give me a husband's right to comfort and cheer her, but I dared not say what was in my heart and on my lips, because I was so poor; and now, what a day-dream of happiness life will be to me, if only she—"

He rang the vicarage hall-door bell, and Molly let him in.

"She's better, sir—better a deal—but weak like, and over-sad, sir, for such a poor young thing. Aye, heart alive, sir, life do seem a trouble to some, it do. You'll go in, sir? It'll maybe cheer her to see you. She's in the parlour, sir."

Mr. Leigh opened the door, and stood a moment irresolute on the threshold.

It was still early in the winter afternoon, and Cicely Chamberlayne stood at the window, from whence she could see the churchyard on the hill and her father's grave. She was watching the snow gradually covering the freshly-disturbed brown earth, and her tears fell like the snowflakes, thick and fast.

"The snow will soon have covered it," she said, and pointed to the churchyard beyond, "and then I shall feel that he is indeed gone from me for ever here. I shall be quite alone then."

He stooped and kissed the hand he had taken in silent greeting.

"Not quite alone, if you will let me call myself a friend. Your grief is very sacred to me, Miss Chamberlayne," he said, "and I scarcely like to speak to you now, while it is so fresh and so keen, about what must seem mere selfishness on my part; but I think I can plead a sufficient reason for asking you to sit down for a few minutes and listen to a strange tale."

She looked at him as if astonished, but she was too much taken up with her overwhelming grief even to try to understand him, and she sat down as he desired.

"Forgive me," he said, "for bringing such a question before you at such a time. You have known me a few years now, Miss Chamberlayne—long enough, I hope, to be able to trust me not to intrude on your sorrow merely for my own selfish gratification."

"You have been very kind to us," she said. "I have reason to be very grateful to you for your kindness to—"

"I want to ask you to give me something more, something better than gratitude. I want your love, dear Cicely—the sweet fresh love of your young heart. Forgive me, dear, if this pains you; only tell me you can give me what I ask, and let me have the right to comfort and cheer you under this bitter trial. Tell me you will be my wife, Cicely."

"Oh no, no," she said. "I have so often heard you say that you were too poor to marry. You are only asking me because—because you pity me. I will not make you poorer; I will not add to your troubles because I have such troubles of my own to bear."

"Believe me, Cicely, when I tell you that the dearest wish of my heart this many a day has been to call you mine. It is not pity—it is true love that makes me ask. Dear, dear Cicely, do not refuse me, unless, indeed, you cannot love me."

"I do love you, but I am sure you are doing a foolish thing to wish to marry a poor girl, who will only hamper you and drag you down still more."

"If you only love me, dearest, let all other considerations go to the winds. Forgive me for a little hypocrisy, Cicely; I wanted to be quite sure that you loved me as a poor man—for myself alone. That is the vanity of human nature, I suppose. And now listen, dear one, to the strange thing that has happened to me. When I left you this afternoon, Mr. Morley drove me to the Hall, at the request of the lawyer who acted for old Miss Hext. I was surprised that he should require my presence, but judge of my amazement when he read a will to us, by which she bequeathed the whole of her wealth to me, a perfect stranger. Her wealth, for the old woman who was supposed by everyone to be a penniless pauper was in reality only a miser, counting her gold by boxfuls. She had turned all she possessed into gold, and lived, herself, in the most abject penury."

"Miss Hext!" exclaimed Cicely, clasping her hands in amazement. "She always said she was so poor that she would never give anything away. Often and often my father has begged her to help in different ways in the parish, and she always refused; but then she always hated my dear father. She has always been cruel and spiteful

to him and to me. I could never understand her hatred of my father, he was always good and kind to everybody. You heard how cruelly she spoke to him on that terrible Sunday when he was already suffering so much? Oh, it was cruel!"

"It was; and her cruelty brought its own punishment, for by staying in the church-porch to read the sequestration-papers, she caught the chill which caused her death. I was so struck the night your dear father was taken ill, with his gentle charity towards her, and equally struck with her bitter, unrelenting hatred towards him—a greater contrast could not have been."

"Miss Hext could never have wished me to benefit in any way by her means," said Cicely. "Why did she leave you her money?"

"I cannot tell. I knew very little of her, and had never done her any service. On the contrary, I was austere and harsh to her, even on her deathbed. Mr. Roberts says she made him draw up the will some time ago, leaving a space for the name, which she must have filled in herself with mine shortly before her death. She did not know how much she was giving me, Cicely dear, when she left me her money; for now I can ask you what as a poor and struggling doctor I had no right to speak of. We can afford to forgive Miss Hext, sweet Cicely—can we not, even though she did not probably mean to be as great a benefactress as she has actually been?"

"We can indeed. I think I could almost say, 'God bless her!' were it not for the recollection of her cruelty to my dear father."

The bells pealed out afresh as she ceased speaking, and Walter Leigh clasped his betrothed to his heart.

"We are so blest, darling," he said, "that to-night we can wish peace and goodwill to all men."

## The Dead Rose.

A Dainty rose in a garden grew,  
And opened its petals wide  
To the kiss of the wind, that softly blew  
In the glow of the eventide;  
And the rose was happy, and softly sigh'd  
A song to the wind in the eventide.  
A youth and a maiden chanc'd to walk  
At eve, in the garden fair;  
He plucked the rose from its thorny stalk  
And twined it in her hair;  
And the rose was sad, and softly sigh'd  
Farewell to the wind in the eventide.  
The youth and the maiden went their way,  
So lovingly side by side;  
The wind sprang up at the close of the day,  
And kissed the rose as it died.  
The stars in heaven their night-watch keep,  
And the wind has sobbed itself to sleep.

## The Editor's Note Book.

POETS and other men of eminent literary genius who feel inclined to turn their attention to politics would do well, before taking any irretrievable step, to consider the career of M. Victor Hugo. Here is a great literary genius if ever there was one, who has gone out of his way to efface himself by the utterance of the wildest political doctrines, who has done all that in him lies to make even his great name a laughing-stock by his fulsome adulation of all that is worst in the French, and especially in the Parisian, national character, and for whose delirious socialistic theories it is at times almost impossible to account, except on the supposition that even so great a man as Hugo may have a soft spot somewhere in his brain-substance.

WHEN such a man as this great writer demands that the lives of the murderers of the Czar and that of the wretched man O'Donnell, who suffered at Newgate last week, should be spared, the spectacle is saddening. He has no arguments to bring forward, no coherent reasons to give. These men chose to set themselves up as the opponents of the constituted authorities, and, according to their apologist, ought to be accorded belligerent rights at all events—even if, as he sometimes seems to suggest, they do not absolutely deserve honours at the hands of their countrymen. It is saddening—and worse. For the frothy rubbish which, emanating from such people as Herr Most, is only likely to deceive the ignorant and the brutal, becomes, when it proceeds from the pen of Victor Hugo, a real danger to the peace and safety of all organised society.

THE Prince of Wales, who is devoting a good deal of his irrepressible energy to the advancement of the interests of the gentlemen who "run" South Kensington, is a shrewd man of business—or is

advised by one, which does equally well. Knowing that the Corporation of the City of London is very desirous just now to show itself anxious to be of some service to the public, His Royal Highness has used all his influence to induce the Court of Common Council and the various Livery Companies to assist him with the oddly-named Health Exhibition which is to follow the Fisheries' show.

FROM the Prince's point of view the result has been most satisfactory, the City people having come down with much cash, and having promised all sorts of support with gratifying alacrity. Whether the speculation will yield satisfactory interest to the investors is another matter. I do not myself think that, when Municipal Reform for London becomes, as it shortly must become, a real burning question, the fact of the money of the Corporation having been freely given for a courtly show at South Kensington will weigh much in its favour.

THE managers of the Central News must be sorry that they took any notice of *Judy's* sarcasms, which would at most have had an ephemeral effect, and preferred to place themselves in the awkward position of having to explain to the judge, the jury, and consequently to the public, the whole system of expanding and "writing up" telegrams. It is not necessary to suppose that there was any fraudulent intention in the matter. It seems to me sufficiently unfair to newspaper readers that they should, even with the best intention on the part of the Central News, be called upon to read and to believe a message of three or four hundred words without any intimation being given them that the original telegram contained only a modest dozen.

SOME years ago Mr. John Beaumont left a sum of £12,000 in trust for the promotion of the intellectual improvement and recreation of the inhabitants of the East End of London, and certain gentlemen were appointed by the Charity Commissioners to carry out the provisions of the benevolent testator.

PROBABLY deeming the recent excitement about the condition of the London poor favourable to their object, these trustees lately organised a Mansion House meeting with a view of raising an additional sum of £50,000 to supplement Mr. Beaumont's legacy, and a great number of distinguished gentlemen attended at the summons of the Lord Mayor, apparently with the express object of showing how little they understood the possibilities and requirements of the situation.

WHAT form this intellectual improvement and education was to take nobody seemed to know. That was a detail which most of the speakers seemed to think might come by-and-by. To quote the *Times* leading article on the subject, "The friends of the scheme do not seem to have any very strict or pedantic ideas as to its exact limits, which will naturally be more or less shaped in accordance with experience." A kind of Alnaschar vision of an educational and recreative palace such as that imagined by Mr. Walter Besant in "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," is all that seems to have entered the minds of these well-meaning gentlemen.

I AGREE to the fullest extent with those speakers who said that the poorer working-classes of London want more rational amusements, more interesting education, than they can get at present, but the history of such things conclusively shows that grand schemes, ill thought out, and planned from the point of view, not of what the people want, but of what professional philanthropists think they ought to want, are sure to fail, even if funds are forthcoming in profusion.

AND it cannot be too distinctly insisted that such a scheme as this has, and can have, nothing whatever to do with the improvement of the housing of the lowest classes of the poor, which is the matter calling for more immediate attention. Professor Huxley's speech—quite apart from the consideration that his experience is of forty years ago, and, therefore, of but little value—was altogether beside the question. A grand Mechanics' Institute, which seems to be Sir E. Currie's idea, will not help starving matchbox-makers, or workers for slop-sellers, or such wretched unfortunates as the woman mentioned by the professor, as "about to add to her numerous family, the ordinary resting-place for whom was under the bed."

MAGNIFICENT libraries, winter gardens with good music and technical education, are admirable things, but they are not for the likes of these poor creatures, any more than are National Galleries and Health Exhibitions. Mixing up such very different objects as the providing of these good things for the decent working man's leisure with the even more serious problem of how to get rid of the sufferings of the tribes of starving semi-savages whom we have in dangerous numbers among us, can only end in a pitiable failure and in a waste of energy, which, properly directed, might move mountains.

THE members of the Clerkenwell vestry seem to be a set of light-hearted revellers who think that business and pleasure may well go hand-in-hand, and that there is no reason why the dryness of debate should not be relieved by the refreshment of drink. It appears to be

their custom at present to bring whisky into the board-room, and the proceedings in consequence assume a liveliness which would be amusing if it were not disgraceful.

ACCUSATIONS of intoxication were freely exchanged the other day among the representatives of the ratepayers of Clerkenwell, and a friend of a gentleman who was said to be half drunk met the charge with this noble speech: "What of that? Lord Brougham drank twelve bottles of wine before he made his maiden speech."

THIS historical anecdote may or may not be strictly accurate, but it is not out of place to remind the teller that even if it were true, the manners of the time in which it occurred were altogether different from those which obtain among public men nowadays, and that what was quite a natural thing at that period would be looked upon as disgraceful now.

"WHAT is fame?" is a question which might very well serve as a companion to that other well-known puzzle, "What is truth?" One might have supposed that the writer of a leading article in a paper like the *Observer* would have been familiar with such famous artists as George Cruikshank and John Leech. But he spells the name of the former indifferently Cruikshanks and Cruickshank, while the latter figures as Leach. And it is not only the dead who are sometimes served in this scurvy manner. Mr. Hubert Herkomer, A.R.A., is a sufficiently well-known man of the time, but he is invariably spoken of in *Punch* as Herbert Herkömer.

It is to be hoped that the Belt Case will now for ever disappear from public life. That the trial and its ignoble revelations of artistic envy, hatred, and malice can be altogether forgotten is too much to be expected, but at least it need vex the souls of the world at large no more.

THE judgment of the Lord Chief Justice, which was delivered the other day, however, is open to some remark before it is dismissed to limbo with the other fallacies and absurdities which have encumbered the case from the beginning.

STARTING with the usual affectation of absolute ignorance of everything about the case but its legal aspect, which has become as ridiculous a mannerism with Lord Coleridge as omniscience was with Brougham, and "cocksureness" with Macaulay, his lordship proceeded to lay down the startling proposition that the character of genuine works of art is not a matter of opinion, but a matter of fact, and that a knowledge of works of art is like a knowledge of science, further illustrating this doctrine by saying that we might as well refuse to believe astronomers, when they tell us that the earth goes round the sun, as decline to agree with great artists, when they tell us that the same man did not execute two works of art.

THE double fallacy is here obvious. We believe the astronomers and mathematicians because they are all agreed, and can prove their cases in countless ways by following the teaching of the exact science of mathematics. We decline, on the other hand, to surrender our right of judgment altogether to artists, because they are notoriously not agreed, and because there is no exact science by which a work of art can be proved absolutely true or absolutely false.

THIS very case has, as everybody knows, excited the most extraordinary differences of opinion in art circles, and, again, are not experts constantly at fault and at variance with each other, not only on the absolute merit of a particular work, but on this very question of the same man having made two works of art; are there not many pictures in the famous galleries of the world as to the authorship of which experts are altogether and hopelessly at variance? When the teachers disagree, is it matter for wonder that the students refuse to accept their dicta as gospel, and assert the right of educated common-sense to have its say? Many of the quacks and dilettanti, who are more artistic than the artists themselves, will doubtless agree with Lord Coleridge. I do not think he will have a majority of the real masters on his side.

LORD COLERIDGE'S doctrine involves another difficulty. If the character of works of art is simple matter-of-fact, the question was eminently one for the decision of the jury, whose province it is to decide on questions of fact, who, in this instance, did so decide after having had the experience of more than forty days of evidence and argument to assist them in forming a judgment, and whose decision, from Lord Coleridge's own point of view, ought not to have been disturbed.

ON the whole the principal moral of the case seems to be that the sooner litigants are spared the expense and anxiety of a long trial before a jury, and the sooner cases of this sort are left to be decided by a judge, who, like Mr. Justice Denman, hesitates and finally compromises between the widely divergent opinions of the two other judges with whom he sits, the better it will be for the public—in that it will then be a very extreme case that forces anyone to go to law at all.

C. D.

## Cookery.

### NICE PUDDINGS.

WE have been favoured by some recipes from the book of an experienced housekeeper, and as all have been well tried, we give them for the benefit of our readers.

### CANARY PUDDING.

Take white sugar equal in weight to three eggs, an equal quantity of butter, flour equal in weight to two eggs, the rind of one small lemon, and three eggs; melt the butter to a liquid state, but do not allow it to oil. Stir the sugar up with this, and finely grated lemon-peel, and gradually dredge in the flour, keeping the mixture well stirred. Having whisked the eggs, add them to the other ingredients, and beat all until thoroughly blended. Put the pudding into a buttered mould or basin, and let it boil for two hours. Serve with a sweet sauce.

### PARISH PUDDING.

Take a quarter of a pound of dripping, three-quarters of a pound of flour, a large teaspoonful of baking-powder, a small cupful of sugar, a teaspoonful and a half of carraway seeds, a little candied peel, one egg, and about half a pint of milk. Mix together the flour and baking-powder, in a dry state, then add the dripping, rubbing it in, afterwards the sugar, carraway seeds, and candied-peel, and lastly the eggs and milk. It may be made with milk only, or with the eggs and milk and water. Keep a tablespoonful of the sugar, and spread it over the top before placing it in the oven. The pudding must be greased. If made in a round tin it becomes a plain cake. The mixture can be varied by using sultanas, currants, or ground ginger, or the juice and rind of a small lemon, or mixed spice and a little candied-peel. For one flavoured with lemon or currants, suet can be substituted in default of dripping, but not in a cake flavoured with spice.

### PARSONAGE PUDDING.

Take four eggs, also their weight in butter, sugar, and flour. Beat the butter to cream, and mix in the sugar. Beat the eggs, yolks and whites together, and add them to the butter; put in a little lemon-peel, and lastly mix in the flour. Butter some coffee-cups or little moulds, and, having filled them half-full, bake them for half an hour in a slow oven. When ready, turn out, and serve them, having added sweet sauce, with or without wine.

### GINGER AND TREACLE PUDDING.

Take three-quarters of a pound of breadcrumbs, one quarter of a pound of suet, one teacupful of golden syrup, one teaspoonful of cinnamon, two teaspoonfuls of ginger, and one teaspoonful of carbonate of soda. Mix the ingredients well, and then boil them thoroughly.

### MARMALADE PUDDING.

Beat six ounces of butter to cream; grate a quantity of bread equal to two French rolls; beat six eggs well, and mix the whole together with two tablespoonfuls of marmalade. Bake the pudding in a moderate oven.

### QUEEN OF PUDDINGS.

Mix one pint of grated breadcrumbs, one quart of milk, one cup of sugar, a piece of butter about the size of an egg, the yolks of four eggs well beaten up, the grated rind of a lemon, and bake them until well done. When cold spread a layer of preserves over the top, and cover it with a *meringue* made of the whites of eggs.

### SNOW RICE CREAM.

Put into a stewpan four ounces of ground-rice, two ounces of sugar, a few drops of essence of almonds, and two ounces of butter. Add to these a quart of milk, and boil it for fifteen or twenty minutes until it forms a smooth substance, but not too thick; then pour it into a mould previously oiled, and when cold serve it up.

### SUET DUMPLINGS.

Mix six ounces of suet, six ounces of flour, two ounces of bread, one teaspoonful of salt, and six tablespoonfuls of milk.

### APPLE JELLY.

Wash some apples, and cut them into slices, leaving the peel on; use as much water as will just cover them, and let them boil until reduced to a pulp. Strain them, and to every quart of liquor allow a pound and a half of lump-sugar, and boil the whole for an hour and a half, rather briskly. A few minutes before taking it off the fire, add the grated rind of a lemon, or two or three cloves, according to taste. Place it in jars.

### APPLE MOULD.

To every pound of pulp add half a pound of sugar—three-quarters of a pound of sugar if intended to be kept all the winter—and half a teaspoonful of minced lemon-peel or green ginger, according to taste. Peel, core, and boil the apples in just sufficient water to prevent their burning. Beat them to a pulp, and allow the above proportion of lump-sugar to every pound of pulp. Dip the lumps in water, place them in a saucepan, and boil them to a thick syrup. Add this to the apple-pulp together with the lemon-peel, etc. Stir it over a quick fire until the apples cease to stick to the bottom of the pan, and then

pour it into moulds that have been dipped in water. When turned out of the moulds, stick over almonds and strips of citron, and pour around cream or custard.

#### THE DUKE'S CUSTARD.

Strain off thoroughly the juice from as many fine brandied Morella cherries as will cover thickly the bottom of a dish, and then roll them in dry castor-sugar. Having arranged the cherries in a dish, pour over them from a pint to a pint and a half of rich cold custard, and garnish the edge with macaroons, or, if it be preferred, pile upon the custard some rose-coloured whipped cream, highly flavoured with brandy or liqueur.

### Wild Animals in Ceylon.

BESIDES the elephant, of which already some account has been given, the buffalo, the bear, the panther, and the alligator, are found in Ceylon in great numbers. Buffaloes are very formidable customers. They charge with great fury, and it is not easy to get a good shot when they are coming at one with their hard heads, from which a ball is apt to glance. The best way to shoot a buffalo, when there are two sportsmen, is for the two to keep a hundred yards apart. One only should fire at first. If the buffalo does not drop he will probably charge the man who fired, and thereby give the other sportsman a good chance of a flank shot.

The natives catch the wild buffaloes and tame them. At certain seasons they are employed in ploughing the paddy-fields; at other times they are allowed to roam about, when they often rejoin the wild herds. A half-tamed buffalo, though he yields a sullen obedience to his master, will often prove very dangerous to a stranger; in fact, almost more so than a wild one. I was travelling one day on the sea-road between Trincomalee and Jaffna. I was riding a small pony, and was charged by a buffalo in crossing a plain. Being unarmed, and as he came at me with a will, I had no alternative but to dash on as fast as I could, my assailant charging from one side; but with a tired pony escape was not easy, and I was getting the worst of it, when, to my great satisfaction and amusement, my friend went head over heels into a mud-hole which lay between us. This cooled his ardour, and he gave up the pursuit.

In one portion of the northern province, wild buffaloes were always to be seen. One of them was exceedingly fierce, and killed several persons. The magistrate went to the spot, and in his capacity of coroner held an inquest. He had just concluded, when the buffalo emerged from the neighbouring forest, and charged down upon his party. Fortunately the magistrate had with him a single-barrelled rifle. He dropped on one knee, waited until the buffalo was close on him, and fired. The ball took effect in the buffalo's forehead, and ran far into his body, and the brute dropped dead.

Bears often attack people, and are seemingly the aggressors; but in all probability it is the fear of being injured themselves that induces them to attack man. A friend of mine once had a terrific tussle with a bear he had wounded with shot. The animal closed with him, and he had to fight the bear with his knife, giving and receiving terrible wounds. At length my friend got away, and crawled for some distance till he obtained assistance. But he will carry to his grave the marks of his enemy's teeth and claws. The following story was related to me by the gentleman who met with the adventure. He had a pony which was very much attached to him, and very gentle with him, but which would allow no one else to mount him. He was given to flying at and biting strangers, a quality which on one occasion turned to his owner's very great advantage. He was on the march through the jungle, his coolies and servants following with his baggage, guns, etc., and he walking with his pony's bridle on his arm. It would appear that a bear was just then regaling himself in the pathway by an ant-hill, which concealed his interesting figure from the traveller's view until close upon him. Suddenly the gentleman felt himself thrown down on the face, with the bear on his back, pawing and scratching him. Knowing that there were four loaded guns in the hands of his attendants, he called out to them to fire, and at the same time struck backwards at the bear with a stick which lay within his reach. No one fired, however, and he did not know what to do, when suddenly he heard a scrimmage; next moment the weight was removed from his shoulders, and on looking back he saw the bear in full flight, and the pony after him with his ears set back. He got up and shook himself, and saw his guns lying on the ground, but his attendants had all disappeared. He was about to retrace his steps, when he heard several voices crying, "Here we are!" and on looking up he saw his people perched high in the trees. They told him that the pony had sprung at the bear with such fury that he had taken to his heels in the manner described, so that there may be some good even in a biting and kicking pony.

The panther, a formidable animal, is occasionally seen even on the outskirts of Colombo, the capital of the island. A very large one was once observed swimming across the Kalany Gunga, and shot.

Once, while a strongly-built Singhalese man was bathing in the same river, a panther sprang into the water and seized him by the right arm. The man, who was, of course, unarmed, grasped his assailant by the throat, and a companion, running up with a knife, dealt the brute such a blow that he quitted his hold of the man's arm,

but again seized him by the thigh. The man who had the knife then cut the panther across the throat, and rescued his companion, an act of daring for which he ought to have received a medal. The wounded man was conveyed to the hospital, where he lay for a long time dangerously ill.

Alligators swarm in Ceylon, and fatal accidents occasionally occur. One of these monsters, who used to be constantly on the watch for bathers, had killed two persons before he was at last fortunately shot. The particulars of the manner in which he killed the two men are as follows. A gentleman in the public service was bathing within an enclosure. A Singhalese gentleman of rank was also bathing just without the enclosure, a native attendant filling a vessel with water and handing it to him. Suddenly the man who had been handing the water was gone, and the two bathers saw him with half his body in the river, at some distance, throwing up his arms, and apparently articulating something. All at once he sank. They imagined at first that he had been carried away by the current, but, subsequently, his body was found in a mutilated state. Shortly after this event, seven pilgrims were standing knee-deep in the same river. The alligator passed six of them, seized the last, and dragged him away from his companions.

At Batticaloa a girl was bathing on her bridal morning, when an alligator seized and carried her off. The brute was shot shortly after, and in him were found several parts of the girl, and her bangles, or arm-rings.

Sharks are occasionally caught with the remains of human beings in their insides. On one occasion, one was exposed for sale in the bazaar at Colombo, in which was found a white hand. A soldier had been buried at sea the previous day, and it was believed it had belonged to him. A pretty little discussion once arose between two Singhalese men, the one the buyer, the other the seller, of a shark, the price paid for it having been about one pound ten shillings. When the purchaser was cutting it up for sale, he found inside the stomach the leg of a man. Thereupon the people declined buying any of the pieces, and the shark remained on the man's hands. So he demanded that the seller should refund the one pound ten shillings. "No, no," said he; "had you found in the fish a bag full of money, you would have claimed it as your own, and given me none." The bystanders gave their verdict against the purchaser, and he had to make the best of his bargain.

### Fashions.

WINTER toilettes being now decided upon, and those dresses and mantles already provided which are to do duty until the time of singing-birds comes round again, it is the pleasant duty of the chronicler to look around and do the critic's rather than the counsellor's office. It is so much easier to make observations upon and find fault with one's friends' dresses than to suggest substitutes equally suitable, and looking as well for the same money.

MID-WINTER offers no new colour for criticism. In the nature of things there is nothing more in textile novelties to bring out for morning wear; for evening the milliner is turning over her stores, and grouping colours, shades, and tones, as skilfully as possible. Buttercup and canary yellows were never before seen in conjunction, but it is wonderful when a dress is made of the two colours, and the very exact flower requisite thrown upon it, how the eye is reconciled to the mixture.

GREYS still reign, but they are very sober colours for the evening, and very dowager-like. In spring we shall have them for walking-dresses. Just now they are more for carriages than for promenading. The favourite is London-smoke, a sort of black-grey, like a heavy smoke rolling up from the depths of some huge chimney. Very unlike London-smoke is moonlight-colour, but a grey, nevertheless. Bessemer is a dark steel-grey, and mouse-grey bears no resemblance to any of the other shades. Silver-sand is very delicate, and very soft, but utterly ineffective unless blended with darker shades, as in grouping plumes of feathers, light being clustered with dark.

BLUES have a certain affinity to greys, and admit of quite as many varieties of shades. Suez is a very pale blue, the lightest tints in which it is possible to recognise a colour. Next to it comes Ismaila, a shade darker, the well-known sky-blue. Lesseps is deeper still, and so on until the corn-flower is soon reached. What are called "false blues," from having a slight infusion of another colour, as green is in turquoise, are quite as much favourites as the orthodox blues. Of these are Danube, sapphire, gens d'arme, gros bleu, and marine-blue, not omitting peacock-blue, and electric-blue, which are rather declining in public estimation.

ALL shades of red are to be seen in millinery, and the names given are not altogether descriptive, as they change from season to season, and are bestowed by the manufacturers with little regard to the uninstructed section of their purchasers. Ibis, pomegranate, poppy, geranium, fuchsia, copper, terra-cotta, grenat, and many others, all



go to the fitting out of a milliner's show-room, or a fashionable shop-window.

WE have had no such boon for many years as the vests which are *de rigueur* as part of every dress-bodice, both for morning and evening wear. If the dress be a new one, the vest stamps it as modern; if it be one which has seen better days, the vest renews its youth. The varieties of modes in which vests are made afford great scope for invention, and prove the great value, artistically and economically, of the present fashion. Suppose that a dress has become shabby at the button-holes—an experience probable when a slight material has been used—the weakness can be concealed in one of three ways. First, to lay on fronts, vest fashion, flat, and cover the joining to the other material with a row of braid, some passementerie, or a lace frill. At the button-holes the old stitching must be carefully picked out, button-holes cut in the vest materials, and the old and new button-stitched together. Secondly, the vest may be made full, gathered at the throat, again at the waist, drawing it in at the latter place very narrow, and finishing with a bow of ribbon. The old buttons and button-holes will still do duty, but the fulness on the two sides being brought to meet, the fastening is concealed under the folds. The third method is more ambitious, and requires more skill in execution, but it rewards the labour bestowed. The fronts must be entirely cut away, rounding off the two sides to form a short jacket, in the style formerly called "Zouave." But this older mode hung loose, and was not attached to the vest, while the newer must be buttoned down with rows of small buttons upon an inner vest. The advantage of this make is the possibility of having two vests, one for morning, of one of the materials used in the dress itself, and one for evening of pale satin, gauze, piece lace, or some bright textile like gold brocade, or an embroidered front is possible, if a lady be industrious enough to work one. Evening bodices which are intended to be open, either square, heart-shaped, or pointed, have the vest specially designed to meet this intention. The flat vest commences at the bottom of the square; the upper part is full, like a habit-shirt, removable at pleasure. A pretty addition to the vest is to treat it like a stomacher, lacing across with thick silk cord, and tied at the waist in loops, the ends being finished with silver or gilt tags.

THE tags are in character with the prevailing taste in trimmings, buttons, etc., which are pendent. The gimp ornaments which are on the backs of mantles have little balls depending, of silk with beads, or fluffy, of chenille. Cords with tassels loop up polonaises, and these tassels have infinite variety in their finish, no longer merely of twisted silk. Fringes are of the same depending nature, very thick and rich, and very costly. A few months ago a lady was perfectly satisfied to have caterpillar fringe; now she is inconsolable if she cannot go so far as leeches, which are big, black, and curly, and make a great display upon a mantle. Fortunately a dress bears but one row of leeches, or caterpillars, across the front of the polonaise, for the cost is very severe.

IF a dress bodice be hopelessly shabby, button-holes burst, and sleeves literally out at elbows, nothing can be done but to discard it altogether, for the days of sleeves different from the bodice are past and gone, and unless in piece lace for evening wear cannot be tolerated. The stockingette bodice comes in to fill the void left by the superannuated one. Unless the dress be of some very peculiar, very unusual colour, stockingette can be had to match. So pretty are some of these bodices, made with simulated vests trimmed with rows of gilt braid, or mosaic-coloured cords, that few ladies murmur at the necessity which drives them to buy a tasteful bodice ready made of stockingette, one which clings to the figure without a wrinkle.

LONG polonaises seem to be most in favour, and are more suitable for winter textiles than the short paniers which make better when of silk or satin. The newest polonaises fasten diagonally, being drawn up at either right or left side with a buckle. The skirts still continue to be box-pleated, and where only six or eight quills are used for the whole skirt, they are of such breadth as to require broad braid or velvet laid on the centre of each.

MARABOUT trimming in both dark and light colours became so popular that a way opened for introducing bordering on similar lines, but less perishable under exposure to damp. Of this nature is astrachan fur, which is used on morning-dresses. Less expensive are imitations in wool, silk, and mohair. About ten years ago a species of astrachan trimming was worn, the name rather than the reality, but it became very common, and deteriorated in quality rapidly. The present astrachan is lighter, more curly, more closely resembling the real fur, and is made in a great variety of colours for evening dresses. All these broad trimmings require to be used with discretion, not to break the lines of the figure or to give undue breadth to the shoulders. Only sylphs, and they do not abound in the British Islands, can afford to wear little circular capes to their dresses which are trimmed with broad bands of fur, crossing back and chest, and widening the figure at the wrong places. Somewhat of the same objection has been made to the circular fur capes, but they have become so much larger, reaching below the waist, and shaped to the figure, as well as having high-set shoulders, that the reproach that they are unbecoming has been quite taken away.

WHEN circular cloaks, fur-lined, came into fashion, they were lauded as the most comfortable idea that had been known for many years, and likely to prolong the lives of the wearers into the twentieth century. Further experience modified this view very considerably, for the difficulty of keeping the cloak closed over the chest, the embarrassment of trying to manage an umbrella with the arms in prison, and, to crown all, the weight upon the shoulders of so heavy a wrap, all tended to check the original enthusiasm.

FROM the circulars, however, were evolved large dolmans with fur linings, the sleeves being cut as part of the back, and these are warm, comfortable, and elegant, closing over the chest, and completely covering the dress-skirt. Long paletots and dolmans have one advantage over the fur-capes in making it possible to wear a second-best dress underneath, which is quite impossible when the arms, basque, and skirt are exposed to view.

VERY pretty bonnets can be made by ingenious ladies of chenille scarfs, such as are to be seen in every draper's shop. Buy a bonnet-frame and cover it with satin; early experiments are more successful when the satin is stretched tightly upon the shape. Choose a chenille scarf with very close meshes, and cover the shape with it. When experience has given courage, the foundation may be puffed by running threads to form diamonds, and bringing one out through each interstice of the scarf. To form the front, folds of velvet are most suitable, and a wing, bird, or flower may be added at discretion. For strings, piece velvet, cross-cut, is very much worn. Cut a short string and hem the edge. It should be just long enough to meet the opposite string, upon which a large bow is sewed, also of cross-cut velvet. The bow should be merely two loops and a cross-piece, but these loops should be liberal wings, fitting neatly under the chin, and they are exceedingly snug and comfortable.

LADIES with pet tabby cats are up in arms at the last novelty in little hats, the Chapeau Minette. A whole cat is required for each *chapeau*, the body being stretched on a frame to form the head part, and the little cat's head nestling in front as ornament. Nor is it every cat that will answer for the purpose, for beauty and youth are indispensable, old tabbies being at a discount. White cats are particularly valuable to make the Chapeau Minette, so owners must be vigilant in guarding their favourites. This is no more than another aspect of the bird-hat, pheasants having been for a year or two used to cover hat-shapes, and even the peacock was pressed into service for the same purpose.

LACE fichus are so useful in transforming a morning-dress into one for demi-toilette, that new shapes are invented every day, all more or less improvements on those already in the shops. The term *plastron* is applied to any lace ornament worn outside the bodice which is independent and added when the dress has been put on. This would not be a strict interpretation of the word, but is its conventional meaning.

WITH black dresses and those of the more brilliant reds—ruby, grenat, cardinal, etc., white quillings are less worn round the throat than black lace, the latter being very lavishly frilled round the neck of the dress. As if to compensate for this banishment of white tuckers, white lace is worn profusely in front, quilled, *en coquille*, or in a *plastron*; handsome lace handkerchiefs are worn looped up as breast-knots, sometimes tucked in by the centre, and the corners displayed, or sewed into a pretty easy bow.

ONE last word for prospective brides. At several very fashionable weddings lately the bride's wreath and flowers upon her dress had the deadness of the orange-blossoms relieved by the introduction of a few little oranges, their deep golden colour relieving the mass of green and white which is rarely becoming.

## The Cold in Manitoba.

THE highest piece of buncombe ever perpetrated upon a long-suffering community is the oft-repeated tale that "you don't feel the cold in Manitoba." Of course you don't. When you see men shuffling along Main Street as fast as they can shuffle; their fur caps pulled down over their eyes and ears; their faces covered with mufflers; their bodies wrapped up in heavy furs; warm moccasins on their feet, fur gloves on their hands, and, for all that, with a huge hump on their backs, you are not to suppose they go about like that because they feel the cold. Not a bit of it. It's the wonderful enthusiasm produced by the ozone in the air of Manitoba which makes the people just a trifle eccentric. When you see a man leaning up against a fence or the side of a house to thaw out, he isn't cold. It's nothing but that confounded ozone in the air stirring up his enthusiasm again. No one ever feels the cold here; the atmosphere is so dry, so bracing, so exhilarating, so utterly too-too in its vigour, that people merely light stoves and burn coals out of pure compassion for the coal-dealers, who have got to live just like others. When the mercury goes below 40 degrees below zero, as it did last night, it isn't cold. It's only jus

beginning to feel warm then, and all this talk about frozen ears and noses, blistered fingers and hands, is only indulged in by spiteful people, jealous of the ozone in our atmosphere. You don't feel the cold in Manitoba. Never lose sight of that one solid fact. When some poor fellow gets frozen to death on the prairie, rest assured that he never felt it, but just laid down out of pure spite and died. When you are told over fifty times a day on the street, by passing friends and acquaintances, that "it's a stinger," you must remember that they are referring to some bygone event, which happened before you were born, and mean no reference whatever to the wonderful ozone of Manitoba. Last night was the warmest experienced in Winnipeg for a century. The fact that the mercury froze in many thermometers, was nothing but the mean, wretched spite which affects even thermometers. They knew it was a warm, pleasant night; but the ozone affected even their enthusiasm, and they had to do something eccentric. We haven't had a cold day this winter yet. Nothing but ozone and enthusiasm.—*Winnipeg Times*.

## How to Sing a Ballad.

To hear some people talk, one would think that singing a ballad was the easiest thing in the world. Now the musical student knows better than this; he knows that in every art there is nothing so hard as simplicity; that the slow *legato* melody, the unbroken succession of continuous sound, is a greater test of the powers of the piano-player than the most brilliant shakes and runs, and that the perfect singing of a ballad demands all the art that a finished singer possesses.

It is probable, in spite of the advance in musical taste, that the ballad form will always retain its popularity. The ballad in music answers to the novel in literature; and people like something with a story in it. Just a few verses, a tale of a village maid whose lover has deserted her, or of a lad who was drowned at sea—even less, a mere hint of a story, a youth pacing outside a window, and watching a glimmering light high up; a girl going by with flowers, and dropping a rose behind her. All these things form a picture, give an idea to the listener's mind, and even if he does not fully understand the music, he likes the interest of the story. Think what a little time the singer has to make her effect in. Two verses—three at the utmost—a few minutes only of actual time, and within these limits she has to present to you, perhaps, a whole life-story, with the joy, and the love, and the sorrow of it, and to paint you a village scene, or the long low line of the far-off tide.

THERE is a ballad of Franz's that has only one verse to it. There are just eight lines of simple melody; the notes are quite simple, the voice takes no high flights. It is the tale of a village maid, whose lover is dead; she is young and very charming, and they ask her to join in the dance and forget. She tells them that she has been putting roses on her lover's grave, and simply says: "I dance no more." Is it the words, which are Heine's, or is it the music, that speaks to us so strongly and so touchingly, showing us in that brief instant as surely as a dark scene is made plain to us by a lightning flash, that here is a sorrow beyond consolation, that the maid may live a long lifetime, but that vulgar joys and pleasures are not for her? She will always be faithful to his memory; she may live, but her heart is broken.

THE singer who has to convey all this to you must indeed be a perfect artist, there must be no exaggeration, nothing forced; Hamlet's advice to the players is most perfectly applicable to singing—not to tear a passion to tatters, or to overdo an effect. But the proper expression of every word and note must be studied if the singer strives to bring out all the beauty and the meaning that are there.

SINGING a ballad is somewhat like playing light music. You only do it well when you can do other things better. The player who only plays dance-music ruins his style, and does not even play dance-music well. But the pianist who studies great classical works can occasionally condescend to play light music, and gives it a charm and a brilliancy like that of a paste diamond in a glorious setting. Just so the successful ballad-singer has never confined herself to ballads; she may adopt them as her style, and never sing anything else in company, but many are the *solfeggi* and many the long *scenas* that she has been through to gain facility first.

To do you real good, there is nothing like learning a work. Take all the soprano (or *contralto*) solos from some oratorio, or all the page's songs out of the same opera. Supposing you have a good soprano, for example, learn the songs of Marguerite in "Faust," recitatives and all; your singing acquires by this means a seriousness and breadth that it would never gain by only singing ballads. Studies and *solfeggi* must be liberally studied, and it is a good thing to sing the names of the notes so as to feel exactly where you are. Mere *arpeggios* are best to be sung with the vowel "a," but regular studies like Concone's are meant to be sung with Do, Re, etc., all through. Concone's studies are remarkably good ones, and should always be sung with expression. It is excellent practice to give expression to

music when there are no words to help you. You ought to be able to express every emotion in life, although you are only singing, Do, Re, and Fa.

PURE *legato* style is the greatest requirement for singing a ballad. The notes of a phrase should be as unbroken as a string of fine pearls, every one touching the other, yet every one distinct. A melody should be as perfectly given out as if there were no words to interrupt it—as if the bow of the violin or 'cello were rendering it instead of the human voice. It is evident, then, that the greatest care should be taken to get the voice equal, to practise going from one semi-tone to another, and to learn to sing every interval with ease. The student should never stop till she is able to sing a smooth passage perfectly, for this is the crowning beauty of all ballad-singing.

THERE is another matter to speak of, which some singers seem to consider very unimportant—we mean the words. The very greatest care ought to be taken over their enunciation, the greatest pains that every one of them reaches the listener's ears. How can you expect to touch him when he does not know what you are singing about? How can you expect to interest him when he does not hear half you say? You may be very much worked up and agitated yourself, but you can't expect him to follow you if your imperfect pronunciation leaves him in ignorance whether it is a ship or a sheep that is gone out to sea.

GOOD elocution is half the battle, and it will be a great gain for you if you will take some lessons in it. It is an interesting study, and brings all manner of pleasure along with it, and its impress will never pass away from your singing. Learning long passages of Shakespeare by heart cannot but improve you in every way, and whilst you are studying which word to throw the accent on, you often gain new light on the sense of a passage.

A GREAT deal may be learnt by studying those public singers who conspicuously succeed in this branch of art. Madame Antoinette Sterling, Miss Mary Davies, Miss Marian McKenzie, are very good models to go by—people who render every note with care, and whose words can be heard to the remotest part of a concert-room. Notice any good singer singing "Robin Adair," for example, and see how perfectly she will do the "flicks." They will not be like two untidy quavers of almost equal length. She will not leave you in pleasing uncertainty as to which note the accent will fall on. No; every time the intonation will be exactly the same; some will be soft and some will be loud, but all as perfect as if they were turned out of a machine. Then, when the singer pauses on the last one of all, she gets an effect—you know that she has done it on purpose, and not by accident—that she has been steadily aiming at this end from the commencement, and reserving herself all through.

THE power of reserve has a great deal to do with good ballad-singing; no rendering can be broad without it. Certain points must be passed over, for the sake of some particular phrase at a certain part which it is necessary to make much of, and as for which point to pass over, and which to insist upon, only a very good singer can tell you that, or very long experience can enable you to discover it.

## The Moth that Wouldn't Die.

THAT all creatures cling to existence however wretched, and that no one knows what he can do without until he has tried, are platitudes only too often heard, but a striking proof may be found in a sphinx-moth, which a doctor, an enthusiastic naturalist, captured off the coast of Brazil, and to which he proceeded to offer, by means of various deadly poisons, the happy dispatch. The moth cheerfully imbibed the poisons, but resolutely refused to die. Even having his thorax crushed in did not subdue his spirit. To effect this required long incarceration in a bottle filled with the fumes of chloroform. When finally he appeared to have succumbed, the operator drew him forth, opened his large fleshy body, removed the contents, which he replaced with cotton-wool, sewed him up again, and laid him on one side. But no sooner did the specimen thus prepared find himself free, than he began to kick and plunge in the most violent manner, and on being set up again on his legs, he conducted himself with as much liveliness as though he found a wadding interior quite as comfortable as his former more complicated organs. That a savage should be able to dispense with the superfluities of civilisation is nothing compared to a moth who can dispense with the necessities of a stomach. How the doctor ultimately triumphed is not recorded.

## Household Gardening.

### THE PAST.

DURING the year that is now closing gardening has been conducted under more favourable auspices than in the season that preceded it. The winter of 1882 was comparatively mild, and the losses by frost

were few. A pleasant spring followed, and this in turn was succeeded by an enjoyable summer—not so hot as to be intolerable, yet not cold, boisterous, and wet, except during the month of July, which was not of a tropical character. The summer was succeeded by a remarkably fine autumn, which prolonged the growth and attractiveness of flowers, and, what is not less important, ripened the wood of fruit-trees, a most essential matter in conducting to their productiveness.

Vegetables throughout the year have been abundant and good, while horticultural exhibitions have never been so numerous before, nor attended by such a number of visitors. The most valuable and important of hardy fruits, Apples, have, for the first time for a period of six years, been plentiful, and this wholesome and nutritious fruit has been sufficient not only for home consumption, but there has been a surplus for export purposes. Other large fruits have been less abundant, but the smaller fruits, Strawberries, Raspberries, Gooseberries, and Currants, have given a satisfactory return to the cultivator, while consumers have been able to obtain supplies at reasonable prices.

This very brief review of the year is thus not on the whole unfavourable; indeed, the season throughout has proved better, more cheerful, and more profitable than any of the past five years.

#### THE PRESENT.

Since the past season, broadly and generally speaking, has, as regards gardening, been the reverse of unfavourable, individual cultivators ought now to be in a better position than they were at the commencement of 1883. It will be well for all of them, large and small, to take stock of their possessions in rooms, greenhouses, orchards, and gardens. It is not to be expected that every one will have succeeded with everything in the measure he would desire. If this were so there would be no incitement to further endeavour. Even the most successful always find something that fails to satisfy them entirely, and hence have an ever-present stimulus to further effort. The truth is that the most skilled cultivators cannot command success in every matter they take in hand, and every crop they cultivate, for the simple, yet sufficient, reason that they cannot control the weather. Notwithstanding this, none need fail wholly if they assiduously endeavour to turn to account information that may be at their disposal.

A most important element of success is for amateur gardeners to carefully estimate their means and resources. Many failures occur by attempting too much, and endeavouring to accomplish that which is practically impossible. The natural adaptability of certain plants and crops to a garden should always, if possible, be determined, and then, by acting accordingly, it is surprising how much may be done, and how comparatively few will be the failures in each particular case.

Every garden should be in better condition at the present time than it was at the corresponding date of last year, and the floral contents of every greenhouse and window be in a more satisfactory state. That this is so in many cases we are well aware; in this there is ground for encouragement, and thousands of homes are made pleasant and cheerful by the clean, healthy, thrifty condition of the floral pets of the owners. Where the improvement indicated is not manifest, then it is clear that further effort must be made, and there is no better time for entering on a better and improved system of culture than in the early days of the opening year.

#### THE FUTURE.

However disappointing the past may have been, or however satisfactory may be the present, there is yet room for improvement, for if one thing is more certain than another, it is this—that nothing in which we may be engaged is absolutely perfect. It is at perfection that all should aim, even if the object be unattainable, as the attempt that is made may result in excellence, and that is always worth striving for.

#### FLOWERS.

Taste in flowers is ever changing. At one period double flowers and quiet colours are in the ascendant; at another time single flowers with high colours find most favour. The latter, of late, have commanded the most attention, and Sunflowers, once despised, have become fashionable, while single Dahlias have for a time quite eclipsed the doubles in popularity, and even single Roses have found a host of admirers.

For general decorative purposes single flowers will be esteemed during the coming year. The gaudy Sunflower will possibly not maintain its position, yet will be grown largely; but the clear yellow Corn Marigold, the white Ox-eye Daisy, the blush and golden Marguerites, the bright star-like Pyrethrums, and the azure Blue-bottle, will be in constant demand; and fortunately they may be grown by everybody who may have a plot of ground in town or country.

Why should single flowers be such favourites? is a question that many ask. It is not always easy to give a reason for the fashions that predominate; but an answer to the question under notice is not difficult to find.

Single flowers can be more artistically arranged in vases and bouquets than is possible with the more massive double forms. These latter, as a rule, when grouped together are heavy, not to say "lumpy," while the former have a free, chaste, elegant appearance. A bunch of Dahlias, Chrysanthemums, Carnations, or even Roses

does not display the flowers to advantage. Their beauty consists in their individuality; but a handful of Lilies, Primroses, or Violets is always admired. Still double flowers—those marvellous examples of the florist's skill—can never be ignored, and there will be an increase rather than otherwise in their growth during the present year.

Ferns are always fashionable. They are permanent favourites, and are fortunately so numerous that there are varieties that will luxuriate under almost all conditions, from the Lastras (Lady Ferns) and Scolopendriums (Hart's Tongues) in a London area, to the transparently charming and superlatively elegant Filmy Ferns under a glass shade in the tropical house or warm conservatory. For sunless greenhouses and shady windows there are also kinds in abundance that will flourish in the most enjoyable manner. Thus those who cannot have flowers may have the cheerful refreshing green which the graceful fronds of these lovely plants always afford.

#### FRUITS.

More attention is being given to the culture of hardy fruits, and never before have so many trees been planted as during the present season. In the aggregate the increase of land under fruit culture will amount to some ten thousand acres, but the most noticeable fact is the marked increase of small cultivators, those who plant their half-dozen or dozen Apple, Pear, and Plum trees, with smaller bush fruits in proportion, in their little home enclosures.

For a long time it was supposed that only those persons could grow Apples and Pears who had orchards for accommodating huge trees, the fruit of which could only be reached by the aid of tall ladders. Such notions are now obsolete, and trees are raised and sold in thousands which bear prodigiously when only two or three feet high, and which can be well grown in small gardens.

In gardens quite close to, and even within the environs of the largest cities and towns, beautiful fruit is now produced, handsome pyramids and bushes adorning the borders, ornamental arches arranged over walks, and trained trees covering fences attractively and profitably. Fruit culture is increasing marvellously, and will increase to the benefit of every householder, hence will be appropriately encouraged in HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

#### VEGETABLES.

With each recurring year the importance of vegetables as a wholesome staple food is becoming more fully recognised. Medical men have long urged their value, but a long time is needed for their teaching to "permeate" the minds of the million.

Thousands of persons may grow some kinds of vegetables who have as yet not devoted attention to the subject. If they cannot grow Potatoes and Peas in abundance, they can at least produce salads with Mustard and Cress, while many a vacant wall may be made to support the rich red fruits of the now favourite Tomato.

With the object of aiding all who need assistance in the cultivation of any or all of the plants and crops alluded to, with others that cannot be enumerated, we shall endeavour to impart information that may be useful, because in every case founded on experience, and shall hope that our endeavours to render gardens more enjoyable and profitable in the future will not be fruitless.

### Three Brave Cavaliers.

A TOUCHING story is connected with the deaths of Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle, who, under Goring, Earl of Norwich, held Colchester in 1648, against Fairfax and the Parliament. The deaths of these gallant Cavalier officers happened thus:

Cromwell had just destroyed the Scotch army of the Duke of Hamilton in the north. The prince was with his fleet in the Downs, the poor king a prisoner at Carisbrooke; the Earl of Holland had been taken near Kingston in an affair of cavalry, and Goring and Lord Capel, with the Kentish and Essex Royalist corps, were shut up in Colchester. The Cavaliers, having eaten nearly all their horses, and despairing of relief, sent to Fairfax to propose terms.

Fairfax would dismiss the common soldiers, but would grant no condition to the officers and gentlemen. A day or two was spent in deliberation. The fiercer were for a brisk sally at all risks, but they had too few horses, and those that were left were weak from insufficient food. Some were for dashing open a port, and for dying sword in hand; but as that was only to be butchered without a chance of revenge calmer counsel prevailed. They all surrendered, threw open the gates, and the officers were at once led to the town-hall, locked in, and guarded. Presently a Puritan officer entered, and demanded a list of the prisoners' names for the general. It was given, and a guard shortly returned for Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, and Sir Bernard Gascoigne. The butchers had come into the crowded slaughter-house, and dragged out their selected victims. They were brought before Fairfax, who (instigated, as Clarendon thinks, by the inflexible Ireton) told them that after so long and obstinate a defence, it was necessary, for the example of others, that the peace of the kingdom should be no longer disturbed, and that military justice should be done—the three men must be presently put to death; and they were instantly led into a yard contiguous, where three files of musketeers were drawn up ready for the dreadful duty.

Sir Bernard Gascoigne was a gentleman of Florence, who knew just English enough to explain that he required only pen, ink, and paper, so that he might write to the Grand Duke to relate how he had lost his life, and who should inherit his estates. Sir Charles Lucas, the younger brother of a lord, and the heir to his title, had been brought up in the Low Countries, and had served in the cavalry. "He was very brave," says Clarendon, "and in the day of battle a gallant man to look upon and follow, but at all other times and places of a nature not to be lived with, of an ill understanding, of a rough and proud nature, which made him, during the time of their being in Colchester, more intolerable than the siege, or any fortune that threatened them. Yet they all desired to accompany him in his death." Lisle, compared with Lucas, was summer to winter. Though fierce to lead, and certain to be followed, he had "the softest and most gentle nature imaginable, loved all, and beloved of all, and without a capacity to have an enemy."

When the news of the cruel resolution reached the prisoners, the Cavaliers were deeply moved, and Lord Capel instantly prevailed on an officer of their guard to carry a letter to Fairfax, entreating him either to forbear the execution, or that all of them, being equally guilty, might undergo the same sentence. The only answer was an order to the officer to carry out the sentence, reserving the Italian to the last. The three Cavaliers were led forth into the castle courtyard. The soldiers first fired on Lucas, who fell dead. Seeing that, Lisle ran to the body, embraced it, kissed the stern, rugged face, and thinking the firing-party too far off, told them to come nearer. One of the musketeers exclaiming, "I'll warrant you, sir, we hit you," Lisle replied, smiling: "Friends, I've been nearer you when you have missed me."

Thereupon they all fired, and under that shower of fiery lead he fell instantly without uttering a word. Sir Bernard Gascoigne had already stripped off his doublet, and was expecting his turn had come, when the officer told him he had orders to carry him back to his friends, "for which mercy he cared not a whit." The council of war had feared that if his life were taken, their friends and children for several generations, would be in danger when travelling in Italy.

When, what Clarendon calls "the bloody sacrifice" was completed, Fairfax and his chief officers went to the town-hall to visit the other prisoners. The Puritan general treated the Earl of Norwich and Lord Capel courteously, apologised for the necessity of military justice, but said the lives of all the rest were safe, and that they should be all well treated and disposed of as the Parliament directed. Lord Capel's high courage could not stand this; he bade the Puritans finish their work, and show them the same rigour; upon which there were, says Clarendon, "two or three sharp and bitter replies between him and Ireton, which cost Capel his life a few months after." While in the Tower Capel made a daring escape, but was soon recaptured and beheaded, together with the Duke of Hamilton and the Earl of Holland, on a scaffold before Westminster Hall.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That all communications respecting the "Puzzles for Prizes" must be addressed to the PUZZLE EDITOR.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to the Puzzles, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### ANSWERS.

ANITA.—Whiteley, Westbourne Grove, or any good furrier, would get the skins made up for you.

B. W. J.—The best pills and other medicines for poultry are to be had of Walton, St. James's Road, Croydon.

CURIOSITY.—1. The words are spoken by the roguish doctor in the play of "The Honeymoon":

"For tho' to cure men be beyond our skill,  
'Tis hard indeed if we can't keep 'em ill."

2. Several people we know, of some standing in society, have had their visiting-cards printed without the prefix "Mr.," "Mrs.," or "Miss," but it is not considered good style. See "Don't," a little manual of etiquette, the revised edition of which is published by Messrs. Griffith and Farran, price 1s.

FIKE.—1. We are not aware that any alteration has been made in the original form of the hymn, the author of which is the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould. 2. We believe it has been prohibited on account of its revolutionary sentiments, and it is not possible to get it anywhere in London.

FIRST LADY.—The lines are to be found in "The Spanish Gypsy," Book V., by George Elliot:

He did not say "Farewell,"  
But neither knew that he was silent. She,  
For one long moment, moved not. They knew nought  
Save that they parted; for their mutual gaze,  
As with their souls full speech forbade their hands  
To seek each other—those oft clasping hands  
Which had a memory of their own, and went  
Widowed of one dear touch for evermore.

I'M A-WEARY, A-WEARY.—There may be many reasons for the feeling you describe. It may be due to indigestion, or to some other depressing form of ill-health, or you may have an irritable nervous system. Worry or annoyance and uncongenial surroundings would all tend to produce the condition you describe. It follows, therefore, that the proper cure must entirely depend upon the cause. But in any case you are safe to take good nourishing food, and plenty of exercise in the fresh air. Avoid constipation. Take a cold bath in the morning; retire early to bed; take as much quiet amusement as possible among congenial associates. Do not take much tea, coffee, or alcohol, and cultivate the habit of restraining your mental irritability or depression, and try to get as much cheerful interest into your life as possible, so that you may at least in some measure rejoice in "the joy of an eventful life."

INQUIRER H.—It was the late Dean Stanley who instituted the special service in Westminster Abbey for children on Innocents' Day. This day, called in Germany "Kindernessee," and formerly in England "Childermass," used to be more strictly observed than it is at present. The office for the festival was one of sorrow, and the church bells were always muffled. In some parishes a muffled peal is still rung on this day.

J. C. S.—1. The paper, we believe, would be provided. 2. No such testimonial would be of any use to you. 3. Your handwriting is not good enough.

MAY.—It will probably require some little trouble to get admission for a girl of thirteen into a training-school. Your best plan will be to apply to the National Central Office, 49, Upper Berkeley Street, Portman Square, where information will be given you of the respective homes throughout the country to which a young girl could be sent, or perhaps the benevolent secretary, H. B. Williams, Esq., of the Destitute Girls' Refuge, Albert Street, Spitalfields, might help you.

MAY 42.—Yes, after ten years' approved service, but, according to the terms of the Treasury Minute, only as the reward of rare and exceptional merit. This being so, it is doubtful how far any individual clerk would be justified in looking forward to this promotion as probable in his case.

ORNAMENTS.—The custom of wearing earrings dates from the earliest times. Michaelis, in his "Laws of Moses," says, according to a Mahomedan legend, Sarah, being jealous of Hagar, declared she would not rest until her hands had been imbued in her bondmaid's blood. Then Abraham pierced Hagar's ear quickly, and drew a ring through it, so that Sarah was able to dip her hand in the blood of Hagar without bringing the latter into danger. From that time it became a custom among women to wear earrings. In England earrings were worn by the Romanised Britons, and by Anglo-Saxons. After the tenth century the fashion seems to have declined both in England and on the Continent, and earrings are neither found in graves, nor discerned in paintings or sculptures. The wearing of earrings was re-introduced into England in the sixteenth century, and Stubbs, writing in the time of Queen Elizabeth, says: "The women are not ashamed to make holes in their ears, wherewith they hang rings and other jewels of gold and precious stones." In the seventeenth century earrings were worn by male fops.

TICKER.—1. It would be much better to buy a new than second-hand silver watch, because it is impossible for you to tell how much the latter may have been worn. An excellent silver watch can be had for 25s. of the Midland Counties Watch Company, Vyse Street, Birmingham. The company undertakes to keep this class of watch in repair free of cost for six months. A gold watch is certainly more ladylike than one of silver, and can be had of this company for 70s., being a really strong and serviceable watch. Your best plan will be to write for a catalogue. 2. The bridegroom usually considers it a privilege to make each bridesmaid a present. Silver lockets, under the circumstances you name, would be appropriate gifts. These can also be had of the above-named company.

## Puzzles for Prizes.

The Parodies on Hood's "Bridge of Sighs" being very indifferent in quality, the Puzzle Editor considers them unworthy of Prizes, which are therefore reluctantly withheld.

The Winner of First Prize in No. 134, was Mrs. Shattock, Hillmorton Villa, Soneyd Park, Bristol ("One and All").

The correct answer to the Poetical Puzzle is as follows:

"Sad is my fate, said the heartbroken stranger."—*Campbell's* "Exile of Erin."

"Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride."—*Goldsmith's* "Deserted Village."

"Old times were changed, old manners gone;  
A stranger filled the Stuart's throne."

*Scott's* "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

"Open the temple gates unto my love."—*Spenser's* "Epithalamion."

"I see before me the gladiator lie."—*Byron's* "Childe Harold."

"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness."—*Keats's* "To Autumn."

"Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is."—*Shelley's* "Ode to the West Wind."

Answers have also been received from—Alice, Alice Norbury, Crystal Palace, Emma Jane, Egerance, Ferret, Sunflower, Tarradiddle.



## Odds and Ends.

A LITERARY man in Vienna, possessor of the learned degree of doctor, used to take his midday refection, a contemporary tells us, at a well-known cafe in the Austrian capital. One wet day the place was less fully attended than usual, and the miserable state of the weather induced most of the visitors to seek their various employments as speedily as possible. When proceeding to follow their example, the learned doctor was astonished to find in place of his shabby and weather-beaten covering, a real Paris hat, shining with sparkling brilliancy. He could only attribute this quasi-magical change to the delicate attention of some friend, and hastened to display the acquisition, with no little pride, to his family. The next day a young man accosted him at the cafe, and politely remarked: "Doctor, allow me to claim my hat, and to apologise for the apparent mistake. The fact was, however, I had no umbrella and you had one. I did not know what to do to prevent my new hat from being spoilt in the rain, and as I knew yours could not be made worse than it is, I borrowed it, and now return it with thanks."

"I was visiting," says Mr. S. C. Hall, "a magistrate in Kerry County, when a stalwart fellow was brought in a prisoner, charged with nearly killing an old, bald-headed man. Being asked to swear information against the accused who had wounded him, the injured man was silent, and on being pressed absolutely refused. 'What was it this fellow did to you?' asked the magistrate. 'Nothing,' was the answer. The magistrate turned to the culprit: 'Are you not ashamed, he said, 'to have half-killed this old man, who will not even give information against you. Had you any ill-will to him?' 'Oh, none at all, your honour; I never saw him before to-day.' 'Then what made you do it?' 'Well, I'll tell yer honour the truth. Ye see, I came late into the fair; luck was agin me, for all the fighting was over; so, as I was strutting about, looking for some boy to cross a stick wid, I saw this poor man's bald head poked out of a slit of the tent that he might cool it; and it looked so inviting that, for the sowl o' me, I couldn't help hitting the blow.'"

A DIPLOMATIST was having an after-dinner talk with the Grand Vizier of the Oriental sovereign to whose court he is accredited. "The only fault I have to find with your system of government," said he laughingly, "is its murderous tendency. Why, not a single one of your sultans has died in his bed during the last two hundred years!" "You mistake, sir," rejoined the grand vizier with patriotic warmth. "Four of them have died in their beds during that period; though I must admit that in each case the royal sleeper was found with the mattress on top of him."

A LEARNED clergyman was accosted in the following manner by an illiterate preacher, who despised education: "Sir, you have been to college, I suppose?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. "I am thankful," rejoined the former, "that the Lord has opened my mouth to preach without any learning." "A similar event," replied the latter, "took place in Balaam's time, but such things are of rare occurrence in the present day."

IN an Irish paper was an advertisement for horses to stand at livery on the following terms: "Long-tailed horses at 3s. 6d. Short-tailed horses, 3s. per week." On enquiry into the cause of the difference it was answered that horses with long tails could brush the flies off their backs while eating, whereas short-tailed horses were obliged to take their heads from their mangers.

A FRENCHMAN who took to learning the English language, persevered till he came to the word "ague." When told that its two syllables might be reduced to one, by prefixing p and l, making plague of it, the philosopher remarked that half the English might have the ague, and the other half the plague: as for him he wouldn't bother more about it.

WHEN Morris had the Haymarket Theatre, Jerrold, on a certain occasion, had reason to find fault with the strength, or rather the want of strength, of the company. Morris expostulated and said: "Why, there's V—, he was bred on these boards!" "He looks as though he had been cut out of them," replied Jerrold.

SOMEBODY told a young English nobleman that to be popular in Boston society he must profess to be very fond of baked beans. And so when he dined at Mrs. Beaconsfield's he said in a loud voice to the servant: "Pass me the baked beans, please." There were none, of course, and the hostess said she was insulted.

TALLEYRAND, the Prime Minister of Napoleon, was disliked by Madame de Staël. It so happened that Talleyrand was lame, and madame crossed-eyed. Meeting one day, madame said: "Monsieur, how is that poor leg?" Talleyrand quickly replied: "Crooked, as you see."

A SURGEON, who was on his way to perform an operation on his patient, had his carriage robbed, and lost his surgical instruments while making a temporary stop: "Whereby," adds the reporter, "the operation was prevented and the patient's life saved."

SOME men can never take a joke. There was an old doctor, who, when asked what was good for moths, wrote back: "How do you suppose I can tell unless I know what ails the moths?"

THE freedom of Berlin having been presented to a Prussian officer in a gold snuff-box, a French writer said there was ample room in the snuff-box for all the freedom there was in Berlin.

THERE are some marriages which remind us of the poor fellow who said: "She couldn't get any husband, and I couldn't get any wife, so we got married."

A MERCHANT in New York, who had lost his fortune in a petroleum oil well speculation, was unkindly advised to let well alone in future.

JACK: "We're very proud of our ancestry, you know." TOM: "Yes, I know; but how would your ancestry feel about you?"

BY an Irishman: "Why is a storm, when it's clearing up, like a castigation?" "Sure, and isn't it a bating."

"BROWN, what did you clear by that speculation?" "I cleared my pockets," said Brown.

ROBERT SMITH, brother of Sydney, and familiarly called "Bobus," was a lawyer and an ex-Advocate General, and happened on one occasion to be engaged in argument with an excellent physician touching the merits of their respective professions. "You must admit," urged Dr. X., "that your profession does not make angels of men." "No," was the retort, "there you have the best of it; yours certainly gives them the first chance."

A NUMBER of amateurs were discussing the question of a name for their new dramatic club, and, of course, someone suggested "The Footlights." "Pshaw!" said a second; "too old. We'd better call it, 'The Flies on the Wings.'" "Well," said a third, "if you are going to borrow a name from some of the stage appurtenances, why not call ourselves 'The Flats,' and be done with it?"

WHEN travelling, Dean Swift once called at a house. The lady of the mansion rejoiced to have so great a guest, and with much eagerness and flippancy asked him what he would have for dinner. "Will you have an apple-pie, or a gooseberry-pie, sir, or a cherry-pie, or a plum-pie, or a pigeon-pie, sir?" "Anything but a mag-pie," replied the dean in his usual sarcastic manner.

A GENTLEMAN in a black coat called his friend to him and said: "Come with me while I change my black cravat for a white one for the ball. You will see how it will change me." The change is made. The friend examines his friend with attention. "That's so. Before one would have sent you out on an errand; but now one would say, 'Waiter, some coffee!'"

ON the edge of a small river in the county of Cavan, in Ireland, there is—or used to be—a stone with the following inscription cut upon it, no doubt intended for the information of strangers travelling that way: "N.B.—When this stone is out of sight, it is not safe to ford the river."

A SCOTTISH blacksmith being asked what was the meaning of metaphysics, replied: "When the party wha listens disna ken what the party wha speaks means, and when the party wha speaks disna ken what he means himself—that's metaphysics."

"WELL, to tell the truth, papa, I did not think much of the close of the sermon," said a fashionable young lady. "Probably you were thinking more of the clothes of the congregation," replied her father.

IN OUR NEXT NUMBER WILL BE COMMENCED A NEW SERIAL STORY, ENTITLED,

"MY LORD CONCEIT,"

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

NOW PUBLISHING,

## THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

WITH A COLOURED PLATE REPRESENTING

ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD DURING THE HEAVY SNOWSTORM

ON THE 18th JANUARY, 1881.

PRICE SIXPENOE.

NOTICE.

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All applications for Advertisements to be addressed to Mr. J. Smith, 24, Great New Street, E.C.



"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 141.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," *Etc., Etc.*

### CHAPTER I. A FIRST INTRODUCTION.

"MADGE, introduce me to 'My Lord Conceit.'"

The person addressed looked at the person addressing her with big, brown, puzzled eyes.

"My dear, when you give up that habit of nicknaming every person you meet, you will be infinitely more intelligible. To whom do you want an introduction now?"

"Can you ask? Don't his appearance, air, languor, self-satisfaction, announce him as well as my *sobriquet*? I mean the individual leaning against the doorpost. He looks half asleep. I suppose he's bored. In any case, I want to know him. I think I might put some animation into him."

Madge Dunbar smiled.

"I think you would put animation into the automaton chess-player, leave alone anything that possessed a spark of vitality. That lazy-looking fellow is a friend of Cosmo's. He asked him here to-night. I've never seen him before. He's the nephew of Sir Hector Grant, and his name—"

"Pray don't tell me his name," interrupted Beryl Foster hastily. "Mine suits him infinitely better. Bring him over here, and let me see what he's made of. Mentally, of course. Nature's done her part, I should say, but I never knew much brains go with good looks."

"He ought to feel flattered at your interest in him."

The girl laughed.

"He won't discover much of it when once I know him."

"Now, Beryl," remonstrated her friend, "no wickedness. Remember, you have done harm enough in your time, and on the very eve of—"

"Hush!" whispered the girl hurriedly, and her hand gave a little nervous pressure on her companion's arm. Then a smile broke over her face. "The law of attraction is inevitable," she said. "My Lord Conceit is coming to me, since you won't bring him."

Across the room, with its soft lights and tasteful combinations of colour and effect, in and out of the scattered figures lounging, standing, sitting, as fancy dictated, on and up to the two women who had been discussing him—one of whom was his hostess—came Ivor Grant.

"Mrs. Dunbar," he said, and the listening ear of the girl, whose eyes were so coolly yet critically resting on his face, could detect nothing in the voice to mar the effect of that face—"Mrs. Dunbar, would you have the kindness to tell me the name of the lady who has just sung?"

"Certainly. She is a Miss Kennedy. Do you admire her voice?"

"Can you ask? I am filled with wonder and admiration at the amount of vocal disguise thrown over what I faintly remember as a simple English ballad. She must be very clever, so to metamorphose it."

"Oh, she is!" asserted little Mrs. Dunbar eagerly. "And she has studied in Italy, and—"

"Thank you," he said gravely. "All doubts as to her perfections are set at rest. Of course, if she has studied in Italy that says—everything."

The very faintest trace of a smile was visible on the fresh, parted lips of the girl who, with a grace as negligent as his own, stood leaning against a marble pillar that supported a magnificent vase of genuine Sevres.

Mrs. Dunbar glanced from one to the other. Then she said, not without some misgivings:

"May I introduce you to my friend, Miss Foster? She shares your musical tastes, though she has not been in Italy."

A bow, a quick yet comprehensive glance. Trifles enough. Yet, after all, is there anything in life that so little deserves to be considered trifling as the introduction of two people, strangers up to just that moment—strangers, and living out their individual existences, frank, careless, free-hearted, content—only to date from thence the sorrows and heart-burnings, the misery and remorse, that Fate calls into life beneath a meeting such as this first one of Ivor Grant and Beryl Foster?

Conversation following on a first introduction is not apt to be

very brilliant, and Ivor Grant rarely troubled himself to talk to unmarried women. As a rule, he found them insipid, or said he did, which amounts to the same thing. Yet he could talk well when he liked, and was not too lazy.

Keeping to his usual rule, he allowed his companion to begin, and she, having summed up his character by his outward appearance, as she had a way of doing with people, opened fire in a way that startled him.

"I don't think you understand music, judging by your remarks. Miss Kennedy is a beautiful singer."

"Why don't you say, 'is considered so'?" he asked coolly. "That would be a saving clause, and I might take refuge under the plea of being unable to 'consider' her that. My taste in music is very simple. It is my misfortune, of course."

"In the present instance?" was the quick rejoinder.

"Your inference is correct. But to me it seems there might be a worse misfortune."

"What?" she asked, glancing up, and wondering whether he was in earnest or only stupid.

"To be able to appreciate what you said was 'beautiful.' Trills, roulades, screams—Heavens! what it would be to live in the same house with that woman!"

"I am sorry you don't admire her," said the girl demurely. "I enjoy the treat you describe very often. The lady is my cousin."

It was not often that Ivor Grant lost his composure, not often that the serene face changed or altered either its colour or expression. But it did both now. Beneath that embarrassing announcement, before that mischievous glance, he blushed like a girl.

"I—I beg your pardon," he stammered.

"Pray do not," she said coolly. "It is rather pleasant to hear the unvarnished truth sometimes. Society is rather a glass house though, isn't it? one has to be careful where one throws one's stones. After all, your remark is not so bad as that of the gentleman in *Punch*, who saw a miserable-looking creature lounging against the doorway at some grand reception, and addressed him with, 'I say, this is awfully slow—shall we go out and have a B. and S.' The recipient of the invitation was his host."

"Well, that mistake was a degree worse than mine," laughed Captain Grant.

"But I suppose you won't retract your opinion—poor Grace! if she only knew how those practised 'song decorations' are valued! I suppose you understand music thoroughly?"

"No," he said quickly, and roused out of his habitual languor by his companion's manner, at once so frank and unconventional, yet so removed from the fastness and vulgarity of much of the modern young ladyism. "That's just it. I understand nothing about it except when a thing pleases me. I learnt it as one learns at school, and my friends are pleased to assure me I have a voice. There is some music I feel, and could listen to for—well, say for half an hour—but not much."

"Oh!" said his companion with another glance.

The "oh" might have been meant to close the subject, but the glance encouraged him to continue speaking.

"A good voice is a gift one can't sufficiently value, in my opinion. Why then spoil what nature has perfected?"

"Most people consider nature's handiwork rather crude," she answered demurely. "It is art, you know, that perfects."

"You are not easy to reason with," he said, smiling at the retort. "Will you give me your candid opinion? When you hear an air or melody that is beautiful, that touches you, or charms your ear, doesn't it seem desecration to hide and cover it with those abominations, entitled 'variations'?"

"The composers would be at a loss if they had only their melody to deal with. The working out of the theme is considered the real art of composition, and variation is only another form of development."

"You have not answered my question."

"Haven't I? Do you know, somebody once said that the great art of logic was to say, 'Why?' or 'Why not?' to everything? You asked me if I didn't consider variations a desecration of music. Why?"

"I shall say that, like all women, you can't argue."

"And I shall answer that, like all men, you are too fond of it. See how we are straying from our subject—the 'grace' of musical decorations."

"Women should never make puns."

"Why? Because they put yours to shame?"

"No, I won't allow that. Simply because they don't sound well from refined lips."

"I thought we spoke with our tongues," said Beryl, just raising her flowers to her face and glancing at him provokingly over the snowy clusters.

He bit his lip. The girl provoked him and yet interested him. That glance met his own, and for an instant held it in a sort of

wondering regard. He had not thought she was half so beautiful till he saw those splendid eyes glancing over the flowers, provocative, mirthful, yet with something so strange and almost solemn in their intense dark depths that it startled him as much as if he had heard a sermon preached in a ball-room, or seen something equally incongruous.

With all the languor and affectation gone from his own, he returned that glance gravely and steadily.

He found himself saying in his heart, "What sort of girl is this?" and ere he could answer the question in any definite way, her eyes drooped; she let her hand fall to her side with a graceful negligent gesture.

"Are you fond of dancing?" she asked.

"Fond of dancing!" he echoed. "Why?"

"Please don't adopt my line of argument," she said with a merry laugh. "It will be very embarrassing if we keep on asking each other that same question. Why—why? Oh, because most army men are."

"And what makes you think I am an army man. Mrs. Dunbar did not mention my name."

"No, but do you think it was needed? Like that of the Church, the profession proclaims itself. I had formed my own opinion of you before you were introduced. I did not want to hear your name?"

"Again might I ask—why?"

"You might and may; and my reply would be the counter-question recommended to refute all arguments. Why not?"

"I think," he said, smiling in spite of himself, "that your feminine logic is quite unapproachable. I can only consider our conversation a sort of gigantic conundrum, and say, 'I give it up.'"

"Ah," she said quickly, "are you so easily baffled, or is it only too much trouble?"

"To talk to you, certainly not; to understand you, yes."

"You are candid," she said, uncertain whether to be vexed or pleased.

"A rare virtue nowadays. But since you possess it yourself, you ought to appreciate it."

"Does one always appreciate what one possesses?" she said thoughtfully. "I think not. And you think me candid?"

"Very much so," he answered emphatically.

Again she laughed—a little, low laugh pleasant to hear, yet not so mirthful as it should have been, coming from such young lips. His ear, quick at discerning the false ring in most women's laughter, caught this note of sadness in hers. It puzzled him, but then the girl herself had puzzled him all this time. He thought—indeed, he knew—that he had never met anyone like her.

How long or how short a time would it be before that fact came before him in the light of a regret? Happily he did not know then.

"Well, perhaps I am," she went on, when the laugh had died away; "I can't help saying what I think. I should like to do it much more frequently, but—isn't it strange how truth offends, and yet how we are always lauding it?"

"Very strange. We have to thank these artificial habits of society for that."

"Society, society," exclaimed the girl wearily. "How sick one gets of it and its ways and doctrines. We, who pride ourselves on our freedom, are bound to a worse slavery than the poor creatures we gave our blood to free. I wonder," she added bitterly, "what force of courage or strength could free us."

"The situation, reduced to its primitive elements, is simply a case of individual folly," he answered reflectively, "to be altered or annealed only by individual effort."

"Which none of us are brave enough to make?"

"Well, you see," he answered thoughtfully, "it would be a great bore; self-sacrifice, and all those high-falutin' principles that sound so grand and read so well, are awfully troublesome things in real life. It's so much easier to go with one's time than oppose it—"

"And pays so much better, you should add," she interrupted sarcastically.

"Exactly."

There was a moment's pause. Then she said suddenly:

"Do you ever think?"

He lifted his eyebrows.

"Occasionally I do. Do you consider it unlikely?"

She was silent for a few seconds. Then a smile stole over her lips, a smile serious, soft, puzzling almost as herself and her manifold contradictions of face and manner.

"I did," she said quietly. "I suppose appearances do mislead one occasionally."

Once again he coloured hotly, and the flush brought to her a sudden sense of the apparent rudeness of her words. She deemed it best, however, not to notice the mistake.

"It is so rare," she went on calmly, "to find anyone who will

allow that he has a mind, or that it has any use beyond the contemplation and discussion of trivialities."

"Would you like ball-room partners to discuss science and the Pentateuch?"

"Certainly not," she said, laughing a little. "'Everything in its place' is a good motto, but even in a ball-room one need not be wholly and entirely frivolous."

"Which reminds me that I have monopolised you all this time, and never once asked you to dance."

"Even after that hint of mine? I do not think you are a Terpsichorean votary."

"You are right. But though not a votary, I indulge in the amusement now and then. May I have the pleasure?"

"Since you have as good as said it is no pleasure, I cannot think of inflicting its pretence upon you," she answered demurely.

"Pardon me, you misunderstood."

"Very likely," she said with one of those puzzling glances, "but don't you think it might be penance to me? Like yourself I really don't care for dancing, though I admire singing."

"You are determined to be unmerciful," he said; "I suppose you will never forgive my unfortunate mistake?"

"Which do you mean?"

"The—the—about your cousin, of course."

"Ah!" she said slowly, and looked at him with a whole world of mischief in her beautiful eyes; "that was unfortunate, as you say, but it might have been worse."

"How?" he asked quickly.

She was moving away now with a bow that seemed meant as a distinct farewell, but he followed her, and offered his arm, which after a moment's hesitation she took.

"Because, after all, the lady whose vocalisation displeased you so much is not my cousin."

"How unkind of you to frighten me so," he answered reproachfully, "and to tell me such a—such a—"

"That's right, spare my feelings," laughed the girl; "I only wanted to give you a lesson. It is so unsafe in society to give your opinion of one person to another."

"Do you think," he said, biting his lip with unconcealed vexation, "that I am so ignorant, so unversed in the ways of society, that I require a lesson in manners?"

"Oh no," she said, glancing at his clouded face with ready contrition. "Pray don't fancy that. I am really very sorry. I only did it for fun."

"Don't look so dreadfully serious over it," he answered as he met the pleading glance. "Even fun and misunderstandings are no bad basis for friendship."

"Friendship!" she echoed, somewhat startled.

"Well, perhaps I was premature in suggesting such a possibility. But I hope we may meet again. It is not too improbable, is it?"

"Improbable?" she said gravely. "Well, perhaps—no. Possible, I hardly think. This is my farewell to society for a long time—perhaps for ever."

"What do you mean?" he asked, startled, and looking fully and searchingly at the face which had grown somewhat pale and—was it hard? He thought so then. He was sure of it a moment after, as she raised her eyes and met his own enquiring gaze.

"I mean," she said coolly, "that I am going to do what my friend Mrs. Dunbar has done—join the 'noble army of martyrs.'"

Something—he could never quite tell what—fell across Ivor Grant's heart at that moment like a discordant sound that jars on ears fresh feasted with some perfect melody. He was silent, and his face grew grave.

"You are going to be married?" he said at last.

"The day after to-morrow," she answered quietly.

## CHAPTER II. WHAT THEY BOTH THOUGHT.

IVOR GRANT lit a cigar and strolled homewards to his rooms that warm June night, feeling for once in his life a curious sort of dissatisfaction with himself and the world in general. He could not imagine why.

As a rule he was not given to self-analysis—indeed, he troubled himself very little about anything, having a thorough detestation of worry, and a rooted conviction that people brought it on themselves by not taking life easily enough.

Perhaps it never occurred to his philosophy that the capability of doing so is entirely a matter of temperament. It had been no difficult matter to him from his very earliest days, he having been the spoilt darling of a mother who idolised him, and of an uncle who indulged him in every fancy. He had known very little of life except its fairest side, and owed it more to himself than anyone else that he had not grown up to manhood quite stupid, or quite conceited, or quite useless.

But that sunny, frank temper of his, and, possibly, a fair share of

brains with which nature had provided him, saved him from this calamity, and made him a favourite everywhere, quite as much with men as with women.

He was too good-looking not to please the latter—dangerously good-looking many of them had acknowledged, when haunting memories of that perfect face and those languid, mournful eyes had come between them and their night's rest after a flirtation with the owner.

Why the eyes had that expression often puzzled the soft-hearted victims to Ivor Grant's fascinations. There was nothing mournful about the young man himself, and he was cool enough and impassive enough to give people the impression that he sailed along through life on very unruffled waters indeed, but never did any one so deceive at first sight as the individual to whom Beryl Foster had given the *sobriquet* of "My Lord Conceit."

She had somewhat prided herself on a skill at reading character, and her first glance at the lazy, handsome figure, the well-cut profile and languid eyes, had been one that summed him up as one of society's spoilt and courted darlings, of very little good except to look at.

That he was good for that she acknowledged very rapidly, and indeed she would have been more than singular had she not done so, even though she professed to despise good looks in men.

That he could talk well enough to measure swords with herself had first surprised, then piqued her. Of course he had no right to be anything different to what she had imagined, and yet he was.

Had he not been she would probably never have given him a second thought, whereas now she gave him a great many.

Beryl Foster was as much of a coquette as a pretty girl with an irresistible attraction for most men is sure to become. She had had two London seasons, and had come to them fresh from a country parsonage, and prepared to enjoy them to the uttermost under the chaperonage of her dearest and warmest friend, Madge Dunbar.

Perhaps she enjoyed the homage and admiration all the more from knowing that her own future was assured, that she had no occasion to distress herself or her chaperon on the score of eligibles or the reverse. Her fate had been calmly settled for her long before, and as calmly accepted by herself. She was to marry her cousin, her father's last living relative, as soon as he was ready to have her, and she had grown reconciled to the fact—as well as to the other and more stubborn one of banishment to India, which it entailed—long before the evening when she met Ivor Grant at Mrs. Dunbar's "little dance."

John Marsden was one of those plodding, commonplace souls, who seem thoroughly good, perfectly trustworthy—and, alas! that it should be so—so eminently uninteresting.

He had known his cousin from her babyhood, and had gone through life with the one firm intention of laying his fortune and devotion at her feet. He was twelve years older than herself, but at sixteen she had accepted him, and at twenty-two she was about to marry him, not for any particular reason, not with an atom of enthusiasm in the matter, but simply because she had been brought up to look forward to that fact as an ultimate result of his placid devotion, a natural response to the demands of duty, and a total indifference to any one else who might have called into life a feeling very different to that which John Marsden had inspired.

Beryl always declared she was unromantic. Her love of reading, great as it was, had been of a kind very different from that of most girls of her age and time. Her father was a clever man, and had imbued her with the idea that minds are meant to be cultivated to some good end, not left as waste ground for such tillers as the world, the flesh, and the devil. Her disposition was naturally a happy one, and life had been a placid and untroubled thing to her, though always busy, useful, and well occupied. Her success in society had not dazzled her a whit, though she was well pleased with it. Mrs. Dunbar had often felt puzzled with her, for what could one make of a girl who was as glad to talk with an old man as with a young one, provided he could "talk well," and who made herself just as agreeable to women as to men.

Only sometimes had her friend felt a little uncomfortable foreboding of Beryl's future when, in some chance glimpse of the girl's mind, she had caught sight of possibilities she had never dreamt of, a strength and depth of feeling, and an acuteness of sympathy, which proclaimed her capable of much suffering in time to come.

Long as she had known Beryl, dearly as she loved her, she yet felt always that she never quite understood the girl. She had watched her through two seasons of London life, and acknowledged that she understood her less than ever.

Sometimes she felt sorry that she was going to be married, sometimes glad, for she knew that the sterling honesty of the girl's nature would make marriage a safeguard and a bond. But invariably, as she looked at John Marsden's commonplace face, or listened to his uninteresting conversation, she felt herself saying, "Oh, if it were anybody else!" Still, there had never been anybody else whom Beryl considered more suitable, or at least appeared to consider so,

and now everything was settled and arranged, and the marriage was to take place on the next day but one.

When her guests had departed that night, Madge Dunbar went up to her friend's room for a chat before retiring.

She found Beryl sitting in a low chair, gazing into the fern-filled fireplace. She had not removed her dress, or done anything apparently, except throw her flowers down on the dressing-table, and herself into the chair.

"I was wondering whether you would come," she said, looking up as Mrs. Dunbar entered. "I hoped you would. Are you tired?"

"No, not at all," answered her friend, taking another chair. "But I thought you were, as I missed you long ago. Why haven't you gone to bed?"

"I was not tired," answered Beryl somewhat absently; "I only wanted to think."

"What about?" asked Madge Dunbar quickly.

"About—oh, many things. The near approach of my wedding-day; the fit of my dress; the success of your evening with its incongruous combination of music and dancing—don't try the two again, Madge; the"—looking up with a mischievous glance—"the perfections of My Lord Conceit."

Mrs. Dunbar laughed.

"I hope you found him interesting. Why didn't you dance with him? He is one of the crack waltzers of the day."

"Enviably being!" murmured Beryl lazily, as she leant back in her chair and unclasped a bracelet from one round white arm. "I didn't waltz, though he asked me, because I preferred talking to him. I am glad I wasn't aware of his reputation, otherwise I should have concluded he carried his brains in his heels. Most dancing men do. I suppose the poor things get addled."

"I think, my dear," said Mrs. Dunbar gravely, "that you should not jump so rapidly at conclusions. How can you tell what a person is like from just a few formal sentences spoken to each other in society?"

"And I think, my dear," answered Beryl with a mocking imitation of her friend's voice and manner, "that you can find out a great deal about a person in even a few formal sentences. Shall I tell you what I found out about My Lord Conceit?"

"Certainly, if you wish."

"*Imprimis*," said the girl, laying one slender white finger gravely against another, "he is in the army."

"Household Brigade," murmured her friend.

"Well, he's a soldier for all that, I suppose. Secondly, he has some brains. Thirdly, he can talk, not badly; and fourthly, I am very sorry I have met him."

The conclusion was so sudden and so unexpected, that Madge Dunbar looked in undisguised astonishment at the girl.

"Why?" she asked.

"Why, why? Oh dear me!" laughed Beryl, rising somewhat impatiently, as if to put an end to the interview. "Why is one anything—why does one think, or feel, or like, or dislike? How can I tell why I feel it? I only know I do."

"Was he so disagreeable?" asked Mrs. Dunbar, rising also, and looking with hesitating glance at the beautiful pale face before her.

Again Beryl laughed.

"Disagreeable! Oh, very much so. I never met such a disagreeable man. He quite spoils my evening."

"I am sorry for that," answered her friend; "but you know you would be introduced to him."

"What great events from little causes spring," quoted Beryl, unfastening her dress and slipping out of it in some quick impulsive fashion of her own; "not that My Lord Conceit is a little cause though. About six feet of bone and muscle—eh, Madge?"

"He is one of the handsomest men I have ever seen," remarked Mrs. Dunbar thoughtfully.

"Handsome! How I hate that word!" cried Beryl impatiently. "What does it matter about a man's looks? The uglier he is the better. There is some chance then of his giving his other qualities fair play."

"Is it impossible to do that, and yet be good-looking?"

"Quite," said the girl determinedly.

She was moving restlessly about now, had thrown on a loose white wrapper, and unbound her rich brown hair, which fell to her knees, tall as she was.

"You are full of prejudices, Beryl," said Madge, smiling, "and rather obstinate about acknowledging them. Was Captain Grant good for nothing except to look at? If so, he kept you employed at that rather a long time."

"I was studying him," said the girl quietly.

"What makes you so fond of studying people?" asked her friend. A little faint smile stole to the lips that were so firmly set, and so perfect in shape and colour.

"Some day perhaps I shall write a book," she answered. "I am collecting materials."

Mrs. Dunbar laughed outright.

"I can't fancy you doing that, Beryl," she said; "you are too impetuous and impatient. If you could begin one day and finish the next, you might succeed—not otherwise."

"Madge," said the girl suddenly, and with that startling irrelevance to the subject in discussion which was one of her peculiarities, "tell me how you felt the day before you were married."

Her friend looked at her in astonishment, then a soft, rosy flush stole over her face, and a smile parted her lips.

"Very happy," she answered readily. "You see I was very much in love—"

"In love!" interrupted the girl impatiently. "What has that got to do with it?"

"Everything, I should say," answered Mrs. Dunbar gravely.

"Do you mean to say you don't love John Marsden?"

Beryl drew the comb slowly through the long rich tress of hair she held in her hand.

"I have been engaged to him since I was sixteen," she said thoughtfully. "I am twenty-two now. I don't think in all that time it has ever occurred to me to ask myself that question. Yet, I suppose love and marriage always go together."

"They ought to," answered Madge Dunbar. "Unfortunately they very seldom do nowadays."

"Then I am safe," laughed the girl, with one of those rapid changes of manner which always puzzled her friend; "my case is on the side of the majority."

"Beryl, my dear," said Mrs. Dunbar anxiously, as she came and stood beside the girl, and looked up at the beautiful, wilful face, "will you tell me one thing: Are you quite content to marry John Marsden? Are you quite happy?"

"Two things!" said Beryl, laughing. "My dear, I have never been unhappy in my life except once, when poor Fido broke his leg in a rabbit-burrow. What makes you look so grave? Is matrimony so very dreadful? I shall tell Cosmo to-morrow that you tried to frighten me out of it."

"I wish you would be serious for five minutes," said Madge plaintively.

"Dearest child—five! I was serious for a whole quarter of an hour. Now, good-night. I must get some beauty sleep, you know, and we have heaps of things to do to-morrow."

Yet, despite the light words and careless manner, there was something wistful in her eyes, and in the lingering kisses that touched Madge Dunbar's soft lips, something that haunted her friend's memory for long after, and left a sort of longing in her heart that her lips had no courage to frame.

"I hope Beryl is not making a mistake."

Beryl herself stood for a long, long time before that glass, which reflected a tall white figure with rippling hair.

She was looking at herself quite unconsciously—looking back at her deep eyes, soft and full of dreams—dreams that for the first time in her life brought her face to face with some undreamt-of possibility; something which stirred the fearless innocence of life and thought, and made her ask herself at last: "Am I right to do this thing?"

She could not understand why the doubt had arisen. She could not define the vague unrest which filled her heart that night. What possible association had these things with the memory of a handsome face, or the lingering echo of a voice? Aye, and what possible association with a path of stones and thorns that the brave young feet must tread in years to come, or with the tears that gathered even now in the radiant eyes, to which tears were so strange and so unfrequent?

Ivor Grant smoked his third cigar through, dismissed his man, drank two brandies-and-sodas, thought he would go to bed—thought he wouldn't, turned over the pages of a new novel, shut it up impatiently, finally went over to the window and threw it open, and stood looking out at the quiet starlit street.

"I wish I hadn't met that girl," he muttered to himself, "or that she wasn't going to be married."

(To be continued.)

## A Pertinent Question.

LIGHTS from the windows are gleaming and glancing,  
Music and laughter are echoing near,  
Save where the twain move apart from the dancing,  
Uttering vows each was longing to hear;  
Tender his tones in their low modulation,  
Timidly downwards her glances are cast,  
Eyes match'd with sapphire, and cheeks with carnation.  
Fair is the vision. How long will it last?

Think, when old Time, of all jokers the grimmest,

Whitens the tresses and furrows the brow,

Changing the forms that are lithest and slimmest,

Will your affection be steady as now?

True that to-day, in its ardent devotion,

Love takes no heed of the future or past;

Curbing and checking the tide of emotion,

Prudence should whisper: "How long will it last?"

All were in vain, though the caution be needed,

Prudence is ne'er the companion of youth;

Passion for aye leaves unnoticed, unheeded,

Warnings of wisdom and guesses of truth.

Forging the fetters that bind them together,

Gilding the hours that are flying so fast;

Careless of sunlight or stormiest weather,

Love never questions: "How long will it last?"

## Two New Years' Eves.

A Tale of the Press Gang.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"By George, there she is again!" exclaimed Captain Hugh Alden, of His Britannic Majesty's Navy, as he was swaggering through the streets of the quiet little borough of Sandwich one fine December morning of the year 1811, and paused to look back at the retreating figure of a young lady closely wrapped up in furs, who had just passed him.

"She is a pretty girl and no mistake about it, and pretty girls are not so common in these outlandish parts of the kingdom that they can be just glanced at and forgotten. Now I wonder who she is?"

So pondering, he turned back and followed the subject of his eulogium. He watched her enter a doorway, over which was inscribed upon a board: "Thomas Burt, carrier to all parts of London, every Monday, and returning on Saturday night;" and muttered:

"Miss Burt—hey! Well, I must try and find out some more about Miss Burt. I've met her ever so many times, and each time she seems nicer and prettier. It'll be a strange thing if rustic Miss Burt resists the advances of—well, rather handsome and accomplished Hugh Alden of His Majesty's Service."

With these complacent notions he retraced his steps towards the quay on the bank of the sluggish Stour, where lay moored a smart cutter flying the naval ensign, and bearing in gold letters on her stern the name "Cynthia."

Captain Alden was in fact in command of the Cynthia, which was engaged upon "particular service" of a particularly unpleasant nature, at least to the inhabitants of the ports whereat she touched, inasmuch as she was engaged in impressing men for service on His Majesty's frigate Guerrière, daily expected off Sandwich on her way to America.

The cutter was naturally the object of much admiration and curiosity to the good folk of Sandwich, who, however familiar their ancestors might have been, in the palmy days of the old Cinque Port, with the spectacle of the entire national fleet within their waters, were strangers to the sight of one of the king's ships almost literally at their very doors, so that a very large proportion of them spent their days in lounging on the quay-side in groups, and speculating upon the possible reason for the appearance of such a phenomenon.

Captain Alden was pacing up and down the spotless deck of the cutter upon the morning following the little episode above described, inwardly praying that the Guerrière might be delayed on her passage round from Woolwich, in order that he might get another glance at the pretty face which had so charmed him. It was Sunday morning, and the number of quay-side loungers was greater than usual, so that the captain, who was really not a bad-looking man, and who was fully aware of the impression made upon simple minds by an attractive uniform, strutted his very best, and looked every inch a monarch. Great was his delight, therefore, when he espied amidst the gaping faces the pretty features of Miss Burt. Politely raising his hat, he said:

"Would Miss Burt like to step aboard and see the Cynthia?"

The young lady blushed, hesitated for a moment, and then without availing herself of the officer's proffered arm, jumped lightly down on to the deck.

"You do the Cynthia a great honour, Miss Burt," said the captain, "for it is not often that our monotonous lives are enlivened by the presence of ladies."

"But my name is not Burt," said the girl. "Who told you that it was?"

"Why—well, I saw you go into a doorway yesterday, above which was written the name of Burt," replied the officer, "so of course I made sure that you were Miss Burt."

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At the name Carroll the captain started and stammered:

"Oh, Mr. Burt is your guardian! Then have you no father or mother?"

"I don't remember them," replied Mavis. "I came here when I was a little bit of a girl, and I was always told that I was an orphan."

The captain seemed lost for a few moments in profound reverie, and almost forgot his visitor, but suddenly recollecting her, showed her all over the ship to her huge delight, until the sound of the church-bells reminded her that she must go.

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"Tom—who is Tom?" asked the captain.

"Tom! Why, he's—he's my sweetheart," answered the lass demurely; "such a dear old fellow, and so fond of ships, for he has been a sailor and knows all about them."

Of course the captain could not reject the proposal, so he said:

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So the damsel thanked him, sprang on to the quay, and disappeared through the crowd which was slowly dispersing.

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"Mavis Carroll!" he muttered to himself; "fancy meeting Mavis Carroll here. Why, she's reputed dead long ago. By George! if the London lawyers only knew that she was alive! Why, I suppose I should have to give up that comfortable little income which I enjoy as having married her sister—the next-of-kin, as was supposed, to old Carroll. Married! That's a nasty word, but it's there staring me in the face. I married Dorothy Carroll and Dorothy Carroll is my wife—that is, if she's alive—I haven't seen her for five years; but I must be careful. And who's this Tom? Some slouching country bumpkin, I suppose, and he'll marry her, and her name will get out, and then—By George! he mustn't, he sha'n't marry her. It's a deep game, but it's worth playing, for if I can make this girl Mrs. Alden, the lawyers may come on as much as they like—unless—unless they find that I'm already married and that my wife is alive, which I don't think is likely, considering the state I left her in. Yes, it's five years since I got into that rage, and—"

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Tom seemed to look rather shyly at the captain and the cutter, much as a hare looks suspiciously at anything which bears a resemblance to a trap, but at repeated instigations on the part of Mavis he floundered on to the deck and stood pulling his forelock and scraping his foot whilst Mavis laughingly introduced him.

In a few minutes the captain had put him completely at his ease, and he felt actually proud as he paced up and down the deck in full view of the admiring crowd, a real king's officer on one side talking to him like an equal, and on the other the prettiest girl in Sandwich.

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"A deal sight harder, sir," replied Tom. "A sailorin', you gets your grub reg'lar, and has plenty o' sleep; but I starts from here to-morrow mornin' afore daylight, an' I gets in to The George Inn, Borough, late o' Wednesday night, barrin' accidents, and early o' Thursday mornin' I starts off again home. I has to sleep where an' when I can, and get my grub anyhow; but I wouldn't go back—not I!"

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"When's what to come off?" asked Mavis.

"Why, when are you going to be married?" said the captain.

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"We said we'd be wed o' New Year's Day," said Tom.

"So as to begin the year well," said the captain; and so they went on, talking and laughing, until, as the churches chimed the dinner-hour, and the happy couple prepared to go, the captain had succeeded in completely winding himself round their hearts, and accepted an invitation from them to go to Delft Street and make the acquaintance of old Thomas Burt.

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In such a small place, where everybody knew everybody else's business, gossips soon got talking about the affair, and once or twice the old carrier was warned. But he saw in Captain Alden only an affable, jovial gentleman, who could tell a good story, join in a hearty laugh, and talk genuine common-sense, and he no more believed that Mavis could have any stronger feeling for him than respect and regard, than that she would give up her affection for Tom for a powder-monkey on board the Guerrière.

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But all looked forward to New Year's Eve. Tom would be free then, and there would be a banquet, and bell-ringing, and first-footing customs, and general hilarity, to assist in all of which the captain was cordially invited.

He was expected to arrive at about nightfall, although, as the snow was deep on the roads, he might be detained. However, the fire burned cheerily on the hearth, the old carrier was in his accustomed chair, with his long pipe in his mouth, listening to Captain Alden's lively chat, whilst Mavis, coquettishly arrayed in her best, was busily



Mrs. Dunbar laughed outright.

"I can't fancy you doing that, Beryl," she said; "you are too impetuous and impatient. If you could begin one day and finish the next, you might succeed—not otherwise."

"Madge," said the girl suddenly, and with that startling irrelevance to the subject in discussion which was one of her peculiarities, "tell me how you felt the day before you were married."

Her friend looked at her in astonishment, then a soft, rosy flush stole over her face, and a smile parted her lips.

"Very happy," she answered readily. "You see I was very much in love—"

"In love!" interrupted the girl impatiently. "What has that got to do with it?"

"Everything, I should say," answered Mrs. Dunbar gravely. "Do you mean to say you don't love John Marsden?"

Beryl drew the comb slowly through the long rich tress of hair she held in her hand.

"I have been engaged to him since I was sixteen," she said thoughtfully. "I am twenty-two now. I don't think in all that time it has ever occurred to me to ask myself that question. Yet, I suppose love and marriage always go together."

"They ought to," answered Madge Dunbar. "Unfortunately they very seldom do nowadays."

"Then I am safe," laughed the girl, with one of those rapid changes of manner which always puzzled her friend; "my case is on the side of the majority."

"Beryl, my dear," said Mrs. Dunbar anxiously, as she came and stood beside the girl, and looked up at the beautiful, wilful face, "will you tell me one thing: Are you quite content to marry John Marsden? Are you quite happy?"

"Two things!" said Beryl, laughing. "My dear, I have never been unhappy in my life except once, when poor Fido broke his leg in a rabbit-burrow. What makes you look so grave? Is matrimony so very dreadful? I shall tell Cosmo to-morrow that you tried to frighten me out of it."

"I wish you would be serious for five minutes," said Madge plaintively.

"Dearest child—five! I was serious for a whole quarter of an hour. Now, good-night. I must get some beauty sleep, you know, and we have heaps of things to do to-morrow."

Yet, despite the light words and careless manner, there was something wistful in her eyes, and in the lingering kisses that touched Madge Dunbar's soft lips, something that haunted her friend's memory for long after, and left a sort of longing in her heart that her lips had no courage to frame.

"I hope Beryl is not making a mistake."

Beryl herself stood for a long, long time before that glass, which reflected a tall white figure with rippling hair.

She was looking at herself quite unconsciously—looking back at her deep eyes, soft and full of dreams—dreams that for the first time in her life brought her face to face with some undreamt-of possibility; something which stirred the fearless innocence of life and thought, and made her ask herself at last: "Am I right to do this thing?"

She could not understand why the doubt had arisen. She could not define the vague unrest which filled her heart that night. What possible association had these things with the memory of a handsome face, or the lingering echo of a voice? Aye, and what possible association with a path of stones and thorns that the brave young feet must tread in years to come, or with the tears that gathered even now in the radiant eyes, to which tears were so strange and so unfrequent?

Ivor Grant smoked his third cigar through, dismissed his man, drank two brandies-and-sodas, thought he would go to bed—thought he wouldn't, turned over the pages of a new novel, shut it up impatiently, finally went over to the window and threw it open, and stood looking out at the quiet starlit street.

"I wish I hadn't met that girl," he muttered to himself, "or that she wasn't going to be married."

(To be continued.)

## A Pertinent Question.

LIGHTS from the windows are gleaming and glancing,  
Music and laughter are echoing near,  
Save where the twain move apart from the dancing,  
Uttering vows each was longing to hear;  
Tender his tones in their low modulation,  
Timidly downwards her glances are cast,  
Eyes match'd with sapphire, and cheeks with carnation,  
Fair is the vision. How long will it last?

Think, when old Time, of all jokers the grimmest,

Whitens the tresses and furrows the brow,

Changing the forms that are lithest and slimmest,

Will your affection be steady as now?

True that to-day, in its ardent devotion,

Love takes no heed of the future or past;

Curbing and checking the tide of emotion,

Prudence should whisper: "How long will it last?"

All were in vain, though the caution be needed,

Prudence is ne'er the companion of youth;

Passion for aye leaves unnoticed, unheeded,

Warnings of wisdom and guesses of truth.

Forging the fetters that bind them together,

Gilding the hours that are flying so fast;

Careless of sunlight or stormiest weather,

Love never questions: "How long will it last?"

## Two New Years' Eves.

A Tale of the Press Gang.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"By George, there she is again!" exclaimed Captain Hugh Alden, of His Britannic Majesty's Navy, as he was swaggering through the streets of the quiet little borough of Sandwich one fine December morning of the year 1811, and paused to look back at the retreating figure of a young lady closely wrapped up in furs, who had just passed him.

"She is a pretty girl and no mistake about it, and pretty girls are not so common in these outlandish parts of the kingdom that they can be just glanced at and forgotten. Now I wonder who she is?"

So pondering, he turned back and followed the subject of his eulogium. He watched her enter a doorway, over which was inscribed upon a board: "Thomas Burt, carrier to all parts of London, every Monday, and returning on Saturday night;" and muttered:

"Miss Burt—hey! Well, I must try and find out some more about Miss Burt. I've met her ever so many times, and each time she seems nicer and prettier. It'll be a strange thing if rustic Miss Burt resists the advances of—well, rather handsome and accomplished Hugh Alden of His Majesty's Service."

With these complacent notions he retraced his steps towards the quay on the bank of the sluggish Stour, where lay moored a smart cutter flying the naval ensign, and bearing in gold letters on her stern the name "Cynthia."

Captain Alden was in fact in command of the Cynthia, which was engaged upon "particular service" of a particularly unpleasant nature, at least to the inhabitants of the ports whereat she touched, inasmuch as she was engaged in impressing men for service on His Majesty's frigate Guerrière, daily expected off Sandwich on her way to America.

The cutter was naturally the object of much admiration and curiosity to the good folk of Sandwich, who, however familiar their ancestors might have been, in the palmy days of the old Cinque Port, with the spectacle of the entire national fleet within their waters, were strangers to the sight of one of the king's ships almost literally at their very doors, so that a very large proportion of them spent their days in lounging on the quay-side in groups, and speculating upon the possible reason for the appearance of such a phenomenon.

Captain Alden was pacing up and down the spotless deck of the cutter upon the morning following the little episode above described, inwardly praying that the Guerrière might be delayed on her passage round from Woolwich, in order that he might get another glance at the pretty face which had so charmed him. It was Sunday morning, and the number of quay-side loungers was greater than usual, so that the captain, who was really not a bad-looking man, and who was fully aware of the impression made upon simple minds by an attractive uniform, strutted his very best, and looked every inch a monarch. Great was his delight, therefore, when he espied amidst the gaping faces the pretty features of Miss Burt. Politely raising his hat, he said:

"Would Miss Burt like to step aboard and see the Cynthia?"

The young lady blushed, hesitated for a moment, and then without availing herself of the officer's proffered arm, jumped lightly down on to the deck.

"You do the Cynthia a great honour, Miss Burt," said the captain, "for it is not often that our monotonous lives are enlivened by the presence of ladies."

"But my name is not Burt," said the girl. "Who told you that it was?"

"Why—well, I saw you go into a doorway yesterday, above which was written the name of Burt," replied the officer, "so of course I made sure that you were Miss Burt."

"Oh dear no. My name is Mavis Carroll," laughed the girl. "Mr. Burt is my guardian."

At the name Carroll the captain started and stammered:

"Oh, Mr. Burt is your guardian! Then have you no father or mother?"

"I don't remember them," replied Mavis. "I came here when I was a little bit of a girl, and I was always told that I was an orphan."

The captain seemed lost for a few moments in profound reverie, and almost forgot his visitor, but suddenly recollecting her, showed her all over the ship to her huge delight, until the sound of the church-bells reminded her that she must go.

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"Tom! Why, he's—he's my sweetheart," answered the lass demurely; "such a dear old fellow, and so fond of ships, for he has been a sailor and knows all about them."

Of course the captain could not reject the proposal, so he said:

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So the damsel thanked him, sprang on to the quay, and disappeared through the crowd which was slowly dispersing.

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engaged in laying the table, ever and anon rushing to the window as she heard the sound of wheels on the rough cobble-stoned street. Seven o'clock chimed from the tower of St. Mary's.

Said the old carrier:

"The roads must be uncommon bad, to be sure. I guess they've a job getting down the hill from Ash. Howsomedever, he'll be all the readier for sommat to eat an' drink when he do come. I don't reckon that even sailorin' gives a man a bigger appetite, captain, than a long drive on a cold night."

Half-past seven chimed. The old man fidgeted in his chair, and Mavis stationed herself at the window. Still no Tom. As eight o'clock struck, she uttered a cry of joy, and rushed to the door, accompanied by the captain. The old cart, thickly coated with snow, drew up at the door, but no Tom jumped down from it.

"Now, Tom, it's too cold to be playing tricks," she cried. "Come out of the cart, I know you're hiding, and supper's been waiting ever such a while."

Still no answer but a low moan, which came from the dark recesses of the cart.

"Oh, he's hurt!" exclaimed Mavis, and sprang into the cart.

There was only poor little Jem there, huddled up in a corner amongst a heap of packages, crying bitterly. They lifted him out and brought him into the house. For some moments he was unable to speak from terror. At length he said:

"Oh, Miss Mavis, I dunno where Muster Tom be. We was comin' down Ash Hill, an' Muster Tom was drivin' an' I was lyin' down covered up behind him, when I saw a lot o' lanterns flash, an' the cart was stopped, an' a man says to Muster Tom, says he, 'Look here, my man, we want you, an' you'd better come quiet.' An' I looked an' saw a lot o' men dressed like sailors, with swords an' pistols, an' Muster Tom he said as how he wouldn't go, and he tries to make old Chestnut go on, but a lot o' the sailors they jumped up, an' there was a drefful fight, an' in the end they knocked Muster Tom down, an' the last I seed of him was bein' carried away like a dead body. And oh, please, Miss Mavis, I couldn't help it, an' I shouted, but I was all alone in the dark, an' old Chestnut she came on all of her own way."

Mavis, who had listened to this with eyes and mouth open, and her hand pressed on her heart, sank back into her chair and sobbed bitterly.

"The press-gang!" said Captain Alden. "Quick, Mr. Burt, we may catch them up, for there's some mistake. The Guerrière's got her crew, so that I can't make out what they want to be pressing for."

They rushed down to the quay. The Cynthia was alongside. They jumped on board and roused the watch.

"To the Guerrière," said the captain to the mate.

"Guerrière, sir?" exclaimed the man. "She's weighed anchor an hour ago."

"Mr. Burt," said the captain, in a voice of the deepest commiseration, "we are too late."

## CHAPTER II.

It was a heavy blow to Mavis. Whilst her Tom was near her, from sheer vanity she played the part of a flighty, careless maiden, but now that the dreadful truth was staring her in the face, that the simple, honest, confiding fellow, who would have laid down his life for her, had been carried off by main force, never, perhaps, to return (for Sandwich folk were sufficiently familiar with the press-gang to know what the result of being pressed usually was), she felt the truth of Shakespeare's words:

That what we have we prize not to the worth  
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,  
Why, then we rack the value.

The captain was temporarily master of the situation, but when he saw how Mavis took her loss to heart, he had the tact not to force his condolence and sympathy until Time should have softened the sting of the blow. He absented himself, in fact, from Sandwich, ostensibly to use his influence in procuring, if possible, the young man's release, in reality to go to the Admiralty in London and tender his resignation as an officer in His Majesty's service. Then he returned, low-spirited and despairing; and the poor old carrier, who, notwithstanding his long life's battling with all sorts and conditions of men, trusted and believed anyone who was not connected with the press-gang, felt deeply the kindness and sympathy of the suave captain, and regarded him as a protector and confidential adviser.

The captain set to work warily. He encouraged Mavis with the hope that, after all, Tom might return shortly; he told her that the very fact of his having been already pressed would militate in his favour; he assured her that peace between Great Britain and the United States was daily expected; he bade her keep up a good heart, and she spoke so kindly and cheerfully and disinterestedly that her old spirits gradually returned; and the pleasant intercourse between her

and her new acquaintance, which had been temporarily interrupted, was resumed. Although the captain's quarters were nominally at The Bell Hotel, he spent by far the greater part of his time in the little house in Delft Street, and as the old carrier was always present during the interviews the captain had with Mavis, and invariably accompanied them upon the little expeditions they made in the pleasant early springtime, no construction other than harmless could possibly be put by gossiping Sandwich upon the marked attentions paid by the gallant officer to the humble household. It was clearly proved that Captain Alden had nothing whatever to do with the impressment of Tom Burt, and it was well known that he had spared no efforts to procure his release, it having been stated that he had been to the Admiralty in London especially for that purpose. Moreover, the old carrier spoke so highly of his guest, and the captain's deportment towards Mavis had been so carefully watched, that the fact was generally recognised that he was a friend and nothing more.

The only evil, in fact, which resulted from the turn affairs had taken originated with Mavis herself. She began again to draw contrasts between Tom and the captain; she was captivated by the latter's address; the wound caused by Tom's abduction healed in a wonderful manner, the blank occasioned by his absence was being so adequately filled; and by the time summer came round poor Tom was rarely spoken of, and in the estimation at least of the simple, susceptible girl, the captain was everybody. But she never forgot that her troth was plighted, nor did she by word or action give the captain the smallest hint that under a little pressure that troth would be broken.

So far, matters looked well for the captain's project, but there were one or two little things which somewhat bothered and annoyed him.

He was in the habit of receiving regularly from London, the *London Packet* and *Daily Whitehall Intelligence*, which for certain reasons he kept to himself, and burnt as soon as they were read. The great reason for this reticence was, that of late an unpleasant announcement had appeared in this paper to the effect that if anyone of the name of Carroll, claiming relationship with Sir Septimus Carroll, who died in the year 1790, applied at a certain address in the City, he or she would receive some valuable and advantageous information, and it was not at all convenient to the captain that any such relation should be known to exist—just yet.

Another disagreeable circumstance was, that he had an idea he was watched by a mysterious gentleman, a stranger in the town, against whom he was continually running during his progresses to and from the carrier's house in Delft Street.

So it appeared to the captain that if the iron was to be struck at all, it should be struck when hot, and he began regularly to lay his parallels and approaches to the heart of Mavis. He experienced less resistance than he had bargained for, and, as usual, was favoured with luck worthy of a better cause, for the news was spread about the town that on the 19th of August, the British frigate Guerrière had been captured after a fight of half an hour by the American frigate Constitution, and that the loss of life had been great.

The poor old carrier's state of anxiety upon the receipt of this news was deplorable, and again Mavis felt her heart touched in a sore place; but the captain was cheerful and sanguine, and told them that until details were to hand there was no need to despair.

However, in a fortnight's time he appeared with a long face, and the *Intelligence* in his hand.

"I am sorry to be the bearer of ill-news, Mr. Burt," he said, "and I hoped against it as long as I could; but read that;" and he handed the old man the paper.

The old carrier put on his silver-rimmed spectacles, read the detailed account of the fight, and then half-way down the list of casualties was:

"Thomas Burt, quartermaster's-mate, seriously wounded."

"And you know what that means," said the captain gently, taking the old man's hand in his.

"But, Captain Alden," said the carrier, wiping his eyes with the back of his hand, "you don't mean to say that my poor boy, my Tom, is—is—"

"No—no, I don't say that, Mr. Burt," interposed Alden; "but from my experience of the service, when a man's reported seriously wounded, especially if he's a prisoner as well, I fear it generally implies death—sooner or later. There's very little choice between a prison hospital-hulk and a grave."

The old man was deeply agitated, and said:

"Poor Mavis! She will never bear this!—I can't break it to her, captain—do you. Now Tom's gone, I seem to look on you as my friend—my only friend, and when you have to go, I shall be alone in the world. I did love poor Tom, and"—the old man stopped suddenly, his eyes flashed, his brow contracted, and he brought his fist down on the table with energy—"I'm ashamed of my country

when I think that she wins her battles with poor fellows dragged away by brute-force from their homes, and their wives, and their sweethearts, and their occupations; and, although I'm an old man, if I could find out who it was that ordered my poor boy to be pressed, were he the Lord High Admiral himself, I'd kill him, for I hold him guilty of murder; I'd kill him—gladly."

So Captain Alden broke the news to Mavis. She was stupefied at first, and refused to believe it. Then she said:

"Captain Alden, when he is reported dead in the papers, or if he does not return by a certain time, then I will believe it. Now, I do not; I hope—oh, how I hope!"

Weeks passed on. Summer drifted into autumn, autumn faded into winter, still there was no news of Tom Burt. Captain Alden still remained in Sandwich, and, as may be imagined, improved every hour of every day to the utmost. His presence had now become an absolute necessity to the old carrier, who gradually became more reconciled to his loss, although he was never the same man as before; whilst his intercourse with Mavis was still closer, and they went out together without provoking comment except from lasses who had been rivals of Mavis for Tom Burt, and who declared that she had got over his loss in a remarkably short space of time, and that all along she had never cared a pin for him.

One fine November morning Alden asked Mavis to stroll with him to the ruins of the old Roman castle on the cliff, about a mile out of the town. Under the shadow of the grey, ivy-mantled walls, against which time and weather have fought so unsuccessfully for nearly nineteen centuries, they paused, and Alden opened fire.

"Mavis," he said, "you must know that I love you dearly, and that I have loved you ever since we first met; although, out of respect for poor Tom, I have smothered my passion. I know that you can never think of me as you thought of him; but now that he is—well, dead—tell me if you can take me into the empty place in your heart?"

Mavis looked at him for a moment somewhat in surprise, and then, affecting to be absorbed in the twisting of an ivy root, said:

"Do you mean—do you ask me, Captain Alden, to marry you?"

"Yes, yes," he replied eagerly, "that is what I mean. I have never dared to speak of love to you before, partly because, as I said just now, I knew that you were betrothed to poor Tom, and partly because it would have seemed so much like taking advantage of my introduction to Mr. Burt's house as a mere acquaintance. But now that it is evident that poor old Tom is——"

"But," interrupted Mavis, with a pleasant look which somewhat reassured the captain, who had not been very confident in the success of his bold stroke, "I can never give you the love, Captain Alden, which I gave to Tom. I like you very, very much, and I thank you for all your kindness to us in our trouble, especially to poor old uncle; but——"

"Could you not learn to love me?" asked the captain passionately. "I would be such a good tutor."

"Yes," replied Mavis; "but suppose poor Tom should not really be dead? I have heard of many men during this war—Ramsgate men, Deal men, Dover men, who have been reported as killed, and who have turned up at last."

"But if I tell you that he is dead," pursued Alden; "if I tell you that I have information to that effect——"

Mavis pondered, and twisted a stem of ivy into pieces, and the silence was only broken by the sound of the sea wind murmuring through the breaches in the masonry; then she said, speaking slowly:

"I will tell you, Captain Alden. Uncle has already spoken to me about you. I will talk to him, and I will give you an answer by the New Year."

"And I must linger six long weeks in suspense, Mavis?" said the captain sadly.

"I cannot decide straight off, for more than one reason," said Mavis. "I know I am only a simple country girl, but I have a conscience. I feel that much as I like and admire you, I don't love you—that is to say, I don't feel towards you as a girl should feel who accepts a man's proposal. Besides, I told poor Tom that I would wait until New Year's Eve. And now as it is getting cold, and there is a man coming along, and uncle will be wanting his dinner, had we not better return?"

They retraced their steps down the hill towards the town, and passed a little man, dressed in black, his hands folded behind his back, who was apparently lost in meditation, and did not notice them.

The captain was in no very sweet mood that evening. His dinner was ill-cooked, the fire smoked, and a company of bagmen in the adjoining room were making a great uproar over their pipes and drink, just at a time when he wished to think quietly over the position of matters.

The captain, like most old-school sailors, was superstitious, and the appearance of that black shadow constantly dogging his foot-

steps seemed to him a warning that, unless he was prompt and careful, his project would be fraught with danger. Who could the phantom be? And yet it was no phantom, for in the broad sunlight of that same morning the captain had recognised in the little man in black, his nocturnal watcher. He was pondering over this when the door of the room opened silently, and a figure draped from head to foot in black, and wearing a thick veil of the same colour, glided in.

A tremor seized the captain's frame as he saw that it was a woman, and he fairly started from the chair when a thin white hand raised the veil and he saw before him his own wife.

"Dorothy! Dorothy!" he hissed, "where have you come from? Is it you, or is it—is it your spirit? I thought you were dead!"

The figure dropped the veil again, and disappeared, as silently as it had entered, without a gesture or a word.

The whole affair was so rapid, and had been so sudden, that he was taken completely by surprise, and could not move. He who had braved dangers and perils in all parts of the world was as cowed and helpless as a child.

With an effort he recovered himself, and rushed out by the door, through the passage, into the dark street. There was nothing to be seen, there was nothing to be heard but the moaning of the wind.

"Pshaw!" he said to himself, "my imagination was on fire. It was but a freak of fancy. She's dead. I know it!"

The six weeks passed slowly and wearily to Hugh Alden, but there was no reappearance of his wife, nor did the mysterious little man in black haunt his footsteps. The advertisement, too, had been withdrawn from the London paper, and there was no further mention of the fate of those who had been captured in the *Guerrière*, so that he felt to some extent reassured, and looked upon his prize as well-nigh won. His visits to Delft Street were continued, and there was no indication in his pleasant, happy manner that there was a skeleton grinning behind the mask. One little thing alone somewhat disturbed him, and this was that Mavis, instead of growing more cordial and intimate as the time-limit approached its completion, seemed to be if anything colder and more reserved. This, however, he attributed to the natural anxiety of a girl on the eve of a momentous period in her life.

On New Year's Eve of 1812—a blustering stormy night which seemed to the fanciful mind typical of the struggle which was taking place between the year dying and the year at hand—old Thomas Burt, Mavis, and Captain Alden sallied forth, in company with many hundreds of other folk, towards the old church of St. Peter's, in the belfry of which the "youths" were assembled for the purpose of ringing out the old year and ringing in the new.

In these days New Year's Eve was very much more of a popular festival in England than it is at present.

Time-hallowed custom ordained that the banquet should be spread, that every house should be thrown open, that master and servant, high and low, rich and poor, should for a time be on a footing of perfect equality, that old grievances and old wrongs should be forgotten, in order that the new year should be entered upon in the true Christian spirit of charity and forgiveness.

Captain Alden offered Mavis his arm up the belfry steps, for Thomas Burt, as churchwarden, enjoyed the privilege, accorded only to a few, of "assisting" the ringers in their task. Mavis declined it. A chill came over the captain at this ominous commencement of proceedings.

The ringers were assembled, stalwart fellows with their sleeves tucked up, each with his rope in hand; huge jacks of ale stood on a bench at the side, and all waited in silence until the first stroke of midnight.

It boomed out, and was echoed from the other two old church-towers, and mechanically hats were doffed in silence as the succeeding eleven strokes made the old tower quake and rock with their clangour.

Then the ropes were seized, backs were bent, and at a word from the leader the chimes proclaimed the arrival of 1813 with such deafening peans of joy that Alden had to draw Mavis aside in order to make her hear the question which had been burning on his lips for so many long weary weeks.

"Will you be my wife, Mavis?" he said.

"No, Captain Alden," the girl replied with a dignity and firmness he had never before witnessed. "You have a wife still living, and I—I have a true sweetheart still living."

Alden staggered as if struck. Everything—the belfry, the forms of the ringers, of Mavis, and old Thomas Burt—seemed to swim before him. He clutched at the wall as a man drowning, and then, without looking back, fled down the steps.

The streets were still filled with groups of people hurrying to and fro, anon stopping to grasp hands and exchange compliments, anon darting into open doors to claim the privilege of first-footing. All was gladness and festivity, everyone seemed happy, and yet that one figure clove through the crowd with hurrying steps and

muffled face as if flying from a pestilence. He hurried on by the back streets towards the quay.

Suddenly he heard a cheer; he knew the sound as the hare knows the holloa of its pursuers—he now the hare who had so long been the pursuer. He turned aside to escape notice, but ere he had traversed a dozen yards, rough hands seized him, and he heard a familiar voice shout:

"That's him, lads! That's Alden, of the Cynthia. Don't let him go."

Alden recognised Tom Burt.

They led him to the quay-side, where a boat was in waiting; they hustled him in; he saw that he was the only pressed man; the word was given, the oars plashed in the sullen waters, and the victim was hurried on to the fate to which he had consigned so many others.

A dozen yards from the shore he heard a shriek, and looking back, could espy a tall female figure on the quay-side, waving her arms frantically.

Tom Burt, who was steering, stood up and sung out the very same words that Alden had used:

"Too late! too late!" But he added: "Never fear! Go to the carrier's house in Delft Street. I'll be back soon."

But little remains to be told. Tom Burt received a perfect ovation in the town on his return the next morning, and found Mrs. Alden at his father's house, already half-consolated in the society of her sister Mavis. Tom and Mavis were married, and shared with the old carrier and Mrs. Alden the property which had been so long alienated by the villainy of Captain Hugh.

When peace was made at the end of the year 1814, Alden returned, a sobered, altered man, and for many years after the old carrier had been carried to his last resting-place in St. Peter's churchyard, there were no happier couples in Sandwich than Tom and Mavis Burt and Hugh and Dorothy Alden.

## Snowdon House.

(A SHORT SERIAL STORY.)

### PART IV.

HER father was at home when she arrived. He, perhaps, had formed some conjecture as to what would be the result of the morning's trip, for he looked enquiringly at her as she entered the room.

Agatha did not make a direct reply in words, but held out the arm, on the wrist of which her new bracelet sparkled, with an answering smile.

"That is splendid, indeed, Agatha!" cried the doctor. "I should suppose it was given on some special occasion."

This led to an explanation, at the conclusion of which the girl said:

"I spoke to him also about his kindness to you. I told him I had not heard of it until this morning, or would have thanked him earlier. He was most considerate in the way he treated it."

"He told you I had given a bill, perhaps," said Fulham, "or would do so when he advanced the money?"

"Yes. But I told him also that I knew it was valueless without security," replied Agatha. "I was sure of that."

"Perfectly so," returned the doctor. "He called it a matter of form—so it is. It would not be much more in any such case; but I know that he has ordered a clause to be inserted in his will to the effect that in the event of his dying before me, this bond is to be given up—in point of fact, the money is a gift."

"He is a generous man!" cried Agatha. Then added something in a low voice, not intended, probably, for her father's ear.

The doctor caught a syllable or two, and replied:

"Too good! Nonsense, Agatha! no man is too good for a good wife, and you will make him one, I am sure. No man could ever ask a better. Besides, you are giving up other eligible chances in his favour."

"I am giving up—what do you mean?" asked his daughter.

"You need not look so alarmed and turn so pale," said the doctor with a laugh. "It is of no consequence; but I dare say you know something about it. It is only a letter from your amiable half-aunt, Mrs. Gurdon. Good Heavens! child, are you faint?"

"No—no," said Agatha, who had turned suddenly pale, and sank upon a chair. "It was only momentary. Please go on."

"Well, I am glad it was only momentary," repeated the doctor doubtfully. "I have seen many a patient in this room with just such a look. She writes in behalf of a Mr.—Mr.—Where is it? Oh, Mr. Tummell—a highly respectable person, it appears; a well-to-do tradesman in the village, consequently a neighbour of

their own, and, moreover, a deacon in their chapel. These united recommendations will, she evidently considers, be too strong to be resisted; and although there is a half-implied idea that the worthy Tummell is throwing himself away, and is altogether too good for such a thankless person as yourself, yet, as he is Tummell, and as you are Agatha Fulham, your aunt will act as an ambassador. She offers you, in that capacity, the hand and heart of Tummell—his shop and his pew in the chapel go with them, I don't doubt. Do you know Mr. Tummell? She seems to say you do."

"Oh yes!" laughed Agatha, who had recovered herself by this time. "I know him, and had heard something of his being a victim to the tender passion in past days. But oh, if you were to see him!"

"That shudder is too genuine to allow me to think that Tummell has a chance," continued Fulham, who was in high spirits, and disposed to be especially pleased with his daughter, to whose influence he knew he owed his good fortune; "poor deacon! But your aunt grows mysterious in her hints a little farther on. She talks of some obstacle which she knows to exist, and which ought to be overcome. She says 'he' will never be seen there any more; who is he? I am afraid, Agatha, you must have been very fatal during your twelve months in Cheshire. And why should 'he' be an obstacle? Here is what she says: 'I know why Agatha refused this worthy man, who offered her a position so far above anything she had a right to expect. But of course that obstacle is removed; he will never, can never come back, and as Mr. Tummell is charitable enough to forget the past, she may be thankful for the opportunity.' The doctor's prolonged speech had given Agatha time to recover herself, and he was too much amused in reading the letter to notice her closely.

"Oh, Aunt Gurdon was always saying something of the kind," returned Miss Fulham, in the most careless tone she could assume. "How shall you answer her?"

"I think I had perhaps better tell her of your approaching marriage," answered the doctor; "we shall hear no more of the deacon after that. Don't you fancy that will be the best plan?"

"No, I think not," said his daughter after a pause. "I should prefer her not knowing anything about it until—" She left this sentence unfinished, and went on: "She is so ill-tempered a person, that the less she knows the better. I would write to her, of course, acknowledging the letter, and saying that you could not give any promise to use your influence as she has asked you, but would write to her again in a short time. Then, when you do write again, she may learn the reason why Mr. Tummell need not trouble himself any more."

The doctor laughed again, and agreed to write as suggested; he probably would have agreed to any suggestion made by his daughter that evening, in such an excellent temper was he.

Then he gave Agatha an account of the negotiations on foot for the purchase of Dr. Z——'s practice—negotiations of which we have already given some hint. It only needs to be said that this was one of the best connections in Bridgeley. So much higher indeed was it than the practice of Dr. Fulham, that the latter would have been at a disadvantage in taking to it, had not Dr. Z—— promised to remain at least a year with him, in order to familiarise him with the patients.

The telling of this took up some time, for the doctor was highly loquacious, and although a temperate, even an abstemious man, felt justified in taking an extra glass of wine on so auspicious an occasion. His daughter listened with an appearance of interest, and smiled at his not very pungent jests, as women can do, but she felt the discussion as an infliction, nevertheless. Dr. Fulham was not satisfied until he had passed in review all the events of the day, and had again and again congratulated his daughter upon her good fortune.

"With such a pair of ponies as those," he said, in what was, happily for his listener, his concluding speech, "and such a carriage, you will cut out all the second-rate stuck-up gentry of this stuck-up town, who have tried to look down upon us. It will be our turn now. I thought of that as I walked homewards after leaving you this morning. After leaving you, by the way, I had a little adventure, or, if not exactly an adventure—Well, well, I won't trouble you with that. I can see you are tired, Agatha, so good-night; do not sit up any longer."

His daughter, having kissed her father, gladly obeyed this injunction, and left him to the indulgence of his cigar, and the reveries which were now so delightful, and so different to the gloomy harassing trains of thought which were his only a short time before. He did not need the aid of his wine to maintain these reveries, for, as just said, he was a temperate man; yet long after his daughter had been, as he thought, in bed and asleep, he sat up musing and picturing the pleasant future.

But he was mistaken in supposing that he was the only watcher in his house—the only one who had busy thoughts which could banish sleep. The conversation he had held with his daughter, the tidings



which he had communicated, had in her mind jarred terribly with the day's proceedings in which the doctor found such unalloyed pleasure, and had awakened afresh memories which kept the girl from her pillow for hours.

More than once she smiled scornfully, and even laughed audibly, at the picture of her suitor, and almost persecutor, Mr. Tummell; the feeling excited by his name was more of contempt than anger, but it was not so when she thought of her aunt, Mrs. Gurdon.

"That woman hates me," she thought, "and would not, and never will, scruple to do me any mischief she can compass. Her letter of to-day proves that. She was in hope to provoke enquiry if I remained obstinate. Well, there is one comfort even in this: she has told all she knows now, she can do no more harm, and her arrow has fallen short of its mark. When I can think more coolly on the matter I shall be glad she has done her worst, but now I can only think of—the past."

Whatever her thoughts of the past might have been, they were certainly not pleasing, for she sat with knitted brow, and often quivering lips, until far into the night. At last she shed some tears, and this seemed to relieve her, so that she soon slept.

During her vigil it had never occurred to her to frame a single conjecture as to the nature of the little adventure to which her father had so slightly alluded.

When Dr. Fulham left his daughter and Mr. Wayre, his round of visits occupied him a considerable time, and finished in the iron-works or Shaletown district. Not much longer, he thought to himself, would his calls so often lead him to such poor neighbourhoods as now contributed the bulk of his town practice, involving so much work and so little profit. In Shaletown he had not many patients. There was a "club doctor," and on his books most of the hands were entered. Dr. Fulham's practice, therefore, lay chiefly amongst such dwellers in the locality as were not employed at the factory.

He had seen the last of his cases, and was going home, taking, for a short cut, a half-finished street, which promised to be even uglier and more grimy than the main street—such as it was—of the place, when, as he was passing one of the cottages, a man came out directly in front of him. The man would have come out, it would be better to say, but he slunk back on seeing the doctor, as though to escape observation. It was too late for this, however, as Fulham's quick eyes had seen and recognised him.

"Ah, my patient of last night!" exclaimed the doctor. "Have you felt much of your injuries to-day?"

Before answering the man glanced warily over his shoulder into the room behind him, where his questioner could just see a woman and one or two children.

"I am pretty well to-day, thank you, sir," replied the man; "pretty well considering, I mean. My hand is rather sore. I have been at work all day, and that rather tries it."

"At work with such a hand as that—as either of them—" cried the doctor, "and with such wounds on your neck? You must be mad!"

"It's all very well to say 'don't work' and the like to poor fellows like me," retorted the other; "but how are we to live?"

"Well, you must decide that for yourself," said the doctor, "but your injuries should not be neglected. Are you not in the club?"

"No, sir," returned the man, after another glance over his shoulder. "I have not been any great while here. And would you mind my walking a little way with you, sir? My wife is in there, and she is fidgety enough already about my hurts, and if she was to hear you say much about them she would get worse. Besides, she does not believe I got hurt as I say I did."

"Humph!" ejaculated the doctor. "Your wife is a shrewd woman, I don't doubt. Come with me by all means."

A doctor, even if he be among the most superfine of his class, can afford to walk with any poor, ruffianly, or suspicious-looking person without incongruity or losing caste in the slightest degree, so no one thought it strange to see Dr. Fulham walking down Spanner Street, and across the ragged field which lay beyond, on his way to Bridgeley, in company with, and listening to, one of the hands from the factory.

"Before you say anything to me," began the doctor, "I wish you would answer a question which has been in my mind from the moment I saw you. Have you always been a labourer, or anything like it?"

"No, I have not," replied the man. "I have been better—and worse."

"So I supposed," returned Fulham. "That is all I have to ask. Now go on."

"You did not believe last night that I had cut myself with panes of glass," continued the other. "You told me as much."

"I believe I did," said the doctor. "I was certain then as to how the lacerations were really caused. I am certain now. They were done by a dog."

"Ah, you think so, do you?" returned his patient. "And what dog should you suppose?"

"The dog that tore you," interrupted Fulham, "was the great hound at Snowdon House—Mr. Wayre's. Of course, you need not be afraid of my betraying you, but, for your own sake, do not run the risk again."

The man made no answer to this warning, but walked on in silence for a few paces; then he said:

"Is what I have heard true, doctor—that it is your daughter who is to be married to Mr. — to the gentleman at Snowdon House? You need not feel offended, sir; no offence is meant."

"No offence may be meant, perhaps," retorted Fulham, "but your question sounds so impertinent a one that I should like to know what you do mean by it."

"I take an interest in it if it is true, sir," replied the man, "and I do not feel hurt by your angry tone. I expected it. But it will not hurt you, nor the young lady either, to answer me; and my question does not concern her any further, when once you have answered it. I only want you to say if I am right."

The man's language and manner were so different to those which were common to his class that the doctor could not help answering him in a different strain to that in which he had at first replied, while at the same time he was conscious of an uncomfortable feeling, almost akin to a foreboding, at such a strange question being so put.

"The report is correct, so far as we can speak of matters which have not yet happened," he answered; "but what it has to do with you I cannot see."

"It has nothing at all to do with me in itself," replied his companion; "but it shows that you are the person I want—at least, I think so. With your permission, I will call on you again, when I hope to get you to do me a favour. We are at the high-road now, sir, and as I am not fit company for a gentleman, I will leave you, thanking you for your attention."

Without saying more, he turned upon his heel, and Dr. Fulham, after watching him for a few seconds, resumed his homeward walk. After some meditation he at last struck upon what seemed to him the correct solution of this puzzling interview and conversation.

"He is a begging impostor of some kind," he muttered; "and he wants me to use my influence with Mr. Wayre in order to get him something. He will find it difficult to get forgiveness for his battle with Nero. Mr. Wayre will send him to Bridgeley gaol for that, if he has the chance. That he means begging of some kind I am sure. If he has been at the game long that will account for what I took to be his superior address; just a part of his stock-in-trade, that is all."

Although the doctor thus declared himself certain that he had found the key to the man's language, he kept recurring to the matter in his thoughts, and debating it, as though it were not so completely settled as he had asserted.

However, when he reached home, the receipt of Mrs. Gurdon's letter, followed by his interview with his daughter, and, above all, the intelligence which she brought, quite obliterated the remembrance of his interview with the man, or at most allowed him to regard it so slightly, as to be content with the most casual mention of it, as shown.

"I dare say he will look me up, according to his promise," was his reflection on the next morning. "Men of his stamp don't forget such appointments. Egad! I don't even know his name."

Dr. Fulham had now not much time to speculate on this, or any minor matters; the near approaching marriage of his daughter, and the purchase of Dr. Z——'s business, absorbed him sufficiently. The past time had been full of anxiety for the doctor, but the rocks were cleared away now; no longer was there any restriction on his credit, and not the slightest shadow of a county-court fell across his path. Beyond even these substantial reliefs, were the improved spirits and increased docility of his daughter. All through his diplomacy and management, even when it seemed most successful, he had a dread of some difficulty with her; but she was changed now.

"And, by Jove!" muttered the doctor one evening, as he thought over the position, "she ought to be satisfied, if ever a girl was! What a chance for her! I believe Wayre might have married many a nobleman's daughter, if he had been so inclined."

This reflection took place at his favourite period for meditation—while he smoked his cigar late at night, and after all business for the day was done.

It was only a day or two after his interview with the man at Shaletown, yet recent as was the event, it was not in his mind at the moment, and when he heard some one turn the handle of his surgery-door, the lateness of the call surprised him, but he did not even think of his still later visitor of only a few nights back, until

the door was quietly opened, and a grimy face looked in—a face which he at once recognised as that of the man from the ironworks.

"Good-evening, doctor," said the stranger; "I see you are alone. You will excuse my not knocking, as I did not want to attract attention. I saw a light, so took the liberty of entering."

"Quite an oration from a factory labourer," thought Fulham; then added aloud: "Come in, my friend, and sit down. I suppose this is the interview for which you asked a day or two back?"

"It is, sir," replied the visitor, who carefully closed the door behind him, and then took the chair to which he was invited; "you will not mind my troubling you, I feel convinced."

"I am not so sure of that," thought the doctor, but merely said aloud: "Go on."

"You perhaps know my name, sir?" continued the other, whose manner grew more embarrassed as he went on. "You do not? I thought you would have found that out. I am employed at the ironworks in Shalatown as John Brooks—everybody knows Jack Brooks, although I have not been there long."

"But you are not Jack Brooks; is that what you wish me to understand?" asked Dr. Fulham. "You say you are employed there as Jack Brooks, which is as much as saying that you are there under a feigned name."

"Well, I will be shot if you are not the sharpest party I ever had to deal with!" exclaimed the other with genuine admiration in his tone. "You ought to have been a lawyer, not a doctor. Anyhow, you are quite right; my name is not Jack Brooks, nor anything of the sort. You remember that I asked you if your daughter was the young lady who was going to marry Mr. Wayre?"

"You did, and you also said that your business did not concern her," returned the doctor. "As that is the case, you will please to leave her name out of our discussion."

"No offence, sir; I shall say nothing which can annoy either the young lady or yourself," said his visitor; "but the fact of such a marriage being probable causes me to speak to you. I also said I should ask a favour; you remember that?"

"Of course I do, and I wish you would come to the point at once," cried Fulham, who began to feel all this preface somewhat irritating. "If you have anything to ask, ask it, and have done."

The man did not seem quite able to comply with this command at first, but hesitated, and made two or three distinct gulps, as though he found some difficulty in speaking.

"The favour I shall ask, sir," he said at last, "will be the easier for you to obtain, because of your influence through this marriage; you will be glad to see it arranged, and that is why I ask you. Of course you know Mr. Wayre—Mr. Luke Wayre—very well?"

"I do," returned the doctor, who was watching the speaker very closely, and with great attention, as though he felt that the deferred explanation was now really at hand.

"But—but you did not know him before he came to these parts, I think?" continued Mr. Brooks.

The doctor shook his head without speaking.

"So I thought," resumed the man; "well, you do not know, perhaps, that he has been married before?"

"Yes, I do," replied the doctor; "I have long known that he was a widower. You do not dispute that he is a widower, do you?"

A sudden thought had flashed upon the doctor's mind, that perhaps this fellow had come to declare the existence of a previous wife. The idea was wildly romantic—absurdly so, indeed, he felt as he thought it—but it did great credit to his presence of mind to be able to smoke his cigar unmoved, and to look his visitor in the face without betraying the slightest sign of the shock it had given him.

"Oh, he's a widower, there's no doubt about that," replied the man; "but he was not altogether happy in his married life. It was the fault of others more than himself, perhaps. I would not have admitted as much some time ago, but I do now. Did he ever tell you that he had any children?"

"No," said the doctor, rising more erect in his chair, and looking at Brooks with a sudden increase of keenness; "I know, if he had, that he has none now, for he has repeatedly told me that he has no one in the world dependent on him."

"He is right, quite right," said the man, whose embarrassment still increased; "but for all that he had a son, a wild young fellow I don't deny, but the mother took his part when he might not have deserved it. A great deal of trouble came through this, and among other things the young fellow, perhaps, has to answer for breaking his mother's heart. His name was Saul—a curious name you will say, but it was that of his mother's father."

"How do you know all this, and what has it to do with me?" asked Fulham, as the other paused.

"You will soon see how I know it," replied the man; "it will depend upon yourself whether it has anything to do with you. I think you will be glad the matter has come into your hands. Well, the mother died, the son left home, which he was forbidden ever

to enter again. He knew his father's resolute temper too well to suppose he would change in this resolve. A little while afterwards Mr. Luke Wayre heard that this young fellow had died. He made some enquiries, which quite satisfied him that this was the case, and I believe he went into mourning. He must have been glad in his heart to learn that his son was gone, for their quarrel was bitterer than I have perhaps given you to suppose. But the son was not dead, nor has he died since."

"How do you know?" said Dr. Fulham, and his voice was in turn husky as he spoke.

"I know it, because"—the man paused for an instant here, then went on with a change of tone, and with more firmness than his previous speech had displayed—"I know it, sir, because I am Saul Wayre. I am the justly discarded son of the man your daughter is about to marry."

Startling as was this announcement in itself, it did not greatly startle the doctor. There had been a foreboding in his mind, during a great part of the conversation, which warned him that he was about to hear some strange disclosure, while the tone of the visitor's remarks, vague as they were, had to some extent prepared him for what was coming. Nor had he the least inclination to doubt the truth of what he heard; on the contrary, he immediately felt a conviction that the story was absolutely true.

"If this is as you tell me," he said, the other pausing for a while, "why do you not go to Mr. Wayre yourself? He does not bear malice, I dare say."

"Perhaps not," returned the man; "but there is a disagreeable fellow in his service, one Ezra Crake, who hates me, and would inform about me. I tell you honestly, it was me that the dog seized the other night, and my hurts were from that dog's bites. You found it out, as I suppose any doctor would have done. I have been hanging about the place a good bit—Snowdon House, I mean; among other things, I wanted to see the girl who was likely to be my mother-in-law. No offence, doctor, it was only natural."

"And did you see her?" asked Fulham.

"No," returned the other, "I could never get away at the right time; but I did see a girl there once—well, that don't matter, I knew it wasn't your daughter because—nor does that matter. On that night I tried to creep to the house to see if a sister of Crake was there, whom I used to know, and who used to be friendly with me. I have learnt since that she is not there. I got very nearly killed in trying to find it out that night. No; if I appear in person Crake will peach."

"Crake will peach! What do you mean?" exclaimed the doctor.

"It must come out sooner or later," replied the visitor, "so I tell you I mean this. He knew that I was not dead, and he knew that I had committed an offence. It was called highway robbery, but was a paltry affair enough, for which I was sentenced to penal servitude for a long time. I should not have been dealt with so severely but for my assaulting the officer who arrested me, and that was through my being excited by drink. Yet Ezra was deceived in his turn; he thinks I died after getting my ticket-of-leave; as you see, I did not. I committed another offence—it is of no use disguising it, you know, now—and was recognised. I got away, but of course I have been compelled to change my name, and hide myself ever since. If the police get me, I shall go to Portland for long enough to last my life, I know."

"But how does this Crake know of your conviction, when your own father was in ignorance of your existence?" asked the doctor.

"Why, because I sent to the sister I told you of, a good old soul," replied the man. "I sent to her, by a sure hand, for money to get a lawyer. The poor old girl had none by her then, so was obliged to borrow from Ezra, and had to tell him about me. I believe he was glad to think I had got my deserts, but this sister, who had been my nurse, made him swear to keep the secret. I find she is dead now, and he would do anything to injure me, but, as I tell you, he thinks I died after my release."

"And what do you tell me all this for? What do you want me to do?" demanded Fulham.

"I want you to tell the governor all I have told you—that puts me in his power, and your power as well," answered the man; "I tell you both I should be sent to Portland to work out my old sentence and a new one besides. Ask him for enough to start me and my family—I have got a wife and two children to keep—in Australia, or America, or somewhere, and you may bet your last coin I shall never come back again. I don't want to interfere with the governor's comfort, I have done enough in that way; but he might forgive and forget so far as to lend me a helping-hand once more."

"This is a strange tale," said the doctor; "how am I to know?"

"If you want any proof," interrupted the other eagerly, "you have only just to tell Mr. Wayre all I have told you, and take him

half-a-dozen lines which I will write, referring to something known only to us two, and you will be thoroughly satisfied. I will see him if he wishes it; but I must avoid that man Crake. I once thrashed him in a quarrel, and he has never forgiven me."

The doctor sat and smoked his cigar in silence, during a pause which must have seemed tediously prolonged to his companion; but the latter waited patiently until his reverie was finished.

"I do not know what to say to you to-night, and that is a fact," said Fulham; "I know where to find you, so can communicate with you at any time, and you have shown that you know where to find me. I must have a day or two to think this over. You have waited so long, that it cannot hurt you to wait a little longer."

"It can't hurt me, as you say," returned the man; "only that my wife and young ones are half starving on the wages I get, and I don't want to prolong that a minute more than I can help. We are a rough lot, of course, but I'm just as fond of them, you know, as if I had married a duchess."

"I don't dispute it," said the doctor, rising to show that the interview was concluded, and there was something in his tone which perhaps implied contempt of the sentiment just expressed; "but never mind your domestic affections. You shall hear from me soon."

"I say!" exclaimed the other—there was a change in his manner which instantly dispelled the assumed indifference of the doctor, and the latter looked round with a swift glance in which there was perhaps something of alarm. Brooks—to call him by his first name—was an altered man; there was a scowl on his face not pleasant to see, while his features seemed suddenly to have hardened into those of the convict and outlaw he admitted himself to be. "I say," he repeated, "you don't mean any foul play, do you? You are not going to put the police on to me, are you? I don't like your looks, and if I thought you meant peaching, I'm — if I wouldn't—"

He thrust his hand into his pocket, in lieu of finishing his sentence.

The doctor at once guessed he kept his knife there.

"I won't 'peach,' I tell you that," said he; "and I tell you this too. If you are fool enough to offer any violence here, I will shoot you."

As he spoke, without moving from the spot, he took from a drawer a revolver, which he cocked.

"I do not travel in these localities without protection, my friend," he continued; "but I am not much afraid of you. Go home, and in a day or two you shall hear from me."

With a few grumbled words which might have been an apology or a defiance, so indistinct were they, his visitor slunk off, and the doctor, with a quiet smile, replaced the weapon in the drawer.

"At any rate," he muttered, "I never will travel in these localities for the future without such protection."

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 123.)

## Grey.

GREY hangs the grey sky o'er the rain-drenched hills,  
Grey mases the clouds above the setting sun,  
And the sere leaves the low winds, moaning, beat,  
Sink to the wet grey grasses one by one.

Grey as the autumn gloaming shows to me,  
Looks the blank future spreading for his eyes,  
Musing on whom, the cold slow-gathering tears  
Blur all the darkening world and sullen skies.

Yet with to-morrow light may wake again,  
And the broad sunshine dazzle gaily down;  
And with to-morrow hope and joy may rouse,  
And laugh to scorn misfortune's lowering frown.

And as the birds and flowers forget the chill,  
And as the brave young heart surmounts the sorrow,  
Will the pale watcher catch reflected glow?  
Nay—for Life's autumn dawns no second morrow!

## The Old Oak Chest.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

"AND when Ralph de Bohun was fighting at Agincourt, her ancestors were blacking boots and sweeping crossings," I said angrily.

My mother had been smiling before, now she laughed outright.

"Oh, Ralph, Ralph," she said, "do not be so wrathfully proud. Besides, are you quite sure that there were any boot-blacks in those days, because I am not?"

"Pshaw, mother! what has that got to do with it? You know very well what I mean."

"I don't think I do, my dear. It is not like you to be so angry about a trifle. I have no doubt Miss Lile really admires the chest very much, and you know old oak is all the rage just now."

"Yes, and of course she thinks that we have no right to anything fashionable, especially anything which 'would suit The Grange so perfectly.' But she shall never have it."

"So you told her, my dear—with rather unnecessary emphasis, I thought."

"Not at all, mother. I meant her to understand me."

"But you need not have hurt her with your abruptness."

"Nonsense! mother, she was only angry. I couldn't hurt her if I tried. She is much too high and mighty to feel hurt at anything I could say."

"Ralph," mother said gravely, "I think you are most unjust. You judge a gentle girl very harshly."

Judge her harshly! I, who worshipped the ground she walked on; I who, though she was "Lady Clara Vere de Vere" and I only the "poor yeoman," had dared to find my heaven in her eyes, my sole earthly joy in a sight of her sweet face, a word from her ripe, red lips.

If mother was right, and I did indeed judge her harshly, then my passion and my misery must be my excuses.

She was not really Lady Vere de Vere, only plain Miss Lile, but then she was so rich; whilst I, Ralph Bohun—we had dropped the "de"—was literally as poor as Job. It was quite true what I had said in my haste, that when my ancestor Ralph was fighting at Agincourt hers were blacking boots, or performing whatever menial work the lowest of the low did in those days. For the Liles were nowhere as to family, though in almost the first flight as to wealth. We had steadily grown poorer and poorer, they had grown rich almost at a bound, and yet I dared to love her.

I had guarded my secret well, or so, at least, I fancied until this day of which I write. Then, when she had come down to see mother, as was her daily wont when she was at The Grange, something she had said or looked made me fancy that I had been deceiving myself, and that she knew my weak madness, and pitied me.

She had been admiring—for the thousandth time—a great, grandly-carved oak chest, whose history of antiquity was told in the simple fact that "it had always been in the family."

"I never noticed before," she said, "how perfectly it matches the carving in the Oak Room at The Grange. How well it would look standing between the windows there!"

"Possibly that was its rightful place once," mother said quietly.

"What do you mean, Mrs. Bohun? Was it sold from The Grange?"

"No, my dear; it was moved before The Grange was sold."

"What! did the Trenfields move it?"

"No; it was moved, I believe, when the Trenfields purchased the estate from Mr. Bohun."

"From your husband?"

"No; from his grandfather."

"But then— But perhaps you would rather I did not ask any more about it?"

"Indeed, dear, I do not mind. It is an old tale now, and I am sure I do not often think about it, for, of course, it all happened long before my time. But years and years ago The Grange and all the country round was owned by the Bohuns. For generations they had flourished and prospered; but in the time of Ralph's great-grandfather, fortune turned shy of them. The Grange was the first to be sold, I have heard; then piece by piece the land went until this little place is all we have left."

"How sad!" the girl said softly. "How much you must regret it, Mr. Bohun! How many visions and plans you must have for winning it back again!"

"I hope Ralph is too wise to indulge in any such vain regrets or futile plans," mother said hastily. "We are happy and content at The Dene, and that is enough."

"It is enough for the wise, I know, but we are not all wise enough for that, Mrs. Bohun. Some of us are foolish enough to indulge even more hopeless plans and visions—more's the pity."

Those were the words which rankled in my mind, which made me fear she had seen through my hopes and visions, and wished to give me a friendly hint as to their utter hopelessness.

So when after a moment's pause she turned to me, saying, "Well, I should dearly like to see the old chest back in its proper place again. Will you let me have it, Mr. Bohun?" I answered harshly and abruptly:

"Never, Miss Lile. You are quite mistaken if you think that I have the slightest wish or intention to replace or restore anything."

She looked gravely at my flushed face, but said no more to me; only, as she was going away, she laid her little hand on the old chest with a caressing touch.

"Good-bye, you dear old thing," she said softly. "I don't despair of putting you back in your own proper nook one of these days."

She had come to say good-bye to us also, for she was going away on the Continent for several months.

"But I mean to be home in time to bring you a Christmas-box," she said to mother at parting. "I should not like to spend Christmas anywhere else."

After mother's rebuke of my harsh judgment, I wandered away into the old garden, to smoke my pipe and think it all over. But the more I thought the more miserable I became, until I arrived at the resolution to try and induce mother to consent to The Dene being sold, so that we might go away, far away from the Liles, The Grange, and all the rest of it.

And many times during the next three months I did try, but quite in vain.

"If you want a change, my dear, by all means take one," she said gently. "I will get some one to manage in your place, and when you are tired of wandering, then come home to me again. But, as to me, I am too old to change."

But of course I would not do that. I would never leave her who had been more than all the world to me until Lillian Lile came into my life.

Mother heard from Lillian now and then. Bright, friendly, gossip letters they were, which pleased the dear old lady very much.

But by-and-by they ceased to come. For nearly six weeks we heard no word of her, and then, one day, there came a letter with a heavy black border to the envelope, telling of sad news within.

She said that her father was dead—had died after four weeks' severe illness—and that she was starting for home at once.

"For, though we only lived at The Grange so few years," she wrote, "yet it feels more like home to me than any other place on earth. I am all alone now, dear Mrs. Bohun—quite alone. Papa told me that, when he was gone, I should have three hundred thousand pounds, absolutely, to do just as I liked with. Three hundred thousand pounds, and not one single living relative! Oh, I do feel so very, very sorry for myself."

"Poor child!" mother said when she had read the sorrowful letter; "poor, lonely, over-burdened child! Whatever will become of her?"

"Oh, no doubt she will do very well," I answered rather shortly; "of course she has plenty of guardians, and trustees, and all that sort of thing, to take care of her."

"To take care of her money, I dare say, but that is not all she will want. We must be good to her, Ralph."

"Nay, mother, she won't want much of us now, unless maybe she still has a fancy for the old chest."

"Ralph, why are you so unjust to her? She has never made a parade of her wealth, or assumed anything on the strength of it; she has always behaved to us as to her equals."

"Her equals! Of course we are; but she does not think so. She would not think so as to any serious matter."

"My dear! what matter more serious than the daily civilities and kindnesses of life could ever arise between us? and as to those, she has always been irreproachable."

It was clear, you see, that mother had never guessed my secret, had no idea that my heart had allowed itself sometimes to dwell on the possibility of there one day being far more than mere kindnesses and civility between Lillian Lile and me.

How should she guess such a thing? How should she ever imagine that her sensible, practical, farmer son could soar so far into the region of wild imaginings? I was glad and relieved that she could not, and sternly resolved that she never should be so troubled.

"Had you any idea Mr. Lile was so rich as that?" I asked presently.

"I always understood he was very rich, but never heard at all how rich. It is a fearful responsibility for a woman to be so wealthy."

"Oh, she will soon get someone to help her bear that, mother. Her only difficulty, I expect, will be to know how to choose amongst so many."

"Ralph, I do not at all like your manner of speaking of Miss Lile. I—"

"All right, mother, I'm sure I don't want to speak of her; it is no pleasure to me, I assure you."

Which was quite true. I did not care to speak of her, for I was in constant fear lest I should betray myself; but I thought about her every minute of the day, and a good part of the night.

I quite believe that the utter hopelessness and imbecility of my passion fed and strengthened it. I knew, of course, that I—the poor owner of a paltry three hundred acres of land, and an old tumble-down house—might as sensibly hope to woo and win a royal princess as this wealthy young plebeian. People would not have thought me half as mad had I fixed my affections on one of Earl Rosslyn's impecunious daughters, and I should have been quite aware that

such an aspiration would not have been half as hopeless as the one I was fool enough to indulge.

Mother had another letter from Lillian, written after her arrival in London, where she was detained by business. She again bewailed her lonely lot, and spoke of her money with something very like loathing.

"People are very kind," she said, "and I hate myself for being suspicious of their kindness; but how can I help it when so many of them warn me against each other, bidding me beware of fortune-hunters, and of those who only seem friendly for the sake of something my money or influence can do for them. Oh, Mrs. Bohun, I am sick of it all already, and I think with horror and dismay of the long future before me, and of the load of responsibility I must bear. It would have been so different if papa had brought me up differently; if I had never known any life but such as they all say I must live now, and ought to have lived all the time. They say it was wrong of papa to live so simply as he did, and to bring me up as if we had only a few hundreds a year; but, if it was wrong, it was very pleasant, and I wish—oh, how I wish—that I need make no change! Papa lived simply, I know, but, if he did not spend much money that way, he did in better ones. I had no conception of the amount he gave away, until all his papers were examined, and then we saw. I think everybody was surprised. Old Mr. Grant—he is the lawyer, you know, and a very grave, stern man—turned to me, and said quite softly: 'My dear, your father very literally obeyed the injunction not to let his left hand know what his right was doing.' And yet they say that all this must be altered now; that, being a woman, it will be better and safer for me to go in the known and well-worn tracks of money-spending, and a great deal more of the same sort. I have promised to think it over, but I shall not decide until I have been to The Grange for Christmas, and talked it all over with you. I intend to be down one day in the first week in December."

When mother had read this letter she gave it to me to read also, and as she never asked for it again I have kept it ever since as one of my dearest treasures.

I was as bad as a child reckoning for its first holidays; I counted the days—aye, and the hours too—until I should see Lillian again. Knowing all the while that her coming would bring me nothing but sorrow, I yet longed, with an unspeakable yearning, for the day which was to give her back to us for a little while.

But before the day really came something happened which put all thought or care about it out of my mind. My dear mother met with a sad accident, which nearly killed her outright, and the effects of which laid her prostrate on her bed, and kept her for many weary days hovering between life and death.

I scarcely ever left her. The neighbours were very good, but I did not like to leave her alone with strangers; and there were none of our own kin near enough to come to us.

Everyone who has nursed the sick knows that the worst and most lonely times are the hours when day is changing to night, and night giving place to day. I used to feel sometimes at these periods as if the best thing which could happen to us two would be just to lie down and die, as we had lived, together.

It was when mother had been ill more than a fortnight, and I was feeling more than ever miserable and despairing. The dull, heavy semi-stupor in which she had been most of the time had given place to an intense restlessness, which, I heard the nurse whisper to a neighbour, "seemed to show that the end was near."

I was alone with her, for the nurse had gone down to her tea, and feeling in every nerve of my body the suffering which I had no power to alleviate.

Presently I heard, without heeding, a slight noise at the door, and after a minute or two became aware in some mysterious manner that I was no longer alone or lonely.

I cannot define the feeling, nor try to account for it. I only know that, whereas a moment before I had felt to the last degree lonely and despairing, now I felt that comfort and hope, in full measure, were come to me. Yes, I felt all this, surely and completely, before I looked round and saw Lillian Lile standing just within the dim light of the shaded lamp.

She was standing quite still, her hands clasped loosely in front of her, and her fair face, with its halo of golden hair, looking like an angel's on an errand of mercy.

She raised her finger warningly as I looked round at her, and came softly over towards the bed. I rose as she came near, and held out my hands towards her, more with a feeling of adoration as to some unearthly presence than of a greeting to a friend. She took them in hers with a gentle pressure of the soft little fingers, and with a silent nod and little smile sat down in my place while I went and stood by the fire, watching her as a devotee would watch his patron saint.

I cannot tell you exactly what she did. I saw her smooth the hot, tumbled pillows, straighten the rumpled clothes, touch the patient's

face with soft fingers and rosy lips, bathe the hot forehead with cool essence, and caressingly stroke the thin, restless hands which lay on the quilt.

I had done all this scores and scores of times without any result, but now, to my wonder, I saw that every touch seemed to have its due effect. The dear old grey head lay still and peaceful on the pillow, the hands ceased their restless moving, and the haggard eyes softened, flickered consciously for a second or two, and then closed, softly and restfully as a little child's.

Lilian sat still for a long while, tirelessly ministering these gentle comforts. Every moan was soothed by a tender touch, or gentle easing of position; every restless movement of the hands was met and allayed by that firm but tender stroking or pressure, till by-and-by the regularly-drawn breath told of a natural sleep.

Then she rose and came and stood on the other side of the fire opposite to me.

"Why did not you tell me before?" she whispered. "It was not kind."

Even then it was on my tongue's end to say, "How should I know you would care to hear anything about poor folks like us?" but I resisted the demon of pride this once.

"If I had known you had been a magician, you may be very sure I would have told you long ago," I said.

"A magician?" she questioned, smiling up at me.

"Yes; it must be magic you have used. She has not slept like that before, since it happened."

"She was ready for it. I saw that directly I came in. I am very glad I was in time."

"When did you come home?"

"By the four o'clock train."

"Then, haven't you been to The Grange?"

"No. They told me of Mrs. Bohun's illness, so I came at once to see how she was. You do not mind?"

Mind! Does a shipwrecked mariner mind the sight of the life-boat? Or a condemned criminal the sight of pardon or reprieve? No, not very likely; but just as likely as that I should mind her coming.

But I did not say so. I only said, as steadily as I could, that I was very, very grateful.

And from day to day she stayed on, only going up to The Grange occasionally; and from day to day my mother's health mended. In a week from the time of Lilian's coming she was able to sit up; in another, she was well enough to allow of my carrying her downstairs; and, though very feeble still, was evidently on the road to perfect restoration.

It was on St. Thomas's Day that she came downstairs; and on the 23rd Lilian announced her intention of going home.

"You can do without me now, Mrs. Bohun," she said, "and I always meant to spend Christmas Day at The Grange."

"My darling," mother said, kissing the sweet face which was so near her own, as Lilian knelt by her chair; "my darling, how shall I ever thank you for what you have done for me?"

"Your 'mother's-love,' which I have never felt before, you know, has thanked me already."

"Not half enough, and I do not know how. You must tell me, child."

"Perhaps I will—some day," she said gravely.

I went away early in the day on which she was going, for I could not bear to stay and say good-bye; but when I got home again, almost at nightfall, she was still there.

"Why are you so late?" she said reproachfully. "I have been obliged to send the carriage back twice."

"But what difference could my coming make to you?" I asked indifferently.

"Why, you did not think I should leave until you were back to keep your mother company, did you? Besides, I wanted to say good-bye."

"Oh, good-bye!" I said shortly. "Pray don't let me detain you any longer; but I am wet through, and must change my clothes before I go to mother."

"Of course you must—and before you catch cold. So good-bye for the present. I shall soon be up to see about things."

"You are very good," I said coldly.

"Am I? Will you be good too, and do as I ask you?"

"Certainly—if I can."

"Thank you; that is a promise, mind."

"A promise in the dark," I said gruffly. "What am I to do?"

"Come up and see me after dinner on Christmas Day. I shall be very lonely, you know."

"I cannot."

"Why not?"

"I cannot leave mother alone."

"Ah no—perhaps not. Well, I must bear my loneliness as best I may, then. Good-bye. Do go and change your things directly."

But I did not obey her injunction. I went to my room, to be sure, but, when I was there, I forgot my wet clothes and everything else but my misery; and—well, the long and the short of it is I made a thorough fool of myself.

"Mother, will you mind being left alone for a little while?"

"Alone, Ralph! Are you going to church?"

"No, mother; but I want to go out a little while, if you don't mind."

"Go, by all means, my dear. Ruth will come and sit with me."

I did not tell her I was going down to The Grange, for I had not quite made up my mind, only I was too restless to stay indoors. But, when once I was out, my feet seemed to follow my wishes, and almost unconsciously I found myself being ushered into Lilian's presence.

"I was almost sure you would come," she said. "See, I have put your chair for you," pointing to a luxurious lounge close to her own low seat.

I sat down without trusting myself to speak. I felt that if I once began, then I should not be able to stop on the hither-side of utter madness; so, wisely, I gave myself time to cool down.

But it was hard work. Sitting there, so close to her, surrounded by the subtle atmosphere of her presence, listening to the soft tones of her voice, and looking into the depths of her soft violet eyes, no wonder I felt my senses in a whirl.

"Well," she said presently, "have you nothing to say to me? I thought you were come to entertain me."

By a tremendous effort I conquered my excitement.

"Yes," I said quietly. "I have plenty to say. I have to thank you for the magnificent presents you sent us to-day."

"Do you approve of my selection of books?"

"Approve! They are just what I have always wanted, but—"

"Of course, I knew that."

"But how? I never told you."

"No; you have never told me anything; and yet I know much. I am glad you like them."

"I do like them. But—"

"Well? But what? You have said 'but' twice over. What is it?"

"Nothing. Only you do so much for us who can do nothing for you in return."

"Yes, you can."

"Can I? What can I do?"

"You can give me your old oak chest."

I felt stunned. What could it mean? Could it be that she had only meant this all along; only meant to put us under so much obligation that we could refuse her nothing, not even this whim on which she had set her heart?

The thought maddened me.

"No!" I said shortly. "I said I never would give it you, and I won't."

"Will you bring it back then?" she said, smiling at my vehemence.

"Bring it? No, that would be the same thing. I cannot do it, Miss Lile."

"I think you can. I think your heart would show you a way if you were not too proud to listen to it."

"I do not know what you mean," I said harshly.

"I think you do. I think I have read you rightly, Mr. Bohun."

"As to what have you read me, Miss Lile?"

"As to this—and answer me truly, please. If you were as rich as I am, or I as poor as you, would you, or would you not, ask me to be your wife?"

"Heaven knows I would not only ask but have."

"Then why not ask me now?"

Not the most arrant prude, the strictest stickler for propriety, could have accused her of aught unmaidenly in speaking thus. I never so accused her for one single moment; never hesitated in the answer I should give her.

Neither did I put her to the shame of hesitating in its utterance.

"I do ask you, my darling," I said, kneeling by her low chair, and drawing her close within my arms; "I do ask you, Lilian, to be my dearly loved and honoured wife. If you will give yourself to me, I will try to make myself and my name worthy of your wearing."

"You are more than that already," she answered softly, and nestling more closely to my side; "far more than that or I should not have ventured to be so bold."

I freely confess that when the first excitement was over I had many a sharp tussle with my pride. But one thing I always fell back upon. If she had the best of it as to wealth, I had the best as to name and descent; and so I managed to persuade myself that, after all, the inequality was not very great; and that when I went to The Grange as my home it was but going back to my own.



Of course the old oak chest went also, and was received with much parade and mimic deference. I took nothing else from The Dene—where, spite of our entreaties, mother persisted in continuing to live.

We have spent many happy and prosperous years since then, with no thought of inequality to mar their serenity. I resumed the "de" to my name on my marriage, and went with my wife at once into society, which received us cordially, as it always does receive great wealth. I have been in Parliament some years now, and I flatter myself have made myself known there. My eldest child—sweet fairy Lilian—is just now getting ready for her presentation at Court; my eldest boy is at Christ Church, and my two next at Eton, and, separately and collectively, they are such as no father could fail to be proud of.

But if I ever venture on a word of self-praise, or even self-congratulation, I am laughingly asked how I think it would have been without the aid of the old oak chest.

## Brass Repoussé Work.

TEN years ago brass had almost disappeared from our dwelling-houses. The cheerful substantial old fender which brightened the fireplace in winter was displaced by one of cold steel and cast-iron, with, possibly, some introduction of paltry ormolu. The bands which used to surround the stoves, and throw out the heat, were voted old-fashioned, and not to be tolerated. Gasaliers were of sober bronze. Candlesticks, first banished to the kitchen, soon disappeared even from thence. Door-handles were removed when it was possible to obtain substitutes in china, plain or decorated.

Now this phase of taste has passed, everything is reversed, and brass is the heart's desire of every person of taste, or desirous of having a reputation for taste, who furnishes a house. The rejected old fenders are looked up, and bought at fancy prices. Modern fire-irons, imitations of the departed old ones, or at least in character with them, are *de rigueur*. Gasaliers and girandoles of brass are for use, and for ornament the old brass candlesticks are disinterred. The china plates are replaced with *repoussé* brass ones, while the rooms are gay with picture-frames, trays, bellows, inkstands, boxes, and many other useful and ornamental articles, of which brass is the most conspicuous ornamental feature.

The most favourite drawing-room occupation of the present is brass *repoussé* work, the great army of ambitious amateurs striving to copy, or at least imitate, the work of professionals.

*Repoussé* work is the term applied to sheet metal in gold, silver, or brass, in which ornamental patterns are pushed out, that is to say, raised in relief. When the attention has been drawn to *repoussé* work examples will present themselves in every house, from the venerable silver sugar-basin, or cream-ewer, down to the smallest card-tray obtained, perhaps, from a Christmas-tree. The old workers in precious metals wrought by hand. Much of our modern work is cast, or it would not come within reach of limited purses. The *repoussé* work of the modern drawing-room is an attempt to revive hand-work, and make embossed, or chased work, by a punch and a hammer. In its simpler stages, where only very thin and ductile metal is employed, the art is very easy, but skill is required to produce highly-finished work with elaborate designs.

There are two kinds of brass used, rolled and sheet; the former is made in long lengths and various widths and thicknesses; the latter is dearer, being sold by weight, and is good for advanced work when skill has been acquired and larger pieces of work are attempted. Sixpenny-worth of rolled brass, a small hammer such as is supplied in a child's tool-box, and one or two French nails of different sizes, will be quite sufficient materials for a beginner.

To the inexperienced eye *repoussé* work seems to be done from the back, and many a conjecture has been hazarded how the fingers of an old silversmith worked inside some very small cream-ewer or cup. The pattern is, in reality, produced by indenting the lower parts from the front, and leaving the higher in relief.

Take the thin sheet of brass and decide exactly what is to be done with it, whether it is to be a card-tray, a finger-plate for a door, a bellows-side, or only an experimental piece of hammered work. Assuming that a small card-plate is intended, cut with a sharp shears a circular piece from the plate, and mark with a lead-pencil an inner circle showing where the edge is to be turned up when the centre is finished. In selecting a design remember that all the work is divided into pattern and background, and it is upon the latter that most of the labour is expended. Trace with a pencil a simple pattern—a leaf, one or two scrolls, a Maltese cross, even a succession of small circles will answer for first attempts. Those who cannot sketch can transfer a pattern with tracing-paper; or a design on thin paper can be pasted on the metal. In tracing the design keep the sheet of brass flat upon a board, or a leaden block. For a beginner it is well to have sufficient margin to the brass to turn an edge over the board, as it is apt to turn up.

The nail is used as a punch, and it is well, if the point be very sharp, to grind it broader, as it is liable to go quite through the brass

and make a hole. Take the nail in the left hand, the hammer in the right; strike gently, following the outline of the pattern with a series of small dots, very faint at first, so as merely to trace the design. Fill up the ground with a series of little dots close together, and it will be seen that the main design, the motive as it is called, is in relief, and the ground lies below it. This is the whole principle of *repoussé* work of every kind, but details are added in practice which produce work of a higher class.

For instance, at parts of the motive at which it is desired to raise the design exceptionally, the sheet of metal may be turned, and the leaf, or flower, or scroll, very gently beaten out with the hammer only. The Arabs, who make the brass salvers, familiar in the Oriental shops, face their work with a coating of pitch, and work from the back, beating out the design, then turning the front, clean it, and finish it upon the right side. Pitch is, for ladies, dirty, and not to be recommended, and a great deal of pretty work can be done without resorting to this unpleasant medium.

Patience with perseverance is the secret of good *repoussé* work. The punch must be used gently at first, going again and again over the same lines. Each time as the ground falls lower and lower, the pattern rises higher and higher. Where a line is to be traced, to mark out the vein of a leaf or any other feature, it must be scarcely perceptible the first time, and deepened time after time.

When the central ornament of the card-tray has been perfected in this manner, the edge must be gently turned up with a round-nosed pliers, and goffered.

Though the nail is suggested as a cheap tool for practice, it is but a clumsy substitute for the real tool, the punch, which professional metal-workers use; and it is impossible to introduce much variety into the groundwork without having a few of these mats, as they are called, of different sizes and patterns. Tracers are for outlining the pattern, which is best done in short lines, so carefully joined as to be like freehand drawing. They are either curved for waved lines, or straight for more formal patterns. Mats are punches with patterned points, circles, trefoils, crescents, etc., and cost about sixpence each. These are used for fancy grounds, and imitations of Oriental chasings. A flattener is useful also, in case the background gets lumpy, to gently beat it down evenly, but with care, not to lower the raised pattern.

The last thing to be done before taking the sheet off the board is to go once more over the outline, remembering that one severe blow will drive the punch right through, and mar all the beauty of the work.

Where it is not convenient to turn over a superfluous margin to steady the metal, lay it upon a board and drive broad-headed carpet-nails into the board all round, letting the tops keep the edge of the brass in place.

With regard to the articles which ladies can make in brass *repoussé* work, the list may be a long one, or it might be very short, according to individual taste.

A sconce, or hanging candlestick, is a simple article to begin with. Cut a strip of brass sheeting four inches by twelve; turn three inches horizontally; hammer in a pattern; punch out a small hole to hang it by. Get the tinsman to solder a socket on the projecting portion to hold the candle. The upper part acts as a reflector, and the idea can be enlarged, other shapes, such as ovals, circles, shields, etc., being wrought in pretty designs, to hang behind wall-lights, gas, oil, or candles.

Finger-plates for doors are so useful as well as so pretty, that beginners take pleasure in making them. It is a drawback to the satisfaction derived from bringing a finger-plate to artistic perfection that it is necessary to invoke the aid of a professional metal-worker to mount the plate into a thin brass frame to give it finish. In this frame are drilled the holes for brass screws to attach the plate to the door.

Round-headed brass screws are more effective than flat for all brass *repoussé* work.

Bellows-covers transform a very homely little domestic friend into an elegant gift, and the amateur will soon acquire the art of nailing on the plates neatly, drilling the holes in the brass first, and then using round-headed brass nails of small size. Panels for covering blotter-cases are very popular with amateurs, being easily fastened upon the sides of a writing-case.

As soon as some degree of proficiency has been obtained, it is well to procure professional tools, including a round-headed hammer for beating out the high relief from the inside.

For early efforts the blunted French nail will answer very well.

When the brass, either sheet or rolled, is purchased, it is not polished, and some workers send their specimens to a workshop to be completed. All this adds to the expense and certainly to the difficulty of turning out anything fit to use, or for a bazaar. Vinegar and salt will bring the brass to a good surface, but the burnishing must be done with care, not to beat down, or otherwise injure, the design already carefully executed.

For advanced workers in *repoussé* many things are possible which would be rather outside the scope of these instructions, which are intended only for beginners, who perhaps have but a few tools. Among these are hinges, plates, brass clamps, key-plates, and other additions to furniture. As these are more substantial, their polish and finish are more important. It may be necessary, after the vinegar and salt, to dry the brass thoroughly, and apply oil and emery, polishing with a chamouis pad,

A still more advanced use of brass *repoussé* is to make hanging-basins, suspended by chains, in which bowls of flowers may be placed.

In the middle ages the *brasero*, according to the Spanish term, the *braciere* of the Italians, was an indispensable article of furniture in large interiors. The huge fireplaces could radiate heat to those who drew round the hearth, but everywhere else it was necessary to be fortified against the effects of ill-fitting doors and windows, and this necessity was met by the brasier; it also served to warm the hands, and over the hot ashes and glowing charcoal it contained were often placed small vessels of perfumed water, which neutralised the fumes of the charcoal, or was otherwise used for ordinary purposes. These old brasiers are charming models for the hanging baskets when they can be met with; but it is rather beyond an amateur to hammer the shape perfectly, so the brasier in its plain form must be cast before the ornament is hammered in.

## Arabs and Arab Stories.

LOVE and constancy as understood in Europe were by no means unknown to the early Arabs, and many stories are extant which illustrate the sentiment. Of these we select the following:

Muawiyeh, the first of the Omniade caliphs, was sitting in his council chamber one very hot day at noon, when he saw an Arab approaching whose jaded appearance and limping gait showed that he had performed a long and toilsome journey, and who was evidently making for the palace. The caliph watched him attentively for some time, and at last exclaimed: "Did God Almighty ever make a more wretched creature than this one who has to walk abroad in such a heat and at such an hour?" He then commanded his attendants to admit the poor fellow so soon as he should demand an audience. Being ushered into the presence the Arab began a complaint against Merwan, Muawiyeh's vicegerent at Medina, who, he said, had grievously wronged him. The caliph bid him state his case, which he did as follows:

"Oh, Commander of the Faithful! I had a wife whom I loved, and who was the joy of my heart; and I had a young camel to which I looked for the maintenance of my darling one and me. But misfortunes came upon me, my friends fell off and my neighbours shunned me, and my wife's father took her from me and drove me from his door. Then I came to thy vicegerent seeking redress, and he summoned my wife and her father before him. But when the prince saw her he was seized with admiration for her, sent me to prison, and compelled me by tortures to divorce her, and has married her himself, and now I come to thee for justice."

Muawiyeh's wrath at this recital knew no bounds, and he at once sent peremptory orders to Merwan to restore the woman, threatening to make him "meat for the eagles" if he refused. The viceroy immediately dispatched the woman to Bagdad, but sent with her a letter to the caliph, in which he excused his conduct and hinted, in verse, that his sovereign might probably feel the same temptation when he saw her. Nor were his prognostications wrong; for when the woman was brought before Muawiyeh "he found her appearance charming, her beauty, grace, and symmetry unequalled, and her wit and eloquence without a peer." Instead, therefore, of at once repairing the injustice for which he had so sternly rebuked Merwan, he made the Arab a handsome offer of "three full-grown virgins like moons, with a thousand gold *dinars* apiece," and an annual pension from his civil list, if he would consent to give up the girl. On hearing this the Arab sobbed aloud and said: "I came to thee for protection against the son of Hakam, but to whom shall I turn from thine?" "By Allah," said he, "I would not take the caliphate itself were it offered without her." Then Muawiyeh replied: "Thou hast confessed thou didst divorce her, and Merwan has divorced her too. Now she shall take her choice; if she choose any but thee, we ourselves will wed her; but if she choose thee, then take her, she is thine." The Arab consenting to this, Muawiyeh turned to the woman and said: "Say, Saïda, which is dearest to thee: the Commander with his power, his rank, his palaces, his empire, and his wealth; or Merwan, with his tyranny and wrong; or this poor Arab, with his hunger and his want?" "By Allah," she replied, "I will not desert him, oh, Commander of the Faithful, because the times have changed and because the days grow dark. I cannot forget that I have been his companion from the first, nor is our love worn out as yet. Should I not bear with him in adversity who have been happy with him in brighter days?"

Muawiyeh was not always lucky in his own marriage relations. One of his wives was Maisûn, the daughter of Bahdal, whom he brought from among her people, a wandering Bedawin tribe. The luxury of a Damascus palace, however, had slight attractions for her. She pined for her home in the desert, and one day her imperial spouse heard her reciting the following lines:

A tent wherein the breezes blow  
Is dearer than a palace fair;  
A crust upon the floor below  
Is dearer than the daintiest fare;  
The winds that in each crevice sigh  
Are dearer than these drums I hear;  
An 'Abbah' with a gladdened eye  
Is dearer than these gauzes here;

A dog that barks around my tent  
Is dearer than a fawning cat;  
The camel foal that with us went  
Is dearer than a mule like that;  
A boorish cousin, though he be,  
Too weak to work on my behalf,  
Were dearer, dearer far to me  
Than yonder clumsy rampant calf.

The caliph, on hearing this last uncomplimentary comparison, packed off the lady again to her desert friends.

Among the many cruel and superstitious customs practised by the ancient Arabs, and one to which Mahomed effectively put a stop, was that of burying their female children alive, which was apparently most often done to avoid the expense of their maintenance, though sometimes from a mistaken idea of sparing them a life of trouble or disgrace. The following proverbs, "An excellent son-in-law is the grave," and "To bury daughters is an act of mercy," sufficiently indicate the Arab feeling on this point; and even to the present day a Bedawi, if asked how many children he has, replies by only enumerating his sons, for, as a Sinai Arab once said to the writer, in their eyes—*El Benat battaleh*—"Daughters are good for nothing." A terrible story is told of Kais ibn Asim, a chief of the tribe of Taim, who, finding that one of his daughters had been saved at birth and brought up in another family unknown to him, got possession of her and buried her alive. They relate that the only tears that this man was ever known to shed was when he kissed his little daughter before consigning her to her living tomb and she brushed the grave dust off his beard.

A certain king went to visit a madhouse and found there an intelligent-looking youth, who, after replying sensibly to a number of questions put to him by the sovereign, at length addressed the latter, saying: "You have asked me many things; I will now ask you one. At what period does a sleeper enjoy his sleep most?" The king reflected awhile and said: "While he is actually sleeping." "That cannot be," said the madman, "for he has no perception while asleep." "Then, before he goes to sleep," said the king. "How can one enjoy anything," said the madman, "before it comes?" "Then," said the king, "after he has been asleep." "Nay," said the madman, "a man cannot be said to enjoy a thing that has passed away." So pleased was the king with the other's wit that he determined to make a companion of him, had a table set out in front of the window of the madhouse, and bade his attendants hand a cup of wine to himself and one to his mad friend. "You drink your cup," said the latter, "that you may become like me; but if I drink mine, whom shall I be like?" The king, on hearing this speech, threw away the cup, and remained a total abstainer for evermore.

"Two travellers had halted in the desert, and had just killed a couple of fowls for their dinner. Before they could dress the birds the hour of prayer arrived, and they turned, like good Muslims, to their devotions. A fox, who had been skulking in the neighbourhood, seeing them thus engaged, came boldly up, and carried off one of the fowls before their eyes. Prayers over, they began lamenting their loss, when, to their amazement, they beheld the thief at a little distance, dragging his tail submissively behind him, and holding the fowl in his mouth. He then deposited it on the ground and slunk away, with every sign of repentance and contrition. They at once hailed the occurrence as a miraculous testimony to their own piety, and ran to pick up the fowl which had been thus strangely restored to them. On reaching the spot, however, they found that Reynard had only restored the skin with the feathers on, and, in the meantime, had slyly stolen round to their camp-fire and made off with the remaining moiety of their dinner."—(Palmer's "Desert of the Exodus," p. 182.)

"A certain shepherd had a dog of which he was very fond, and which having, to his great grief, died, was buried by him with every mark of affection and regret. The cadi of the village, whose ill-will the shepherd had in some way incurred, hearing of this, ordered him to be brought before him on the serious charge of profanity in having mocked the ceremonies of the Mahomedan religion and buried an unclean animal with sacred rites. On being asked what he had to say in his defence, the prisoner thus addressed the magistrate: 'If your reverence will be pleased to hear my story, you will, I am sure, excuse me. My dog's mother died when he was quite a puppy, and he was brought up by a she-goat of my flock, who adopted him. When she died in her turn she left him all her property, consisting of several fine young kids. Now, when my poor dog was taken ill and found himself at the point of death, I asked him what I should do with the kids which belonged to him, and he replied: "Give them to his reverence the cadi." I thought the animal so sensible for this, that I gave him Muslim burial.' 'Quite right,' said his reverence. 'What else was the lamented deceased pleased to observe?'"

Animals play an important part in the folk-lore of the Arabs as of other nations, and the *Mantik ut tair*, or "knowledge of the language of birds and beasts," is regarded as the greatest divine gift, and was expressly vouchsafed, according to the Koranic legend, to Solomon, the son of David. Apropos of this the Egyptian poet Beha-ed-din Zoheir has written a clever epigram:

A foolish atheist whom I lately found  
Alleged philosophy in his defence;  
Said he: "The arguments I use are sound."  
"Just so," said I, "all sound, and little sense."  
"You speak of matters far beyond your reach,  
You're knocking at a closed-up door," said I.  
Said he: "You do not understand my speech."  
"I'm not King Solomon," was my reply.

Bahram, the Sassanian King of Persia, was so careless in his administration, that half the towns and villages in the kingdom became ruined and deserted. One night, while on a journey, accompanied by a Mobed, or Magian priest, he passed through some depopulated villages and heard an owl screech, and his mate answer him. "What do the owls say?" asked the king. The Mobed answered: "The male owl is making a proposal of marriage to the female, and the lady replies: 'I shall be most delighted if you will give me the dowry I require.' 'And what is that?' says the male owl. 'Twenty villages,' says she, 'ruined in the reign of our most gracious sovereign Bahram.'" "And what did the male owl reply?" asked Bahram. "Oh, your majesty," answered the priest, "he said: 'That is very easy; if his majesty only lives long enough, I'll give you a thousand.'" The lesson, say the historians, was not lost upon the king, who reformed his ways.

## The Chemistry of Conversion.

THE Sanitary Engineer of New York is responsible for the following yarn:

A reporter had to attend a meeting at a Wesleyan Chapel for the conversion of the Hebrews to Christianity, after which he reported some addresses on the conversion of sewage into lime and cement. In the printer's hands the folios got mixed up, and the report read: "The Chairman, after the meeting had been opened with prayer, explained that the conversion of the Jews was one of the greatest works that could engage the attention of our sanitary authorities. Filtration was the most perfect method that could be adopted for purification; but a filter had its limits. There was a popular notion that the sewage contained a vast amount of wealth, but the sludge must be taken out of it for purposes of irrigation, as it otherwise choked the pores of the land, and they were a wandering race spread over the whole face of the habitable globe. They were denied the inimitable blessings of Christianity, which might be counted by thousands of tons per annum allowed to run to waste, when by a judicious admixture of lime and clay, the benighted Hebrews who sat in darkness might easily be converted into lime and cement for building purposes, and if thus deodorised, after being first dried and burned in a kiln, this ancient race would once more take its proud position among the nations of the world. Subscriptions were earnestly solicited for the purpose, though he (the speaker) disclaimed any idea of making a profit out of the process, and, in conclusion, he urged increased efforts in the good work, showing that, thus deodorised by a very novel process of evangelisation in large tanks constructed for the purpose, the grateful Hebrews might flow over the land without injury to vegetation, while the expense of conversion, which was progressing as rapidly as the best friends of Christianity could wish, would be more than repaid by the sale of the phosphate of lime and valuable cement for building purposes."

## The Family Doctor.

### CONSTITUTIONAL TENDENCIES.

IN this world, none of us enter life with absolutely healthy bodies. We may be perfectly free from any visible trace of disease, but we have in us a lurking tendency to it under some form. Such tendencies are of course hereditary. They may come to us from our parents or our grandparents (for a generation is frequently skipped over by them), or they may have never appeared in our direct descent, but only among collateral relatives. How such seeds of disease may develop in future years depends in most cases on the individual and the history of his life. Sometimes the disease asserts itself so soon and so strongly that death ensues during infancy or early childhood. The amount of knowledge, good sense, and care which surrounds each child can do much towards making or marring its constitution. The mortality of infants is very great, and it is impossible to account for it without laying some blame to the ignorance or carelessness of those entrusted with the care of infant life. On the other hand, the number of preventible deaths among adults quite able to take care of themselves is very large. Not a few of these premature ends are due to unchecked constitutional tendencies. And it is in such cases that the individual duty and responsibility exists.

LET us now make quite clear what we mean by constitutional tendencies. A person may be born with a disease which does not show itself for years. Yet the disease is there, ever ready to spring into activity. In other cases a child may be born with no actual disease, but as life goes on it manifests a special weakness on certain lines—a peculiar tendency to certain diseases. In the first case the seed, as it were, is in the soil—in the other the soil is only ready for it. The practical use of considering this subject is that, by knowledge, judgment, and self-control, much may be done to check these tendencies.

WE can best make our meaning clear by giving an illustration. Of all constitutional tendencies, that known as "scrofulous tendency" must certainly rank as the commonest. The term is difficult to define. The word "scrofula" is derived from the Latin "scrofa"—an old sow—the reason being that scrofulous persons are liable to swollen and enlarged glands, which, when occurring in the neck, may have been thought to give them some resemblance to a pig. Doctors learn to know a scrofulous person by a kind of instinct, just as we learn to know our neighbours by their faces, though it would be impossible for us to give a description of their features, adequate to explain our recognition.

It has been the custom with some physicians to describe two classes or types of scrofula. One class consists of dark, coarse-haired people, with long eye-lashes, and pasty-looking skins; a thoroughly unhealthy appearance. The other class includes fair people with blue eyes, and with skins so soft and thin that the blood shines through, giving a brilliancy to the complexion—an appearance rather of fragility than of disease. Most of the beautiful heroines, described by third-rate novelists, are to the medical eye merely scrofulous subjects! Any attempt at classification must be, however, but very partially successful.

SCROFULOUS people show their inherent weakness at every turn. If they receive a wound, it takes long to heal—much longer than in a healthy patient. A blow which would produce little effect on a strong person, often leads to serious mischief in the scrofulous. Their tissues seem feeble. There is a flaw, as it were, in each of the bricks which build up their "tenement of clay," and so a trifling vicissitude wrecks them. A slight cold, for example, will linger with such persons for months, or even years, and finally end in consumption. They are very subject to the glandular enlargements from which their tendency seems to get its name. In these, matter may form. They also suffer frequently from indigestion and diarrhoea.

A PERSON, then, who without any very definite symptoms, is described as scrofulous, is simply one who from general physical weakness in certain parts and tissues of the body is specially liable to a certain set of maladies. Recent researches go far to prove that this feeble or scrofulous habit of body is peculiarly likely to become the prey of an infinitesimal plant called the *bacillus of tubercle*. Once his microscopic organism has entered the system at some weak point, distinct symptoms of scrofula appear. One other point must be mentioned here to complete our bird's-eye view of this vast subject. It is, that a person born quite healthy and free from all scrofulous taint, may yet develop it by improper diet, bad air, overcrowding, depressing habits, or imperfect recovery from other forms of suffering.

THE reader's mind now probably asks this question: "What are we to do to combat with the foe which you have described to us as so formidable?"

OUR answer may seem somewhat vague, because the peculiarities of individual constitution and of surrounding circumstance vary in each case. We can give you the broadcloth of counsel, but each must cut his own garment from it. However, certain wide principles do apply to most cases. When a child has a scrofulous tendency—that is, when it is, in common parlance, "a delicate child," everything possible must be done to invigorate its constitution from the first. Its food must be nourishing and easy of digestion. Cod-liver oil is largely recommended. It is best taken in the form of emulsions, kept by every chemist. But this, as a medicine, should be no substitute for plenty of milk and cream, taken judiciously as food. The child's nursery should be bright and sunny, and it should be encouraged in merry active sports, rather than to the sedentary games and studies to which it will probably incline. Its clothes should be warm and rational, there should be none of the bare arms, and legs, and necks, which are a cruel tampering with the health of even the strongest. As life advances, its healthiest conditions should be always sought. Health takes precedence of wealth. There should be no overwork either in pursuit of gain or pleasure.

IN cases of incipient consumption, a long sea-voyage gives the best chance of recovery, and where it fails to do quite so much, frequently adds many useful and happy years to life. People often delay this experiment till too late, and end only in dying among strangers, and deterring others from following their example. Sometimes those who have been always delicate in their own country become robust under a change of climate. We have known some notable instances of this in the case of Australia and the South American province of Buenos Ayres.

IT should be realised that consumption is now recognised as contagious, and, of course, those already having a consumptive tendency are specially susceptible. When whole families are swept off by this disease, as we sometimes see, it is doubtful how much of the mortality is due to hereditary tendency, and how much to the disease being allowed to spread in soil only too ready to receive it.

WE have dwelt at so much length upon scrofula, because it so well serves the purpose of illustrating the whole subject of constitutional

tendencies. But these hereditary tendencies include many diseases. They exist in cancer and rheumatism, in many nervous affections, such as neuralgia, paralysis, St. Vitus's dance, etc., and in some skin diseases. The first thing is for each individual to find out his own weak point. The next is to find out from some good physician what precautions or active measures are best suited to his case. On these he should, as far as possible, mould his life. From them, too, he should deduce certain rules for his daily conduct.

THIS will make it easy for him to do naturally, and almost involuntarily, what is best for him, without any unwholesome reiteration of the question: "Will this suit me?" For the worst thing he can do is to fret and worry over his possible dangers. Nor should he consult doctors' books upon his particular malady. Few can do this with any profit to themselves, and it is often a cause of great and needless mental anxiety which is sure to deteriorate the bodily health.

IF these general principles were taken as guides, many persons with grave constitutional tendencies would prolong their lives in happiness and usefulness, and might often even outlive their originally more powerful but less wary neighbours.

## Singular Recoveries from Death.

IN 1740, a youth who had been found guilty of a serious offence, was hanged at Tyburn. After remaining suspended for two-and-twenty minutes, he was cut down and taken to Surgeons' Hall, that the body might be dissected. On being laid on the table, however, he was heard to groan: he was thereupon bled, and after a while was able to raise himself, though at first unable to speak. The sheriffs were then communicated with; but, the news having spread abroad, so great a mob collected before the hall, that the sheriffs were afraid to take the wretched creature back to Tyburn and again hang him, as with the customary hardness of those times they seemed well disposed to do. They accordingly kept him in the hall till midnight, when, all being quiet, he was taken back to Newgate. Two days after he was reported to be "fully recovered in health and senses," but all recollection of his execution, or even of his trial, had gone—a fact partly accounted for by his having been in a state of fever and delirium ever since his original committal to prison. To this fact also was attributed his extraordinary escape from death. Being unconscious at the time of his execution, and therefore having no fear, his blood, it was thought, circulated with greater quickness and force than it would otherwise have done, and thus saved him from suffocation. The lad was ultimately transported for life.

Another strange instance of recovery from seeming death is that of a man in Ireland, who was hanged for sheep-stealing, and who "came to life again," when in the hands of the medical operator. The latter refrained from giving information to the authorities, and restored the man to health. The malefactor, by a strange application of logic, used afterwards to force the doctor to support him, saying that he was bound to continue the life he had restored, and threatened that if he did not, he, the culprit, would give the authorities information of his own escape from death, and of the medical man's complicity in that evasion of the law.

## Pet Expressions.

NOBODY who has busied himself with watching the peculiarities of contemporary speech can have failed to notice the prevalence of pet expressions. English people, as a rule, have very little sense of style, and many of them when they begin a story have very little idea indeed concerning how it is to end. The young man of the day, in particular, has a slow and sluggish mind, and can seldom be troubled to give a careful specification of the particular person or thing which forms the topic of his conversation. He finds it answers better for his purpose to choose some simple generic term which he can use when his thoughts fail him. What the trapeze is to the acrobat, his pet expression is to the modern young man. It serves as a rest to steady himself on, and to sustain him until he takes his next awkward flight. Many a fall would that young man have, many an awkward hiatus or wrongly-chosen expression would there be in his discourse were not his pet phrase always near him to be rested on half-way whenever the exigencies of his narrative become too much for his powers of speech.

THE conversation of the young lady of the period is principally remarkable for its adjectives. Unlike the young man, she has rarely any pet substantive whereby to express most things that come under her notice; it may be that she refrains to use her brother's phrases for fear of being considered slangy. But she rejoices in a curious collection of qualifying adjectives, by the aid of which she manages

to make her meaning known. Anything that pleases her, from a bracelet to a sunset, is dubbed by the title of "quite too lovely," while its antithesis, whether used in reference to a public calamity or a bad floor at a dance, is pronounced to be "quite too dreadful." Any act of kindness bestowed upon this young person wins from her the remark that such attention is "truly affecting," and with this pet phrase, and a few more "lovelys" and "preciouses," varied and qualified by the word "quite" and "too" being prefixed to them either singly or together, she manages to rub along very well.

NOTHING strikes the aspiring foreigner so much, on endeavouring to accustom himself to our colloquialisms, as the superabundance of adjectives used by our young ladies. One particularly intelligent Teuton, painstaking after the manner of his race, once announced his intention of making a dictionary of these terms, but has since given it up in despair. Some grains of comfort, however, he did obtain from his summary, some little additional light on an obscure subject. The unbounded terms of admiration for any object that they thought it behoved them to admire appeared to be his principal stumbling-block, but he overcame it. "When you say 'Zat is most beau-ti-ful!'" said he, "it means 'rather nice,' and 'sweetly pretty' means 'I do not like it.'"

WHICH of us has not a friend who indulges in pet expressions—some, perhaps, that we may not notice when we are with them, yet often recall when they are far away? We remember them with a sort of gentle amusement, as we find ourselves using their catch-word, and adding: "As So-and-so would say." For there is a great deal of individuality about a man's catch-words, and his character creeps out that way. Do we not remember our gentle Scotch friend, and the long sigh he would give at the end of some narration of sorrow or sin, summing up the sorrowful or the sinning one with the comprehensive comment: "Ah, poor body!" How much unaffected pity was contained in those words, and very often forgiveness too; for this was a public man, with many traducers, whom, in his large-heartedness, he could afford to despise, and if he were reminded of some past ill-natured deed, the same pet phrase would show how little the wound was rankling, and that he had far more pity left than anger for his enemy.

ANOTHER friend recurs to us whose pet word is "moreover." A certain gentle dignity seems to hang about this man; a love of olden times whose habits and quaint phrases he would revive again if he could. A gentle complacency in explaining and relating, a love of giving details, and of planning out arrangements—all these things seem to be borne to us along with that gentle phrase: "We will do this, and moreover we will do that." "Our guide begged us not to try the ascent, and moreover he explained to us;" so our friend goes on, with unconsciously recurring phrases. As we write, we can see him, in our mind's eye, seated at table in his mediæval refectory, talking with the air of a man accustomed to be listened to with deference.

A GOOD deal of simplicity of mind is shown in the pet expression of another man we wot of. He relates to us some very trivial event, some series of coincidences so singularly trivial that it is strange that he should regard them worth the telling. These narratives he tells with every appearance of care, with a painstaking accuracy as to names and dates, and with manifest fear lest these sister-pearls should forbear to kiss each other so that he should present his story incomplete. His stories are all interlarded with one set phrase which is as necessary to the teller as harking back to Charing Cross was to the old lady who lost her way in the underground railway. This phrase is "strange as it may appear," and by its aid alone does our friend deliver himself of his tale. "I was walking along King Street, Brighton, with my wife," he begins, "when, strange as it may appear, we met Jones. He lives there, you know, which doesn't make it so odd, but who should be with him—strange to say—but Johnson. Now, my wife's family have all known the Johnsons for many years past, but, strange as it may appear, we never had the least idea before that the Johnsons were related to the Joneses." So he meanders on, with a childlike confidence in the strangeness of the facts he sets before you, and is only too disappointed and distressed if his listener does not put in the exclamations of surprise in the spaces so considerably pointed out to him.

THE "good talker" has gone out of fashion, and would now be voted a prosy old bore; it is not the fashion to be careful about the way you express a thing, or to appear to be giving yourself much trouble in entertaining your hearers. The words of the modern young man come out in disjointed fragments—much as one might expect a Dutch doll to talk were it blessed with the power of speech; his sentences seem as if they dropped out of his lips without his own volition.

HE has one favourite word at a time, and he wears it threadbare. If you can understand it, all the better for you; if not, you would not like to show your ignorance by asking; so the young man distinctly scores one there. His pet phrase covers his ignorance or his laziness, and he is borne along with the tide instead of having to row against the stream. A very few words suffice the young man. The social scale is divided by him into two broad portions—"swells" and "cads."



To the one or the other you must belong. If you look superior to your station, you are a cad, apeing a swell; if you disgrace your station, you are a swell behaving like a cad. The young man of the period does not speak evil of dignities. He calls them "toffs." How refreshingly simple is conversation made by these means it is easy to perceive. "Sir Frederick Leighton and other toffs," is a deliciously easy way of describing a few prominent Royal Academicians, or the same word applied to the Lord Mayor and his following ought to conjure up a perfect vision of high sheriffs and aldermen, including perhaps the sword-bearer and the gold-stick.

AFTER all, it is fashionable to be brief, and you must forgive the young man's slang as the pardonable exuberance of youth. To choose your words with care is to talk like a book—so the young man will tell you, if consulted on the point. "Like a book," you repeat after him, as you turn away from his chatter with a grateful glance at the shelves where stand some of those mute companions—their leaves filled with choice and scholarly and sounding prose, to which the greater part of modern conversation bears as much resemblance as does the strong flight of an eagle to a squirrel turning round and round in his cage.

## Household Gardening.

WE are now in the midst of what may be termed the working period of the gardening year. Labour must of course be bestowed on gardens at all times, but in the spring and summer this amounts, in many cases, to healthy exercise and pleasant recreation, such as sowing seeds, tying up plants, and watering crops. At this time of the year the work requiring to be done is of a different order, some of it not less healthy, perhaps, to those who may by preference engage in it, and certainly not less effective exercise than "peddling about" among the flowers. The resting season of plants and trees—winter—is the working season of their growers, and hard and heavy much of the work is that needs to be done in many gardens at the present time. Digging, trenching, manuring, and making improvements of a permanent character form a short list of the operations pending now, and the sooner they are completed the better.

### ARRANGING WORK.

Some impetuous persons, when they make up their minds to have anything done, will have the work in hand pressed on without intermission, whether the weather be favourable for its prosecution or not. In this they err. Much labour is wasted every year, and positive injury done in various ways by digging when the soil is slightly frozen and even covered with snow; while, on the other hand, walks are cut up by wheeling soil and manure when they are soft and wet. Always take advantage of frost for the last-named duties, and never dig frost and snow in the ground if a workman could be found to do it for nothing. Such practices, and they are indulged in every year in numerous instances, are wasteful and dangerous. There are local gardeners, we know, who will not endorse this teaching, but it will be just as well to enquire if any objections they may urge are not based on self-interest, which, being interpreted, means seeking work. In some gardens there is work for all weathers, but not in all; but what may be done in many with advantage now, is

### MAKING A ROCKERY.

It is a question if a limited plot of ground in sun or in shade can be so interestingly occupied, or so satisfactorily turned to account, as by forming a rockery on it, and furnishing it with plants. We have seen charming little miniature mounds containing not more than a barrowful or two of soil in the small forecourts of artisans' dwellings, the mounds being studded with clinkers, shells, and such odds and ends of hardware as could be found, and fixed to impart ruggedness and variety. Such rockeries, when planted with suitable flowers, have a very pretty effect.

Even in some of the cellar-like areas in London, mounds of a similar character are formed with any rough material at hand, and this embedded in a bushel or two of soil in itself affords acceptable relief from the monotonous plainness of brick walls and flagstones; while when the mounds are planted with the strong growing Ferns, small-leaved Ivies, and that accommodating plant, the Creeping Jenny, they have quite an attractive appearance.

Again, in suburban gardens only large enough to swing conveniently the proverbial cat, many corners that would be otherwise unsightly are appropriately and agreeably occupied in the manner indicated, and more might with advantage be seen. A little thought, labour, and pride in rendering the home surroundings pleasant would result in numerous small enclosures being made cheerful that are now decidedly unattractive, and the improvement might be effected at a trifling cost.

Villa gardens of larger size, yet small in comparison with those attached to country residences, can scarcely be considered complete without a rockery, and an appropriate site can usually be found for a mound of the kind in question.

If there is a dark, shaded corner, overhung with trees, where

little or nothing will grow, that is just the place for a rockery, to be planted chiefly with strong-growing Ferns, which are sure to be admired in the summer, while in the spring the mound might be attractive with such bulbs as Snowdrops, Winter Aconites, and Daffodils. Such an arrangement will have a far better appearance than broken pots and bottles, stray saucepan-lids, and other refuse of the kind that usually find a place in these barren out-of-the-way nooks.

In sunny positions a rockery may be even more attractive, with a different class of plants, such as dwarf herbaceous flowers and pretty creeping and tufted spring-flowering Alpine plants. With a collection of these some of the most charming and interesting arrangements imaginable are made.

Then there is what may be termed the general purposes rockery, erected in a position neither totally shaded nor yet fully exposed to the sun. It is wonderful what a number of plants will flourish there, for it is not too hot and dry for Ferns, nor too dark for many flowers. A mound well made and judiciously planted in such a position will give far more satisfaction than a bed on the level surrounded by a patchy lawn; in fact, any place where turf will not retain its verdure will be rendered far more agreeable by a rockery with a gravel walk around it.

### FORMING THE ROCKERY.

As a rule, an arrangement of the kind under notice cannot be too irregular. The site and surroundings will usually suggest the general form of the mound, and determine whether it should be an oblong, round, oval, or of half-moon shaped outline. The larger the rockery, as a rule, the more rugged it should be, and the deeper the indentations in its sides. In this respect there should be no suspicion of smoothness, no straight lines of any length, nor regular curves. The effect of many mounds is marred by too much neatness and primness in their construction.

### BUILDING A ROCKERY.

An initial mistake is often made by amateurs in first packing together a pile of roots and stones, with such other rough pieces of burnt bricks, clinkers, slag from furnaces, and spar when it is procurable, then filling up the interstices with soil, working it down with the hand. This is radically wrong, and sure to end in disappointment sooner or later. We have seen many failures by adopting that mode of procedure, and it is mentioned in order that it may be avoided.

When abundance of hard materials are provided, the work of arranging them and adding soil should go on together, making the stones firm so that they cannot sink or slip, and the soil also so firm that it cannot materially settle and fall away from the roots of the plants.

It is important also to remember that as the soil has to support the plants, the stones too must sustain the soil, and prevent its being washed away by heavy rains or artificial waterings. Each space or "pocket" that is made for plants should be so formed that it will hold water the same as the space above the soil in a flower-pot; the soil then cannot readily be displaced, and the water will pass where it is wanted—to the roots of the plants.

But perhaps the majority of persons who desire to have a rockery, large or small, have not a very abundant supply of hard, rough materials with which to build it, and their object consequently is to make the most of what little they have.

In this case, undoubtedly, the best plan is to first raise a mound of soil, confining the base by a strong boundary of heavy stones, then embed the remainder in the soil, disposing them according to taste, each one being made firm. That plan answers very well for an ordinary rockery of mixed flowers, but it would not satisfy a geologist.

One more obstacle is often present in respect of this work—namely, a scarcity of good soil for raising the mound. For this there is a very simple remedy. When an abundance of good soil is not readily procurable, the bulk of the mound may be composed of bad, or of rubbish of any kind—broken pots, bottles, the contents of ash-bins, anything of a hard nature to form the base. This will not only save soil, but will act as drainage in the same manner as crocks do in a flower-pot.

But the mound must be surfaced with fertile soil for the plants to grow in, a foot in depth of good loam being ample for most plants, or ordinary good garden soil will do. In districts where peat is plentiful, it may be mixed with advantage in the soil for a rockery; it is, however, by no means indispensable, as there are quite sufficient plants that will flourish without it.

Persons with large or small means, who are contemplating adding the enjoyable feature of a rockery to their garden, will now, presumably, have little difficulty in doing the work. With the object of being useful to the majority, we have treated the subject as plainly as possible, and on another occasion we will direct attention to a few plants that will be suitable for occupying the rugged mounds.

### PLANTS IN ROOMS AND GREENHOUSES.

Take care that all kinds which are flowering or approaching that stage are well supplied with water, also keep the soil of ornamental foliage plants, such as Palms and Ferns, regularly moist; but Geraniums, Fuchsias, Cactuses, and succulent plants generally, should be kept dry at the roots rather than otherwise at this period of the year.



# Odds and Ends.

It was Christmas-time, and the train was almost full. A quiet-looking gentleman walked down the platform in search of a place. He stopped before a carriage in which there was a vacant seat—no, not quite vacant; corner. "Room here?" demanded the quiet gentleman. "No," growled the stout. "No one is sitting there," pointing to the hand-bag. "Got out. Coming back," growled the stout. Perhaps the new comer had his own views as to how far this vague statement was trustworthy, for he said in a quiet tone, "I will sit there until your friend returns." The train began to move. "Your friend is late," said the quiet. It was fairly in of sympathy; "but," he added, "he shan't lose his property," and he hurled the black bag out of the window. The stout made an ineffectual effort to save the bag, and then burst out into language not that of blessing. The package was, of course, his own. He only wished to keep the seat unoccupied with a view to his own comfort. He did not try that plan again on his next journey.

The following was copied from one of the original bills, framed and suspended over the mantelpiece in the coffee-room at the Black Swan, Coney-street, York: "York. Four days' stage coach begins on Friday, the 12th April, 1706. All that are desirous to pass from London to York, or from York to London, or any other place on that road, let them repair to the Black Swan, in Holborn, in London, and to the Black Swan, in Coney Street, York, at both which places they may be received in a stage coach every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, which performs the whole journey in four days (if God permits), and sets forth at five in the morning, and returns from York to Stamford by Huntingdon to London in two days. And from Stamford by Huntingdon to London in two days more. And the like stages on their return. Allowing each passenger 14lb. weight, and all above 3d. a pound.—Performed by Benj. Hingham, Henry Harrison, and Walter Bowman."

A LADY passenger by one of the West Highland steamers had unintentionally been annoying the man at the wheel by asking questions at a time when all his attention had to be directed to his work. At last he so far forgot himself as to tell her to "Go to Jericho," or some other worse place. The lady was greatly shocked and insulted, complained to the captain, and insisted upon an apology from the man. The captain politely promised to see to it. Having called the steersman, he told him that whatever his provocation, he ought not to have spoken so to a lady, and that he must go to the cabin where she was, and make an apology. The man was not convinced of his offence, but knew that he must obey orders, and so went off rather sulkily towards the cabin. Having reached the door, he stood there till the attention of the lady was directed to him, when he called out to her, "You need not go," then turned and went on deck.

A TRAVELLER, who spent some time in Turkey, relates a beautiful parable which was told him by a dervish, and which seemed more beautiful than Sterne's celebrated figure of the accusing spirit and recording angel: "Every man," said the dervish, "has two angels, one on his right shoulder and one on his left. When he does anything good, the angel on the right shoulder writes it down and seals it, because what has been well done is done for ever. When he does evil, the angel on the left writes it down, and he waits till midnight. If before that time the man bows his head and exclaims, 'Gracious Allah! I have sinned; forgive me!' the angel rubs out the record; but if not, at midnight he seals it, and the beloved angel on the right shoulder weeps."

At a populous manufacturing town there was an inhabitant who held a good position as a fishmonger, and, being partial to theatricals, was very kind, and gave great assistance to the Theatre Royal. Being anxious to make his *début*, it was at last arranged that he should play Polonius for the manager's benefit, that gentleman himself playing Hamlet. The house was crammed, and the play proceeded until it came to the lines, "Do you know me, my lord?" "Excellently well; you are a fishmonger!" when the maternal parent of Polonius (being in front and thinking the line was a personal insult to her son), rose and said: "Well, sir, if he is a fishmonger he has been very kind to you, and you've no right to expose him in public."

It was to introduce to the English public a joint invention of his own and his brother Werner in electro-gilding that William Siemens first came to England. This was in 1843. Speaking, two years ago, to the members of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Dr. Siemens, as he was then, gave an interesting account of the difficulties which not unnaturally beset the young foreign inventor, so ignorant of the language of the country that his first visit was to an undertaker, under the impression that he was a suitable person to take up and bring out his invention.

MISS MUNRO lately published an amusing sketch of a quarrel between Figaro and a Bartholo. In the "shaving scene" Figaro took the opposing tunk to tie Bartholo fast in his chair, so that when the latter rose to providing himself with a stout cudgel, and, instead of administering the usual mock thrashing to the scampish barber, laid it on in sound earnest. The quarrel was an open secret, and the effect was highly relished by the audience.

The most common error of men and women, is that of looking for happiness somewhere outside of useful work. It has never yet been found when thus sought, and never will be while the world stands, and the sooner this truth is learned the better for every one. If you doubt the proposition, glance around among your friends and acquaintances, and select those who appear to have the most enjoyment in life. Are they the idlers, and pleasure-seekers, or the earnest workers? We know what your answer will be.

MANY of our cares are but a morbid way of looking at our privileges. We let our blessings get mouldy, and then call them curses.

"SPEAK fitly," said George Herbert, "or be silent wisely."  
WHEN is iron the most ironical? When it's a railing.

A PASTRYCOOK, who used to write comic operas much in the same way that a wigmaker named André used to write tragedies, read to the Abbé de Latteignant a little piece entitled "La Gallette." The Abbé smiled, and advised him to put his play in his oven. "I understand you," said the metromaniac, "but all the same, Professor —, whom I have supplied with pies for twenty years, assured me that my 'Galette' was full of wit." "Ha, ha! Well, does the professor owe you anything?" "I should say he does: he owes me 600 francs for pastry." "Exactly. Now, you tell him that you are not at all pleased at his not paying his account, and he will tell you that it is a shocking bad play."

THROUGHOUT the empire of Morocco there are villages where the eldest members of the adult population follow professionally the pursuit of fattening young girls for the matrimonial market of Barbary. The Moors, like the Turks, give a decided preference to "moon-faced" wives over lean ones, and are more solicitous as to the number of pounds which their wives weigh than about the stock of accomplishments which they possess. The fattening process begins when the girl is twelve years old. Stiff maize porridge, kneaded up with grease, is daily fed to her in the form of boluses. If she declines to take them they are crammed down her throat.

INVETERATE smokers do funny things. Carlyle smoked up the chimney with a degree of thoughtfulness for the feelings of others not universal in his conduct, and the famous Bishop Burnet, who, like many another author, found composition facilitated by puffs of the seductive weed, disliking the interruption of removing his pipe constantly while he was writing, in order to combine the two operations with due comfort to himself, bored a hole through the broad brim of his hat, and, putting his long pipe through it, puffed and wrote, and wrote and puffed with the most philosophical calm.

At a café in Paris a dispute ran high between a musician and a young banker. The musician—a music-hall "star"—at last sprang up, pulled out a card, which the banker calmly accepted and put in his pocket. Two days later the musician met the financier in the street. Rushing up to him he exclaimed: "Sir, you have not yet given me satisfaction!" "That I have, and to the fullest extent," answered the young banker. "That gave me a ticket for your concert last night; I went and sat out the performance to the end. What more do you want?"

MISS KNIGHT, author of a brace of novels—"Dinarbas" and "Marcus Flaminius"—once called upon Dr. Johnson to pay him a farewell visit on her quitting England with the intention of making a prolonged stay on the Continent. Besides being exceedingly vain of her novels, it so chanced that Miss Knight was a lady of large and portly presence. When the final good-bye came to be said, the Doctor dismissed her with these words: "Go, go, my dear, for you are too big for an island."

"JUMP in, Yeast, and I'll drive you into town," said Crimsonbeak, overtaking that gentleman the other morning. "Thank you, Crimsonbeak; but I'm in a bit of a hurry this morning," sarcastically replied Yeast, glancing at his neighbour's horse, which no one ever accused of being fast, and continuing his walk. "Well, I know my horse isn't fast, Yeast," said the driver, "but I fancy he can beat a donkey. Jump in." Yeast laughed and got in.

"I SENT a sentence to a paper to the following effect," says Dean Alford, in his work, "The Queen's English": "When I came to the spot I met a man running towards me with his hands held up." Next day I read: "When the reverend gentleman arrived in close proximity to the scene of action, he encountered an individual proceeding at a rapid pace in the opposite direction, having both his hands elevated in an excited manner."

"I HAVE," says Mr. G. A. Sala, "seen a good deal of husbands and wives in my time, and, if I have any faculty of observation, it has generally led to the conclusion that the happiest marriages are those in which the bride, when she comes to the altar-rails, has in the way of the world's goods precisely what she stands upright in, and no more."

"How do you do, Mr. Lincoln?" said someone to the President. "Well," said he in his characteristic way, "that reminds me of a story. As the labourer said to the bricklayers, after falling through the roof and rafters of an unfinished house, I have gone through a great deal since you saw me last."

A LADY acknowledged to her father-confessor a passionate fondness for gambling. The latter exhorted her to consider the waste of time. "Ah yes, you are quite right there," was her answer, "there is a frightful amount of time lost—over shuffling the cards."

In announcing a visit of Her Majesty to Scotland, a Scottish paper said: "Preparations are now being made for her reception, several tradesmen having received orders to be immediately executed at Balmoral."

"FATHER, what would you run for if the house were all ablaze?" The old gentleman declared that he should run for a very valuable manuscript. "I wouldn't," replied the boy; "I should run for the door."

"How many deaths?" asked the hospital physician of an Irish dresser at Scutari, while going his rounds. "Three." "Why, I ordered medicine for four." "Yes, your honour, but one would not take it."

A CLERGYMAN tells young men to choose their associates from a class higher than their own. The better advice would be to so conduct themselves that there should be no class higher than their own.

"WHERE Our Storms Come From," read Mr. Broughne, in a scientific paper. "Well, I know where a great many of them come from," he mentally ejaculated, looking up and glancing at his wife.

"BETTER late than never" does not apply with eminent success to the man who wants to catch a train.

CHEAP drapery—The curtains of the night.

THE Original Wire-Pullers—Irish harpers.

RAPID Consumption—Bolting one's food.

A COURT Martial—A soldier's addresses.

NON-UNION Men—Bachelors.

CIRCULAR Drafts—Cyclones.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## QUESTIONS.

C. A. C. wishes to know where to get a book of instructions about Grecian netting.

FRANCES ALICE wants to find a poem entitled, "Fallen by the Way," and to know the price of the book in which it is published.

NUMUR.—Can any correspondent say whether it is possible to procure a book entitled, "One Thousand Chances to Make Money," by Edwin Freedly, U.S., published 1859?

SEARCHING writes: "My interest in religious matters having been aroused, I desire to know the creeds of the Roman and Greek Churches, and of all Protestant sects. Can any of your readers tell me of books likely to serve my purpose, by whom published, and the price?"

W. MoW. writes: "Can any reader inform me where the recitation, 'My First and Last Appearance on any Stage' (by Turner), is to be found?"

## ANSWERS.

C. A. C.—Calando is a direction, in music, to gradually slacken the pace and decrease the volume of sound.

CUPID.—"The Curfew Must Not Toll To-night" is by Rosa H. Thorpe, and is published by Messrs. Walker and Sons in the Golden Floral Series.

DESIGNER.—There are no Prize Competitions for Christmas Cards going on at present.

DISGUSTED.—Hotel-keepers generally demand compensation for real or supposed damage sustained by cases of severe illness happening in their establishments. Excessive demands of this kind should be resisted. In view of contingencies, the following cheerful notice was recently hung up, neatly framed, in the bedrooms of a large hotel in London: "In case of the death of a visitor, the hotel charge, in addition to that for damage to linen, etc., and cleansing room, will be five guineas."

FRANCES ALICE.—1. "Billy's Rose," by G. R. Sims, 1d.; "A Dead Rose," 2d.; "False Step," by E. B. Browning. 2. Your handwriting would hardly be considered good yet. Try and keep the lines straighter.

JOSE.—"Holbein Stitch" has gone quite out of fashion. It seems impossible to get patterns for it. It is done with silk in a kind of cross stitch, which looks the same back and front.

MARTHA.—The verses are by Longfellow, and run as follows:

We speak of a merry Christmas  
And many a happy New Year;  
But each in his heart is thinking  
Of those that are not here.

We speak of friends and their fortunes,  
And of what they did and said,  
Till the dead alone seem living,  
And the living alone seem dead.

NEMO.—1. Write to the Secretary, Royal Training College for Music, South Kensington, and you will obtain all the information you want. 2. The gentleman raises his hat though he does not know the lady with whom his friend is walking. It shows respect to her.

OLD COCKNEY.—The column and dials were removed before your time, in 1773. The poet Gay thus alludes to the locality of Seven Dials:

Where fam'd Saint Giles's ancient limits spread,  
An innal'd column rears its lofty head;  
Here to seven streets sev'n dials count the day,  
And from each other catch the circling ray.

It is stated that for some unknown purpose the column was removed from the Seven Dials to Sayes Court, a house not far distant from Weybridge, where it lay neglected for some years, till made to serve the present purpose. The stone belonging to it, that gave directions as to the localities of the Seven Dials, may still be seen on the green, close to the public-house. For further particulars, see Dickens's "Dictionary of London."

ROBIN.—Send to Augener's, Regent Street, for a list of Operatic Selections, by Edward Dorn. They are very easy and effective. Sydney Smith's arrangements of operatic airs are also very good; they are to be had at Edwin Ashdown's, Hanover Square. The opera "Carmen" is very difficult to play; but it is so fresh and original, that it will repay any amount of trouble.

TINTAGEL.—1. You had better buy a copy of "Pygmalion and Galatea." It is published by French, Strand. 2. Would Princess Potost do?

TROUBLED MIND.—1. Make a paste of petroleum and finely-powdered bath-brick, and clean the brass with it, rubbing afterwards with a leather. 2. Put a little powdered resin on the peg, then the string will hold fast.

YOUNG HOUSEWIFE.—Probably the following recipe for "Savoury Eggs" is what you require: Cut up into dice a slice of cold boiled bacon, fat and lean, weighing about two ounces. Mix with it a small teaspoonful of chopped parsley and a little pepper and salt; put this in a shallow tart-dish, and pour over it three eggs beaten up with a tablespoonful of milk and one of gravy. Bake until the eggs are set.

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# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 142.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Taking the Risk.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"FATHER," said Ned Long suddenly, as they sat together after dinner, "I want to ask you something."

Mr. Long put down the book which he had just taken up, and turned his chair towards the fire.

"What is it, my boy? Any trouble?"

"I don't know yet, sir; I hope not. It depends on you chiefly."

"I don't make trouble when I can help it, you know, Ned; it comes of itself too easily."

"I want to know," said Ned, speaking with a sort of effort, "what it is that makes you treat Mr. Fowler in the way you do?"

Mr. Long looked steadily into the fire. Ned became alarmed lest he had asked too much. He was somewhat afraid of his father, and it had caused him no small amount of anxiety as to how he was to approach the dangerous subject of Mr. Fowler.

He was conscious that there was something mysterious in the relations of the two men, and it is a delicate thing for a son to meddle in the private affairs of his father, especially when they have been carefully concealed from him. However, he had his reasons for doing so, and they were strong ones, as his action proved.

Mr. Long was some moments before he replied. With his eyes still fixed on the fire, and his face turned away from his son, he said:-

"Why do you ask me, Ned? I must know that first."

Ned had made up his mind for that question. He knew his father was a cool man of business, who would not be likely to make any disclosure without a corresponding one on his side.

"I want to know, father, because I wish to marry Nellie, and naturally I should like to know why you are on such peculiar terms with her father."

Mr. Long gave a slight exclamation. He did not pause this time before asking quickly:

"Have you proposed to her?"

"No, sir; I thought I ought not to do so till I had spoken to you."

"Do you intend to do so whatever may be my wishes?"

This was an awkward question, but Ned knew his father well enough to be aware that candour was his best course.

"I certainly mean to marry her, sir; but I am equally certain that you cannot find any reasonable objection to her."

"I am not so sure of that, my boy. But as you have chosen to follow your own course in spite of anything I may say, why take the trouble to ask me your question?"

"Because, father, I should be awfully sorry to do anything that might grieve you. But I never thought this would. If you did not think Nellie a fit wife for me, why did you let me see her so often without saying anything?"

"I don't say she is not a fit wife for you," replied Mr. Long slowly.

"Then you have no objection to my proposing to her?"

"I did not say that," was the father's guarded reply.

"Then what is your objection?" reiterated Ned. "Really, sir, you are treating me too much like a child. If I am old enough to marry, surely I am old enough to be trusted with any secret that may be in your possession with regard to the family into which I hope to enter."

"Don't lose your temper, my boy," said Mr. Long kindly. "Do you object to the way I treat Mr. Fowler or the way he treats me?"

"To both, father, or rather I do not so much say I object to it as that I want it explained."

Mr. Long rose and stood in front of the fire, with his thumbs in his waistcoat arm-holes. In this position he surveyed his son.

"It doesn't seem to strike you, Ned, that a secret is generally the property of more than one person. Before one can divulge it he must have the permission of the other or others. If your mind is made up, you must go to Mr. Fowler, tell him you wish to marry his daughter, tell him also that you have spoken to me, and that I have referred you to him. Whether I say any more to you will depend on what he may say."

"You are not angry with me, father?"

"No, my boy, no. If you are in love with Nellie, marry her by all means. But don't ask her yet. If I were you I wouldn't see her for a day or two; at all events not till you have seen me again."

Mr. Long resumed his seat, and took up his book. Ned understood that the interview was at an end.

It was not an entirely satisfactory one, but then on the other hand it might have been a great deal worse. He had been quite prepared for his father's anger, of which he had a dread founded on the rarity of its manifestation. That at least he had escaped.

Mr. Long was a merchant in a good position in a county town. His son was in business with him, and had proved himself a valuable addition to the firm.

Mr. Fowler was the head-clerk, and had been so for nearly ten years. He was the son of a banker of good position in the neighbourhood, and on his entry into the house it was clearly understood that before long was to be made a junior partner. However, year after year passed, and he still remained a clerk, though he rose steadily to be the head one. It was a puzzle to every one why he was allowed to remain in an inferior position; none the less a puzzle because he never gave any reason for it when some inquisitive friend demanded one. His father had died soon after he had made his start in life, so there was no one but himself to further his claims.

Gross favouritism was the explanation which was most current, and Mr. Long was often spoken of with some bitterness as a hard man, who had taken a dislike to his head-clerk, and therefore treated him with conspicuous unfairness.

But strangely enough, the very man who, in the ordinary course of things, ought to have been the one to complain, was the very one who did not do so. Mr. Fowler rarely spoke of Mr. Long, and when he did so was careful to speak of him in high terms. This was currently explained by the assertion that Mr. Fowler was a poor sort of fellow, who had no pluck in him, and would stand anything.

However this might be, there was no doubt of the head-clerk's ability. That was so marked that the injustice of letting him remain in his inferior position became manifest to Ned soon after he entered the firm, and once he had hinted as much to his father. His hint was, however, received so ungraciously that he never renewed it.

But now that he meant to marry Miss Fowler things were changed. He must know what was the meaning of the strange relations existing between his father and Mr. Fowler, and, as we have seen, he had taken the straightforward mode of discovering.

The more he thought it over, the less he liked the idea of an interview with Mr. Fowler. It would be an uncomfortable one for both of them. He could not talk to him at the warehouse, and if he went to his house he would probably see Nellie, which he had resolved not to do. He had not yet proposed, though he was quite resolved to do so. But he would postpone his avowal in accordance with his father's advice.

After some cogitation he determined to write a letter instead of seeking an interview. He went to his room, and sat down to compose one.

He did not take long to finish it. It was his natural habit to go straight at whatever he wanted, and so he found small difficulty in saying what he wished. His letter ran thus:

"DEAR SIR,

"I write to request your permission to ask your daughter Nellie to be my wife. The very fact of my doing so will, I am sure, prove to you that I love her. Though I have not yet spoken to her I have every hope that I am not indifferent to her. I have informed my father of the step I contemplate, and he, without raising any objection, tells me that it is to you I must in the first instance apply. May I ask for a speedy reply?"

"Believe me to remain, yours very sincerely,

"EDWARD LONG."

He put on his hat, walked down the town to Mr. Fowler's house, and slipped his letter into the letter-box. He had a strong desire to knock, but reflected on his resolve, and refrained. Besides, it was getting late.

### CHAPTER II.

NEXT day was not a pleasant one for Ned. His duties led him into frequent contact with the head-clerk, but no word or sign escaped the latter to show that he had received the letter. Ned longed to speak to him about it, but considering that he himself had chosen to communicate by letter instead of verbally, he felt no right to do so.

When he arrived home he found a letter awaiting him. It was in the well-known hand of Mr. Fowler. Ned took it up to his room and eagerly opened it.

It was not a long one.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your letter, though not entirely unexpected, was a surprise. I mean that I had not anticipated a declaration on your part so soon. I should not have expected it at all had I not taken for granted that you were in possession of certain facts of which your father is aware. I supposed—wrongly, it appears, from your letter—that Mr. Long had communicated these facts to you before allowing your intimacy with Nellie. It only remains for me now to say that he has my full permission to tell you everything. When he has done so, it will be time enough to discuss the matter further. It must rest with you to decide whether you think fit to do so when you have heard what he will tell you.

"At the same time, I feel flattered by your letter, and can only say that if any obstacle arises to your wishes it will not be of my raising—I should rather say, of my present raising.

"Yours very sincerely,

"MARKHAM FOWLER."

Ned held the letter in his hand, wondering what it could all mean. At any rate he would know the whole truth before long. After dinner he would again approach his father on the subject.

It was not so difficult to do this time, for Mr. Long evidently expected it to be brought up. Ned handed his father Mr. Fowler's letter without remark.

Mr. Long read it carefully.

"You want to know all about it, Ned?" he asked.

"Of course, sir."

"Don't be in a hurry. If you wish to marry Nellie you may do so; she is a charming girl, and I will receive her as a daughter with pleasure. Are you not content with that? Is there any use in raking up an old story which is a very painful one?"

Ned reflected for a moment.

"I think I ought to know it, father. It will make no difference in my resolve to marry Nellie."

"Very well, I will tell you, and I am rather glad you have chosen to hear it. Eighteen years ago there was a good deal of mysterious work going on in our place, and I set myself to find out what it all meant. I discovered in time that embezzlement on a considerable scale had taken place. A clerk of the name of Chambers was at the bottom of it. He took fright at some enquiries I instituted and bolted. I have never heard of him since. But I also found that Mr. Fowler, who was then a junior clerk, was implicated in the business. I had him up here one night and showed him that I knew all about it, and asked him what he had to say. He was in terrible distress, and confessed his guilt; that is to say, he owned that he was aware of what had been going on, and had tried to screen Chambers, who was a distant relation of his. Of course that rendered him an accomplice. I consulted with Mr. White, the then senior partner, whose death made your entry into the firm possible. Fowler seemed thoroughly penitent, implored mercy on the ground of his recent marriage, of the ruin to all his prospects if the matter became known, and promised that, if he were not prosecuted, he would spend his life in endeavouring to show himself worthy of our forbearance. I needn't give you further particulars of all the reasons which led us to decide to hush the matter up, and let all the blame fall on Chambers; enough that we thought it the right course to pursue, and that I, for one, have never regretted it. Mr. Fowler has served the firm faithfully ever since; I have no doubt whatever that he is absolutely worthy of trust now. But, of course, he can never be admitted into the firm, that was clearly understood at the time, though when he entered our place it was with the idea of becoming a partner at an early date."

Mr. Long stopped for a moment, as if to give Ned the opportunity of saying something. But he did not take advantage of it.

"You see, my boy, the position of affairs," continued Mr. Long. "I believe Mr. Fowler to be a thoroughly trustworthy man, but all the same my duty to the rest of the firm does not allow me to treat him altogether as such. Mr. White and I were the only two who knew of his guilt. Mr. White is dead, so now I am the only one who knows it. I am obliged to act on business principles in a business matter. I am forced to see that we have a guarantee for future good behaviour in the sword which is constantly hanging over his head. Now it is for you to decide whether you will marry the daughter of a man who may become some day a convict."

"How is that possible?" exclaimed Ned. "You do not intend to prosecute him? Besides, can you, now that you have condoned his offence?"

"Letting that point stand over, it is quite possible that it may be discovered some day that he did embezzle, and it would not make much difference whether he were convicted or not."

"But how can it be discovered? Surely you would never expose him if I were to marry Nellie?"

"No; but you have forgotten the existence of Chambers. From what I found out about that young scamp I believe him to be quite

capable of using any means to gain his end. If he found himself in need of money he would not hesitate to threaten Fowler with exposure."

"But he would convict himself."

"He would not be fool enough to apply directly. He would employ a third person, of course. He was a very clever young rascal; the way in which he managed his thefts proved that. I only mention this to show that there is a risk; I grant it is a small one, but it exists. Are you ready to chance it?"

"Yes," replied Ned firmly, "I am."

"Then, my dear boy, you have my full consent. If I were in your place I should do just the same."

"Thank you, father," exclaimed Ned, shaking his hand warmly. "Nellie shall never know a word of this affair, and I am sure that the link between the two families will render any further gossip about Mr. Fowler impossible."

"Yes, I know people talk about us," said Mr. Long calmly, "but you, at all events, know how much their opinion is worth. But now, my boy, taking it for granted that Nellie accepts you, how about ways and means?"

"I have enough to marry on," said Ned.

"Only enough to live in a very quiet way, my boy."

"I have no wish to live otherwise."

"Very well; my only advice to you is not to be in too great a hurry. Wait a year, say, before you marry. Nellie is very young, and so are you for that matter. Better have enough to furnish a home really well than to go to a house you can only half furnish."

"A year is a long time, father."

"Time enough, perhaps, to consider how long your engagement will be when you are engaged. When shall you speak to Nellie?"

"To-morrow, sir."

### CHAPTER III.

NED decided that the best course for him to pursue now was to propose to Nellie at the earliest opportunity. This would be a sufficient answer to her father's letter. Mr. Fowler had stated that no objection would be raised by him, so Ned resolved to woo Nellie as if there had never existed, and never could exist, an obstacle to their union. Probably Mr. Fowler would never refer to his letter again; if not, Ned determined that he would not be the first to do so.

And now, strangely enough, when he saw his best hopes in course of realisation, after he had found his father's anticipated objections were non-existent, for the first time Ned did not feel quite at his ease about his prospects of success. He knew it was foolish of him, but, foolish or not, he took a gloomy view of the whole affair that evening. He could not help thinking of what might happen if Chambers by any chance should return.

However, he had gone too far now; he could not draw back even if he would. And he had no desire to do so. He had told his father he was prepared to take the risk, and so he was.

He left the office early next day and proceeded to Nellie's home. She was in; he was shown into the small but charming drawing-room which her taste had done much to adorn. It was not without some feeling of trepidation that he saw her appear.

The usual conventionalities seemed more forced than usual, and but few moments elapsed before Ned began telling her the object of his visit. He did not suffer from a lack of words, and as he watched her cheek grow red, and felt her slight form tremble, he wondered how he could ever have hesitated for a moment in striving to win the love of such a girl. He felt at that instant that, if her father were ten times more disgraced than he ever could be, it would be only an additional reason for doing his best to comfort and console her.

"You won't say no, will you, my dearest?" he asked earnestly. "Tell me that you love me a little; I will be content with that, for the present, at any rate."

"No, I will not say no," was her reply, "but I can't say yes—at least, not yet. I must speak to papa first. And you must talk to your father as well."

"That is all arranged, my darling, and neither of them raises the smallest objection."

"Then I won't," she whispered. "But I have been so afraid that this could never happen, because, though I saw you liked me, and I felt I was growing to like you rather too much, I always fancied that Mr. Long did not get on well with papa."

"It was all fancy, my dearest," protested Ned, who would not have let Nellie gain an inkling of the truth for anything. "My father esteems yours very highly, and I believe the feeling is mutual. At any rate, if you do think there is any ill-feeling between them, it's your duty, you see, to marry me, and thus help to allay the feud."

Nellie smiled; it was a great relief to her to find that her fears

had apparently been baseless. She, as well as her lover, had noticed that the two fathers did not seem on altogether pleasant terms, and she had failed in extracting the reason from her father as Ned had done from his.

In the course of a few days the engagement was known everywhere, and congratulations were freely offered to both. It was generally considered a very good match for Nellie, but those who knew her well were still more certain that Ned had made a wise choice, though he had chosen no higher than the daughter of a clerk in his own office.

As the weeks rolled by Ned began to forget all about Chambers and the possibility of an interruption to his happiness. If he thought of it at all it was to laugh at his former fears.

But one day they returned in full force. One evening, when he had been dining at the house of his betrothed, Mr. Fowler asked him, as he was going, to stay for a few minutes. Ned obeyed, and followed him into his private room.

"Ned," began Mr. Fowler, "I have very bad news for you. You have behaved so well all through your engagement to Nellie, as well as in the manner you became engaged, that I feel I ought to tell you everything. A man came here this evening whilst you were in the drawing-room; he came from Chambers."

"From Chambers?" exclaimed Ned.

"Yes; he evidently knows the whole story. It seems that Chambers is in want of money; after having made a considerable sum in America he has spent it all, and is now in want. He owes this man some hundred pounds, and told him that if he came to me I would let him have it as the price of his holding his tongue."

"The villain!" cried Ned. "What did you do?"

"That which I determined to do long ago if ever that terrible business should come up again. I told him I would give him nothing, and that he might tell Chambers so."

"And what was his reply?"

"He threatened to expose me—to make my name known as that of a thief."

"But could you not buy him off?" suggested Ned. "Suppose you were to give him a sum of money on condition that he should leave the country?"

"It would only be a temptation to him to come back to demand some more; I have no hold over this go-between. There are two of them who know it now, if not more. No, I sinned once, and this is the punishment for my sin. There is no escape; I may as well face the worst now, as wait till I am drained of every penny, when exposure will come with the same certainty."

"But," pleaded Ned, "think of what Nellie will suffer."

Mr. Fowler turned on him almost fiercely.

"You tell me to think of that?" he cried. "Have I not thought of it night and day for the last twenty years? Has not my life been one long atonement for the crime I committed in my youth? And now, when I had hoped that the danger which had slept so long must have perished, to see it rise anew just at the moment when Nellie's happiness is at stake, is it not enough to make a man almost regret his repentance?"

"Forgive me," said Ned; "I did not mean to say anything to add to your troubles, but only to give an additional reason for turning them away from yourself if possible. Can we not work on the fears of Chambers through his messenger? My father would be quite ready to prosecute him if he had the chance."

"You forget that would incriminate me," said Mr. Fowler.

It was quite true, Ned had quite forgotten it. However, he had long ago made up his mind. He had chanced the risk; it only remained for him to face it.

"Whatever may happen, Mr. Fowler, I can assure you that it won't make the slightest difference in my relations to Nellie. In fact, if anything happens, it will be only an additional reason for hastening our marriage."

Mr. Fowler made no attempt to conceal his emotion. He pressed Ned's hand.

"Bless you, my dear Ned! I can bear anything if I know that my Nellie has some one to take care of her. But it will be a bitter blow to me to have her know what I am."

"No," cried Ned warmly, "she knows what you are; what you have been can be of small moment to her. If that man comes to see you again, I wish you would let me see him, will you?"

"If you like, but I don't expect him again; I gave him a final answer."

#### CHAPTER IV.

NEEDLESS to say Ned's thoughts that night, as he tossed on his bed, were not the most comforting. Yet he felt a certain sort of satisfaction, the result of the consciousness that the part he had acted was an honourable one.

The chief anxiety on his mind was about Nellie. He could not

conceal from himself the fact that it would be a heavy blow to her should anything happen to her father. It must be prevented at any cost.

Why could it not be? The course taken by Mr. Fowler was a wise one. Chambers could make no use of his knowledge except in so far as he could use it as a threat to draw money from his former accomplice. But now that the threat had failed, what more could he do? To expose Mr. Fowler could only gratify his revenge, and it seemed impossible that a man could descend so low as that action would imply.

Thus Ned argued to himself, with not an altogether satisfactory result to his own mind. However, he fell asleep at last, wondering what the next few days would bring forth.

He found no opportunity during the morning of speaking to his father; he intended to tell him what had happened, though he did not see what he could do.

Ned left the warehouse early in the afternoon, in order to pay a visit to Nellie. He did not care to meet Mr. Fowler again till he had seen her, and once more told her that whatever might happen he would still be faithful.

He entered the garden by the side gate, as was his custom, and made his way towards the French-window opening into the drawing-room. It was open, for it was summer-time.

To his surprise Nellie was not alone. A man was with her, who was evidently annoyed at the interruption.

"Oh, Ned, I did not expect you so early," said Nellie. "Let me introduce you to Mr. Harrison."

Mr. Harrison bowed. He was a tall, rather fine-looking man of about thirty-seven or eight.

"I shall be glad if you will let me have a few minutes' private conversation with you, Miss Fowler," said the stranger.

"How long has he been here?" whispered Ned to Nellie.

"Only a minute or so," she whispered back.

"I think, sir," said Ned, "that Miss Fowler will not object to my remaining here whilst you say what you wish. I am engaged to this lady."

"I wish to see Miss Fowler alone," said Mr. Harrison pointedly.

"I am sorry I can't permit you to do so," was Ned's retort, "unless you assure me that you did not pay Mr. Fowler a visit here last night."

The stranger winced.

"What has that to do with you?" he asked.

"A good deal, perhaps. But don't trouble to reply; the servants can tell me if you are the same man."

"You need not ask," said Mr. Harrison; "I am the same."

Nellie stood in wonder during this conversation. She did not know what hidden mystery was under discussion. Ned took her arm and gently led her from the room.

"Now, sir," he said on returning, "be good enough to tell me the meaning of your intrusion."

"You need not get angry," was the cool reply. "I came here to see Miss Fowler, to try and work on her feelings a little, as I have failed for the present with her father. I suppose you know the whole story?"

"Yes, I do, and I've a great mind to give you the soundest thrashing you ever had for daring to force your way in here and speak to Miss Fowler."

Harrison only laughed.

"It would be a bad day's work for you all if you did. Perhaps, as you feel such an interest in the family, you would like to come to terms with me on your own account?"

At this moment the door opened and Mr. Fowler entered the room. He had seen Ned leave the office early, and followed him. He was not surprised to see the visitor, for Nellie had met him and told him that Mr. Harrison was in the drawing-room.

"I thought I told you not to come here again?" he demanded. "I didn't come to see you," was the retort. "I chose a time when I knew you would be at the office."

Mr. Fowler started, and looked at him closely.

"How do you know what time it closes?" he asked.

It was Harrison's turn to start.

"Oh, Chambers told me all about it," he replied.

"Ned," cried Mr. Fowler, "he has betrayed himself. This is Chambers, though he is so altered I should never have known him. You have him at last!"

"Have you?" retorted Chambers, who made no further attempt to conceal his identity. "Remember you are in the same boat with me."

"Not quite," said Ned. "But we will suppose that he is, if you like. Do you know what the result of your staying here another hour will be? You will be arrested as surely as you stand there. Will it help you much if Mr. Fowler, who will not be prosecuted, is dragged through the dirt as well?"

"You won't dare to prosecute me," cried Chambers.



"It won't require much daring," said Ned. "It will be done, I swear to you. So now choose. Will you stay here and find yourself arrested within an hour, or will you sign a paper acknowledging your guilt, and then go straight away to America? I give you two minutes to make up your mind."

Chambers did not take the two minutes; he gave in at once, seeing that Ned was in earnest. Ned drew up a paper in which Chambers undertook never to return to England, and confessed that Mr. Fowler's share in the embezzlement was solely to screen his defalcations.

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WHERE the waters flash and glitter  
In the sunny gleam,  
Where the song-birds chirp and twitter  
By the silent stream,  
Yellow gorse and purple heather  
Caught the crimson glow,  
As we plighted troth together  
Years and years ago.  
Once again my footstep lingers  
By the vacant shrine;  
Once again those slender fingers  
Seem to rest in mine.  
As the summer sunset flushes  
All the lonely place,  
Once again I see the blushes  
On her pure, pale face.  
Still the waters flash and glitter  
In the sunny gleam;  
Still the song-birds chirp and twitter  
By the silent stream.  
Love may bind, or death may sever,  
Fate may bless or ban;  
Nature's aspect changeth never  
For the griefs of man.

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His master meanwhile strolled through the streets somewhat moodily. He had come out with no very definite idea why, only that the heat seemed unbearable, and now he felt himself acknowledging that it was infinitely worse out of doors than in. He turned abruptly out of Regent Street, and on through Hanover Square.

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The carriages were driving up and putting down their freight of dainty millinery and martyred manhood. That instant's hesitation of his had brought him to a standstill on the edge of the pavement. Another carriage dashed up. Just as rapidly as he seemed to take in the fact that it was the bride's, so did he also take in the knowledge of who the bride was.

A beautiful pale face—more beautiful still with its shroud of gossamer lace and sprays of orange-blossoms—and two deep, soft eyes met his gaze for one rapid moment. He could scarcely tell whether she had recognised him—there had been no time to bow—when the carriage moved on and he was free to follow his intention of crossing the road and proceeding to Grosvenor Square.

He proceeded.

"It was true then," he said to himself. "What infernal tomfoolery weddings are!"

"I, Beryl, take thee, John, to my wedded husband."

Like one in a dream the girl found herself repeating the formula of the marriage ritual. She was perfectly self-possessed. Too much so, some of her friends thought, who deemed that tears and nervousness were a *sine quâ non* for a bride.

The words her lips framed fell like a dull echo upon her heart, and gave her a strange feeling of unreality, a sort of wonder that, often as she had heard them, she had never in any way grasped their full meaning.

Did marriage really mean so much? A lifelong love, an unimpeachable fidelity, an earnest resolve to keep those vows that sealed the bond, in letter and in spirit?

It must mean all this. Why had she never thought of it before? And why did she think of it now, and, as she so thought, see only two startled, pleading eyes looking back at her, and the figure of a man outlined against the sunny streets—a man whose six feet of height and fair, handsome face bore little resemblance to the short, plain-featured individual fidgeting so nervously at her side?

She grew irritated and impatient at herself. She found she had not heard a sentence of the clergyman's exhortation, and yet the word "amazement" cut short her thoughts and recalled her to a sense of her position. On her finger gleamed a thick gold band; jubilant strains of music were pealing through the church.

There was a stir and bustle, and she was leaning on John's arm now, and following the clergyman to the vestry. She roused herself with a start, and strove to realise her new condition.

Everyone was congratulating her and kissing her, and her father's eyes were dim and yet happy. The wish of his life was accomplished, and his child's future assured.

Alas! alas! is human nature ever but the blindest thing that calls wisdom its own, when it arrogates to itself the right to order the destiny of others?

Beryl met her father's gaze, and smiled, but the smile was dreamy and absorbed. She did not yet feel as if she had come to herself. And why was it that, look where she might, she only saw that one figure outlined against the sun?

Ah, if we could comprehend the mysteries of our nature, the warnings that come to us, and are only disregarded or ignored, would our lives be the blundering, reckless things they too often are?

It scarcely seemed possible then to Beryl to associate this vague unrest, this sudden sense of sorrow and regret, with the fact of a chance meeting, a face only seen twice, a voice only heard once. But long, long afterwards she remembered, and, remembering, understood.

### CHAPTER IV. "WE SHALL SEE."

IN the pleasant morning-room at Grantham Court two people were sitting at breakfast.

A woman with a proud, sad face that bore traces of care and anxiety, and a man of some sixty years, handsome, hale, hearty, good to look at still, despite the handiwork of time.

The morning post had come in, and they were both busy with their correspondence. Mrs. Grant was the first to break the silence. She laid down her letters, and looked across at her brother-in-law, her usually calm face lighted up with expectation and delight.

"Ivor is coming at last," she said. "He will be here on the eleventh."

"Ah," said Sir Hector Grant, dropping the sheet in his hand, and meeting her delighted glance with delight as great, "that is good. Whom does he bring?"

"Young De Grey—he was here last year, you know—and a Captain Forsyth, and two other friends whose names I don't know. One is a foreigner, I think. Count—Count something. I can't read it. See if you can make it out."

"What hieroglyphics the boy does use," laughed his uncle, as he ran his eyes over the hasty scrawl Ivor had penned. "Count—"

What in Heaven's name is it? No, I can't make it out. No matter. Ivor's friends are always welcome. He has the good taste only to bring those worth knowing. He doesn't say much about himself, I see."

"No," answered Mrs. Grant. "His letters lately have been very reticent. But, of course, he is so much occupied."

"I don't know that the duties of the service are very arduous," laughed her brother, "although the fellows declare them so. Well, I shall be glad to see our boy again. It's a long time since he was here."

Mrs. Grant hurried away to give orders to the housekeeper, and personally superintend the arrangement of rooms for her idol.

He was her idol, and she knew it. Sole fruit of a loveless marriage, the one tie that had bound her to life when life looked dreary beyond expression, it was no wonder that the long choked springs of her nature gushed out in fresh, warm, living waters at the cry and touch of her first-born. Widowed but two years after his birth, she devoted herself entirely to him—loving him passionately—trying to associate her own mind with such things as pleased him—putting her own weak fondness aside at such times as correction and discipline demanded, and atoning for hard-won harshness by yet more adoring tenderness afterwards. As Sir Hector was a childless widower, and Ivor his only possible heir, he persuaded the boy's mother to take up her abode with him at the Court, and here it was that most of Ivor's youth had been passed. He went to college at seventeen, distinguishing himself by constant "plucks," a general disregard of the classics, and a fondness for late hours and wine-parties.

But then he won the coveted position of "stroke" in the Oxford eight, and kept it for three famous victories, and assured his mother that such an honour was worth all the "double firsts" he might have won had he been so disposed.

Meanwhile athletic exercise had developed him into the model type of a young Englishman. A superb figure bespeaking nerve and muscle, graceful as it was strong, and telling of capabilities of "pulling up stream," or doing fifty miles across country, that made many a burner of the midnight oil envious.

He was not worse than most of his sex and age under similar circumstances, though certainly not much better. But he had never committed a dishonourable action, never contracted debts he could not pay out of his uncle's liberal allowance, and altogether enjoyed life as heartily and heedlessly as all manly youth enjoys it, when gifted with splendid health, unflagging spirits, and a purse into whose depths they can fearlessly dive.

The life of youth has been not inaccurately described as "a champagne-cup with aconite lying at the dregs." However that may be, Ivor Grant had managed to quaff pretty deeply without tasting the bitterness. From college he had entered the Household Cavalry, and lived the brilliant, useless, ornamental life of one of its pet "lions" for many a London season.

If at the present time he felt a little inclined to cry *vanitas vanitatum*, it was scarcely from the fault of even a crumpled rose-leaf, certainly not because life had been in any way unkind. As a surfeit of sweets makes one doubly enjoy a plain dish, so, perhaps, a long course of flattery and idleness had awakened in Ivor Grant's breast a longing for something simpler and more wholesome. The fact of being able to see life in any form he chose probably divested such liberty of its charms. Opposition and inaccessibility are the *sauce piquante* of life; take them away, and it becomes flat, wearisome, disappointing. So Ivor Grant suddenly bethought himself of an adoring mother, the delights of "covers" awaiting his gun, the peace and beauty of the country, the utter freedom and enjoyment of life at the Court, and resolved to run down there for a month. Before going, however, he dispatched another missive to his mother, more brief even than its predecessor. It simply said: "On no account ask any women."

Mrs. Grant read it, and wondered. Ivor's rare visits were usually the signal for a brilliant house-party, and now he wished to have no one. She consoled herself by saying, "No matter, I shall have him all to myself," and her eyes brightened, and her cheeks flushed, and happiness brought such tender beauty to her face, that she looked quite youthful as she stood in the vast entrance-hall waiting to welcome her son.

Wheels were heard. The great deer-hound, stretched before the oak fireplace, rose and bayed loudly in welcome. There was a sound of voices—of eager manly steps. Then the beloved voice rang out in the familiar greeting, "Well, mother?" and Ivor, who was far too affectionate a son to heed conventionalities, took the still graceful figure in his arms, and kissed her again and again before he introduced her to his friends.

Three men stood apart in the shadows of the great hall, but as Ivor turned, two of them stepped quickly forward.

Mrs. Grant welcomed them warmly, and Sir Hector did the same. Then Ivor's voice continued the introduction, "My mother—Count

Savona," and she bowed and raised her eyes. They met a dark, scrutinising glance, saw a pale oval face, with jet black hair, and a cold, smiling mouth. For an instant she turned as white as death, and the hand she had stretched out to the stranger fell to her side. The lights and shadows seemed reeling before her, the hum of voices, as the group drew round the fireplace, sounded deafening as a brazen trumpet's blast. Then rapidly she recovered herself. Her eyes looked bravely—almost defiantly—at the dark, watchful face.

"I am pleased to see you, count," she said in clear, unflinching accents. "Pray come nearer the fire, the evenings grow chill."

A footman entered with tea on a silver tray. She seated herself by the little table where he placed it. Ivor crossed to her side, and bent fondly over her. No one had noticed that momentary agitation. Her voice was steady, her face composed. She poured out the tea, and handed the dainty china cups without the slightest tremor of the white hands.

The count leaned against the massive oak chimney-piece, and smiled furtively beneath his heavy moustache.

"A clever woman," he thought to himself; "she braves it out well. But we shall see—we shall see."

"May I give you some tea, count?" said the clear, well-bred voice of the hostess.

He bowed low.

"With pleasure, madame."

#### CHAPTER V. IN THE AUTUMN WOODS.

MRS. GRANT sat by her dressing-room fire, awaiting the signal of the dinner-bell.

She had dismissed her maid, and was expecting her son, to whom she had sent a message. Her face was very pale, and the paleness seemed intensified by the black velvet dress she wore. Her beautiful white hair was dressed high on her head in the style of Marie Antoinette, and covered with a tiny square of filmy lace. Some rings glittered on her delicate hands. She wore no other ornament.

The usual proud composure of her expression was now anxious—almost terrified. She leant over the fire and shivered from the nervous fears that oppressed her.

Ordinarily calm and self-controlled, except to her son, in whose presence she delighted to show herself loving and womanly, this strange and unwonted agitation would have surprised anyone who had witnessed her usual demeanour.

But when she heard Ivor's step she made an effort at composure, though a faint nervous flush tinged her cheeks, giving a new and rare beauty to her usually cold and colourless face.

Her son threw himself into a low chair beside her own, and smiled benignly as he met her wistful glance.

"Well, mother, and how have you been all this time?"

It was his usual question, as much a matter of form as the conventional "How d'ye do?" which we all use and scarcely ever answer. But Ivor always described himself as being "not good" at conversation.

Mrs. Grant scarcely seemed to hear the familiar interrogation. She stretched out one delicate ringed hand for a small screen, and, shading herself from the fire's somewhat obtrusive attentions, said:

"My dear Ivor, what made you bring a foreigner here in the shooting season? You know they can never understand a gun."

"On the contrary, my dear mother," laughed Ivor gaily, "the noble British institutions of '*le sport*' and '*la boxe*' are becoming quite popular among our neighbours. Why, I met a Frenchman lately who assured me that no Parisian lady of fashion was happy unless she possessed a '*bouledogue*.' We call them pugs, but there is a family resemblance."

Mrs. Grant did not smile. The fire was still engrossing her attention. The hand-screen was moving from side to side as if she had confused its usage with that of a fan.

"Have you known him long?" she asked abruptly.

"The Frenchman? No, not very long; he's a most amusing fellow. I had a great mind to ask him down, only—"

An impatient movement brought the hand-screen down upon the tiled hearth. Ivor stooped and picked it up.

"No damage done," he said lightly, "But, as I was saying—"

"I did not mean the Frenchman," interrupted his mother, with unusual impatience. "I meant this—this count."

"Oh, Savona! No, I've not known him long. He was everywhere this season. The women rave about him. He is a sort of universal genius. I met him at Duchess May's; you know, your little *protégée* who married—"

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Grant, "I know all that. But I hope this man is all right. I mean—"

Her son's astonished glance stopped her.

"My dear mother, what has come to you? Of course he's all

"It won't require much daring," said Ned. "It will be done, I swear to you. So now choose. Will you stay here and find yourself arrested within an hour, or will you sign a paper acknowledging your guilt, and then go straight away to America? I give you two minutes to make up your mind."

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It must mean all this. Why had she never thought of it before? And why did she think of it now, and, as she so thought, see only two startled, pleading eyes looking back at her, and the figure of a man outlined against the sunny streets—a man whose six feet of height and fair, handsome face bore little resemblance to the short, plain-featured individual fidgeting so nervously at her side?

She grew irritated and impatient at herself. She found she had not heard a sentence of the clergyman's exhortation, and yet the word "amazement" cut short her thoughts and recalled her to a sense of her position. On her finger gleamed a thick gold band; jubilant strains of music were pealing through the church.

There was a stir and bustle, and she was leaning on John's arm now, and following the clergyman to the vestry. She roused herself with a start, and strove to realise her new condition.

Everyone was congratulating her and kissing her, and her father's eyes were dim and yet happy. The wish of his life was accomplished, and his child's future assured.

Alas! alas! is human nature ever but the blindest thing that calls wisdom its own, when it arrogates to itself the right to order the destiny of others?

Beryl met her father's gaze, and smiled, but the smile was dreamy and absorbed. She did not yet feel as if she had come to herself. And why was it that, look where she might, she only saw that one figure outlined against the sun?

Ah, if we could comprehend the mysteries of our nature, the warnings that come to us, and are only disregarded or ignored, would our lives be the blundering, reckless things they too often are?

It scarcely seemed possible then to Beryl to associate this vague unrest, this sudden sense of sorrow and regret, with the fact of a chance meeting, a face only seen twice, a voice only heard once. But long, long afterwards she remembered, and, remembering, understood.

### CHAPTER IV. "WE SHALL SEE."

IN the pleasant morning-room at Grantham Court two people were sitting at breakfast.

A woman with a proud, sad face that bore traces of care and anxiety, and a man of some sixty years, handsome, hale, hearty, good to look at still, despite the handiwork of time.

The morning post had come in, and they were both busy with their correspondence. Mrs. Grant was the first to break the silence. She laid down her letters, and looked across at her brother-in-law, her usually calm face lighted up with expectation and delight.

"Ivor is coming at last," she said. "He will be here on the eleventh."

"Ah," said Sir Hector Grant, dropping the sheet in his hand, and meeting her delighted glance with delight as great, "that is good. Whom does he bring?"

"Young De Grey—he was here last year, you know—and a Captain Forsyth, and two other friends whose names I don't know. One is a foreigner, I think. Count—Count something. I can't read it. See if you can make it out."

"What hieroglyphics the boy does use," laughed his uncle, as he ran his eyes over the hasty scrawl Ivor had penned. "Count—"

What in Heaven's name is it? No, I can't make it out. No matter. Ivor's friends are always welcome. He has the good taste only to bring those worth knowing. He doesn't say much about himself, I see."

"No," answered Mrs. Grant. "His letters lately have been very reticent. But, of course, he is so much occupied."

"I don't know that the duties of the service are very arduous," laughed her brother, "although the fellows declare them so. Well, I shall be glad to see our boy again. It's a long time since he was here."

Mrs. Grant hurried away to give orders to the housekeeper, and personally superintend the arrangement of rooms for her idol.

He was her idol, and she knew it. Sole fruit of a loveless marriage, the one tie that had bound her to life when life looked dreary beyond expression, it was no wonder that the long choked springs of her nature gushed out in fresh, warm, living waters at the cry and touch of her first-born. Widowed but two years after his birth, she devoted herself entirely to him—loving him passionately—trying to associate her own mind with such things as pleased him—putting her own weak fondness aside at such times as correction and discipline demanded, and atoning for hard-won harshness by yet more adoring tenderness afterwards. As Sir Hector was a childless widower, and Ivor his only possible heir, he persuaded the boy's mother to take up her abode with him at the Court, and here it was that most of Ivor's youth had been passed. He went to college at seventeen, distinguishing himself by constant "plucks," a general disregard of the classics, and a fondness for late hours and wine-parties.

But then he won the coveted position of "stroke" in the Oxford eight, and kept it for three famous victories, and assured his mother that such an honour was worth all the "double firsts" he might have won had he been so disposed.

Meanwhile athletic exercise had developed him into the model type of a young Englishman. A superb figure bespeaking nerve and muscle, graceful as it was strong, and telling of capabilities of "pulling up stream," or doing fifty miles across country, that made many a burner of the midnight oil envious.

He was not worse than most of his sex and age under similar circumstances, though certainly not much better. But he had never committed a dishonourable action, never contracted debts he could not pay out of his uncle's liberal allowance, and altogether enjoyed life as heartily and heedlessly as all manly youth enjoys it, when gifted with splendid health, unflagging spirits, and a purse into whose depths they can fearlessly dive.

The life of youth has been not inaccurately described as "a champagne-cup with acornite lying at the dregs." However that may be, Ivor Grant had managed to quaff pretty deeply without tasting the bitterness. From college he had entered the Household Cavalry, and lived the brilliant, useless, ornamental life of one of its pet "lions" for many a London season.

If at the present time he felt a little inclined to cry *vanitas vanitatum*, it was scarcely from the fault of even a crumpled rose-leaf, certainly not because life had been in any way unkind. As a surfeit of sweets makes one doubly enjoy a plain dish, so, perhaps, a long course of flattery and idleness had awakened in Ivor Grant's breast a longing for something simpler and more wholesome. The fact of being able to see life in any form he chose probably divested such liberty of its charms. Opposition and inaccessibility are the *sauce piquante* of life; take them away, and it becomes flat, wearisome, disappointing. So Ivor Grant suddenly bethought himself of an adoring mother, the delights of "covers" awaiting his gun, the peace and beauty of the country, the utter freedom and enjoyment of life at the Court, and resolved to run down there for a month. Before going, however, he dispatched another missive to his mother, more brief even than its predecessor. It simply said: "On no account ask any women."

Mrs. Grant read it, and wondered. Ivor's rare visits were usually the signal for a brilliant house-party, and now he wished to have no one. She consoled herself by saying, "No matter, I shall have him all to myself," and her eyes brightened, and her cheeks flushed, and happiness brought such tender beauty to her face, that she looked quite youthful as she stood in the vast entrance-hall waiting to welcome her son.

Wheels were heard. The great deer-hound, stretched before the oak fireplace, rose and bayed loudly in welcome. There was a sound of voices—of eager manly steps. Then the beloved voice rang out in the familiar greeting, "Well, mother?" and Ivor, who was far too affectionate a son to heed conventionalities, took the still graceful figure in his arms, and kissed her again and again before he introduced her to his friends.

Three men stood apart in the shadows of the great hall, but as Ivor turned, two of them stepped quickly forward.

Mrs. Grant welcomed them warmly, and Sir Hector did the same. Then Ivor's voice continued the introduction, "My mother—Count

Savona," and she bowed and raised her eyes. They met a dark, scrutinising glance, saw a pale oval face, with jet black hair, and a cold, smiling mouth. For an instant she turned as white as death, and the hand she had stretched out to the stranger fell to her side. The lights and shadows seemed reeling before her, the hum of voices, as the group drew round the fireplace, sounded deafening as a brazen trumpet's blast. Then rapidly she recovered herself. Her eyes looked bravely—almost defiantly—at the dark, watchful face.

"I am pleased to see you, count," she said in clear, unflinching accents. "Pray come nearer the fire, the evenings grow chill."

A footman entered with tea on a silver tray. She seated herself by the little table where he placed it. Ivor crossed to her side, and bent fondly over her. No one had noticed that momentary agitation. Her voice was steady, her face composed. She poured out the tea, and handed the dainty china cups without the slightest tremor of the white hands.

The count leaned against the massive oak chimney-piece, and smiled furtively beneath his heavy moustache.

"A clever woman," he thought to himself; "she braves it out well. But we shall see—we shall see."

"May I give you some tea, count?" said the clear, well-bred voice of the hostess.

He bowed low.

"With pleasure, madame."

#### CHAPTER V. IN THE AUTUMN WOODS.

MRS. GRANT sat by her dressing-room fire, awaiting the signal of the dinner-bell.

She had dismissed her maid, and was expecting her son, to whom she had sent a message. Her face was very pale, and the paleness seemed intensified by the black velvet dress she wore. Her beautiful white hair was dressed high on her head in the style of Marie Antoinette, and covered with a tiny square of filmy lace. Some rings glittered on her delicate hands. She wore no other ornament.

The usual proud composure of her expression was now anxious—almost terrified. She leant over the fire and shivered from the nervous fears that oppressed her.

Ordinarily calm and self-controlled, except to her son, in whose presence she delighted to show herself loving and womanly, this strange and unwonted agitation would have surprised anyone who had witnessed her usual demeanour.

But when she heard Ivor's step she made an effort at composure, though a faint nervous flush tinged her cheeks, giving a new and rare beauty to her usually cold and colourless face.

Her son threw himself into a low chair beside her own, and smiled benignly as he met her wistful glance.

"Well, mother, and how have you been all this time?"

It was his usual question, as much a matter of form as the conventional "How d'ye do?" which we all use and scarcely ever answer. But Ivor always described himself as being "not good" at conversation.

Mrs. Grant scarcely seemed to hear the familiar interrogation. She stretched out one delicate ringed hand for a small screen, and, shading herself from the fire's somewhat obtrusive attentions, said:

"My dear Ivor, what made you bring a foreigner here in the shooting season? You know they can never understand a gun."

"On the contrary, my dear mother," laughed Ivor gaily, "the noble British institutions of '*le sport*' and '*la boxe*' are becoming quite popular among our neighbours. Why, I met a Frenchman lately who assured me that no Parisian lady of fashion was happy unless she possessed a '*bouledogue*.' We call them pugs, but there is a family resemblance."

Mrs. Grant did not smile. The fire was still engrossing her attention. The hand-screen was moving from side to side as if she had confused its usage with that of a fan.

"Have you known him long?" she asked abruptly.

"The Frenchman? No, not very long; he's a most amusing fellow. I had a great mind to ask him down, only—"

An impatient movement brought the hand-screen down upon the tiled hearth. Ivor stooped and picked it up.

"No damage done," he said lightly, "But, as I was saying—"

"I did not mean the Frenchman," interrupted his mother, with unusual impatience. "I meant this—this count."

"Oh, Savona! No, I've not known him long. He was everywhere this season. The women rave about him. He is a sort of universal genius. I met him at Duchess May's; you know, your little *protégée* who married—"

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Grant, "I know all that. But I hope this man is all right. I mean—"

Her son's astonished glance stopped her.

"My dear mother, what has come to you? Of course he's all

right. Good family, plenty of money, all the talents. Why, everyone's running after him."

There was a short silence.

Then the ringing of the dinner-bell startled them. Ivor rose from his seat and gave her his arm with his usual courtesy. She accepted it—not with her usual loving grace, not with that upward glance of adoring mother-love at his handsome face that he so well knew, not with anything but a look of sombre abstraction in her blue eyes, and a mechanical effort at composure and pride.

So she met her son's friends, still clasping her son's arm; so she took her place at the stately dining-table, beside that son's chair; so she met the eyes of that stranger guest whose coming had so moved her—whose cold, smiling eyes were ever on her face.

Dinner is over. She rises and withdraws, a smile on her pale, proud lips, a tearing, breathless, unspeakable anguish in her heart. Someone advances and opens the door, a low bow follows her retreat—a bow emphasised by a whisper that only her ears catch.

In the dining-room glasses chink, wine flows, voices ring, all is mirth, gaiety, goodwill. In the great drawing-room a woman stands alone beside the tall, draped windows. Lamplight and fire-light are behind her, but she has left them to gaze out on the clouded autumn sky, the shadows of the bare trees. Her face is white as death. Her lips close in a line of intense pain.

"Great Heaven!" she whispers below her breath, "spare me, help me. Not this, it cannot be—it cannot be."

The men did not return to the drawing-room. They seldom spent their evenings there, unless there was a house-party. Mrs. Grant heard them go to the billiard-room, and gave a sigh of relief. At least for that night she had no more to fear.

"Yet what should I fear?" she asked herself proudly, as alone in her own room she saw how white and anxious her usually calm face had become. "The story is so old a one, and no one knows it but—"

The reflection in the glass seemed to startle her, looking back to her eyes with so sombre and so sad a gaze. It chilled the thought in her mind as if she had been speaking it out, and the words held some name of dread.

She turned abruptly away, and rang the bell for her maid.

"Of course I have nothing to fear," she said.

But that assertion, confident as it was, could not silence the chill, foreboding whispers of her heart.

The next morning all was bustle and preparation. The sportsmen met at early breakfast, attired in rough homespuns and tweeds, and full of Englishmen's excitement at the prospect of "something to kill." The preserves were pronounced to be in splendid condition by the keepers, the soft, grey, hazy sky gave fairer promise of fine weather than one more brilliant would have done. Hot coffee, devils, omelettes, were being swallowed down with a speed too hasty for appreciation, and at the head of the table sat the proud, fair woman whom Count Savona's eyes unceasingly watched.

She looked so calm, so serene, so untroubled, that it was difficult to associate her with anything dark or mysterious. Only a certain nervous tremor about the firm lips, a studied avoidance of one face among the many around her—for the party had been augmented by some neighbouring sportsmen—showed that there was something beneath the perfect composure of her outward demeanour—something that only a very close and watchful eye could have observed.

Breakfast over, the party dispersed. Sir Hector, who was still a keen sportsman, despite his three-score years, accompanied them. The Court was deserted, and Mrs. Grant was free to retire to her own morning-room, overlooking the wide sweep of the park. It was a small octagonal room, with a view of wide woodlands and beautiful avenues and glades, where the deer herded in timid groups as the crack of the guns disturbed their solitude.

The sky was still grey, but a faint gleam of brightness was spreading itself over the hazy clouds, giving promise of a brilliant noon.

Mrs. Grant usually found plenty to occupy her time. She was no useless fine lady, but a woman with good brains and sound judgment, and she detested idleness and frivolity as only such women can. This morning, however, when her orders had been given and her correspondence answered, she seemed unable to settle to any of her usual avocations; a strange restlessness possessed her. She started at every sound. At last, rendered desperate by this restlessness, she dressed herself for walking and went out.

The trees were already growing bare and leafless. The early days of September had been heralded by fierce gales and much rain, and the golden pomp of the autumn woods had suffered severely. She took her way through the beautiful elm-tree avenue that was one of the glories of the Court, and followed it for fully a mile. She had set out with the intention of going to the village, but suddenly altered her mind, and turned off into one of the glades, where the fern grew high almost as a man's elbow, and the great trees shut

out the faint sunlight. Pursuing a narrow footpath, she came at last to an opening in the wood. The old Court, grey with years, and beautiful with the beauty of past ages, when architecture seemed a labour of love that should defy time's ravages, faced her fully where she stood, but though her eyes caught sight of it with the sense of something long known and familiar, their startled glance never rested on it, so it seemed to her, but was caught and arrested midway by a figure standing just a few paces beyond—the figure of a man leaning lightly on his gun, and gazing with a curious intentness at the distant building. The sound of her step, the rustling of the brushwood, made him turn. Their eyes met.

A smile of triumph crossed his lips. He lifted his hat and advanced. Pale, startled, she looked full into the dark face and smiling eyes; an involuntary exclamation escaped her lips:

"I thought you went for a day's shooting, count?"

"The day is not half over yet, madame," he said, with that curious foreign intonation of the words that always sent a shiver of remembered pain through her veins whenever she heard it. It was so like—so like a voice of her long past youth. "This is an unexpected pleasure," he continued; "I knew that I must request half an hour's private conversation with you soon, but I hardly thought chance would favour me so rapidly. You are surprised to see me. I left the sportsmen but half an hour or so back. I am not what you English call 'keen' on it. Besides, is it not cruel—a little? The poor harmless things fluttering at our mercy, helpless in our power, like—women, it seems to me, if madame will excuse my comparison."

Madame continued to look over him, away from him, anywhere but at him, with cold, unsmiling eyes, and a face set in stern, rigid lines as if she held herself in a determined self-control no word of his should break.

"You wish to speak to me—what about?"

He smiled, the same singular, inscrutable smile that was like a mask to his face, revealing nothing, yet expressing much.

"What about? Need you ask that? Have we not many things in common of which to converse?"

She made a gesture of impatience.

"None—now. My past is utterly blotted out. I have nothing to do except forget it. I only know you have come here as my son's guest. What circumstances have led to your reception in London society under your present name I am at a loss to imagine. But if I consent to your presence here, it is from no fear of what you know, remember that. You are powerless to hurt me now, save only through the memories that presence wakes."

Her voice was low, firm, defiant. He listened with respectful attention. The smile had left his lips. His face was grave now as her own.

"It is as well we should understand each other, madame," he said calmly. "I will return to your opening statement. You say your past is blotted out. Say rather you wish it to be so. They say sins have long shadows, you know, so have follies, youthful errors, even the caprices by which your charming sex delight to torture ours. Next, you speak of circumstances—of my changed name. I simply inherit a title which would have belonged to my—eldest brother, had not death rudely interfered. You start. Is it possible you did not know—"

"I desire to know nothing. I have already told you that."

"I am sorry I cannot bow to your commands, madame. A woman cannot, even by right of her sex, always escape the consequences of—shall we call it imprudence—early imprudence?"

The blood rushed to her face. She stamped her foot on the dry and crackling brushwood in the momentary forgetfulness of the passion that consumed her.

"Speak—tell me plainly what you mean by these hints."

He smiled. His eyes glanced back to the beautiful Gothic buildings with the warm sunlight resting on its pointed gables, and lancet windows, and ivied turrets.

"Your son has a fine inheritance," he remarked. "It would be a pity if anything—any little unforeseen mistake arose to turn him out of his possession. Would it not, madame?"

She bit her lip to keep back the outburst of rage that longed for vent. She made one last effort to show herself fearless, to defy him even while this terror at her heart turned her sick with shame and sudden dread.

"You would be better employed in pursuing the sport you pretend to commiserate, instead of propounding riddles to me, count. Allow me to suggest—"

"Pardon, madame, I am not jesting. As you say, however, we have fenced long enough. I came here, not as your son's guest, but to see you. My reason, one only, and a very simple one. I know you are devoted to your son. I know that he is your brother's heir—ostensibly. I am possessed of some information that concerns you and him. That is the cause of my presence here. Will you just cast your eye over this paper? With the true characteristics of your



charming sex, you doubtless abhor statistics. Dates are an abhorrence to you. Nevertheless, dear madame, dates are sometimes very important things. Instance, the present time."

As he spoke he handed her a paper, a small printed slip cut out apparently from some foreign journal. She glanced at it.

"I have seen that before," she said contemptuously, and pushed it aside.

Again he smiled.

"Have goodness now to read this." It was a letter this time that he placed in her reluctant hand, and on which her eyes fell in a glance of abhorrent recognition. "It is dated, you observe, two years later than the printed announcement," he said slowly and significantly. "The inference is clear."

No need for words now, no need for explanation. Only a pale, terrified face turned itself in unspeakable anguish to the brightening sky, as if seeking there for some hope in this moment of horror. A moment—two—three passed by. At last her white lips moved. They only let fall two words:

"Your price?"

He neither flushed, nor paled. Perhaps he had no feelings of delicacy to wound.

"That will require a longer interview to arrange. Besides, you will naturally want proofs. I shall be happy to afford them. May I wait upon you in your own room to-night after dinner?"

She bowed. She seemed to have passed beyond all power of speech. A faint wind, rustling the branches overhead, scattered a shower of leaves upon the ground. She looked at them mechanically. Sere, withered, dry, like old hopes long dead—like proud dreams scattered and laid low.

The glance resting on her had nothing of remorse or pity, not even a momentary compassion for the wreck of a lifetime's glory—the blow that in a second's space had ruined the fondest hope of a desolate life.

Suddenly she drew a sharp breath, as of a cry stifled in her heart's depths, then turned and went back through the little glade as if to seek refuge in its darkness from those cold and pitiless eyes.

"After all these years—after all these years!" she cried to herself; "and now, is he to suffer for my sin?"

#### CHAPTER VI. A MYSTERY.

COUNT SAVONA was as much a mystery to people enjoying the doubtful pleasure of his acquaintanceship as to the outside world.

He had been a great traveller—knew most modern languages, and most of the known, as well as many of the unknown, parts of the globe. In bygone years he had been known as plain Luigi Rocca, and when he shone forth on Parisian and London society in the glories of title, and, apparently, wealth, the little whispers, and scandals, and *on dit* floating about to the credit or rather discredit of the former name were conveniently forgotten, or ignored in connection with the latter.

It may be that he ruled as much by fear as by his vaunted popularity, for he had an unpleasant knack of getting at people's private histories, and a reputation of being a dangerous enemy, and a merciless one.

He might have been any age from thirty to fifty. It was hard to say and difficult to guess. He professed to have no family ties, and his only occupation seemed that of a fortunate speculator.

In all the involutions, changes, and mysteries of finance he seemed without equal, and he worked the wires of too many puppets not to be perfectly aware of any chance and fluctuation in the money market long before such information was public property. Apart and aside from this phase of his life and character was that other one by which he charmed society and secured its prestige, where many a better man failed.

He had come to London from Paris with some introductions which his own tact and talents helped him to establish and use for his further advancement. A foreigner can often make his way where an Englishman fails, and Count Savona was quick at seizing opportunity.

Ivor Grant had met him out a great deal before taking much notice of him. Indeed, he would have been surprised had anyone told him that his languid good-humour and placid indifference had made him malleable as wax in the hands of a mere designing adventurer, and won from him that invitation to the Court, which he always thought he had given in a moment of impulse and good-nature.

On the contrary, it had been slowly and steadily worked for through many months; planned with the skill and carried out with the success that usually marked Count Savona's designs. This design was destined to have results of which Ivor Grant never dreamt, slaughtering the pheasants there in his own prospective preserves, revelling in the enjoyment of sport, without caring to

analyse whence came its charm. He told himself he had been right to come here. Life in town was, after all, a great bore, and the men and women of his "set" were horribly uninteresting. At this point he had usually paused to look back upon one night, when he had found there might, after all, be a charm in such scenes, a night into whose brief hours the whole memories of the past season had been crowded. He wondered how it was he could not forget it, or that girl with the piquant face and beautiful, dark, deep eyes that were like wells of purity and truth, eyes into which he could have gazed, and gazed, and never wearied, if only—Ah, that was the rub. Why did things always go in such contrary fashions? Why did the right people always meet too late? Which paradoxical question proving that by so doing they must assuredly be the "wrong" people, he treated the whole affair as a sort of gigantic conundrum, and gave it up.

Coming home tired and happy that night, with a sense of "duty done," and a heavy game-bag to the fore, he went to his mother's room for his usual chat before dinner. But the maid stopped him with a message. Her mistress had a bad headache, and was lying down. She would not be able to appear at dinner that evening. He felt disappointed at so unusual a rebuff. As a rule his mother allowed nothing to interfere with his privileged visits, and it seemed odd that a headache should debar him from her presence.

However, he went in to dinner and apologised for her absence, and listened to the count's brilliant talk and the sportsmen's various accounts of their day's luck or otherwise, and felt that life was, after all, not such a bad affair.

When they were dispersing to the billiard or smoking room, he wondered somewhat that Count Savona begged to be excused on the plea of important letters to write, for which purpose he retired to the library.

It might have been an hour or so later when Ivor, going upstairs to his own room for some trifle or other he wanted, heard the sound of voices coming from his mother's boudoir. For a moment he stopped in the corridor in sheer surprise.

Yes, there was no doubt about it. That was his mother's voice—cold, haughty, yet subdued, as if its faint echoes might betray the misery slowly fastening itself on the very roots of her life; and the other—there was no mistaking that either. Well enough Ivor knew the foreign accent, the clear, resonant tones. But what on earth could the count have to say to his mother, and why had she risen from her bed to grant him an interview when she had refused to see her own son?

Utterly unable to answer such questions, or conceive any probable reason for so strange an interview, he turned and went back to the smoking-room, completely oblivious of his reason for leaving it.

He was so silent and so preoccupied that his friends jested him on the subject, without, however, eliciting any satisfactory explanation.

He sent another message to his mother, and was informed that she had retired for the night.

The count joined them all again, and was his usual gay and brilliant self, charming even the country squires by his versatile talents. Ivor, watching him closely, saw how his eyes glittered, and what an unusual satisfaction showed itself upon his face. He grew more and more puzzled every moment.

What could that interview have been about? What mystery was there between his mother and this comparative stranger?

"Pshaw!" he said to himself at last. "Why need I bother? She is sure to tell me;" and with his usual easy indifference he threw off the momentary discomfiture of the evening.

In the morning, when the party had met again, the Count Savona declared himself desolated, heart-broken, but unfortunately news had reached him which compelled his immediate departure for Paris. Mrs. Grant was presiding at the breakfast-table, and involuntarily Ivor's eyes turned to her face. Save that it might have been a shade paler than usual, its outward calm composure was unaltered. She murmured a conventional regret, but her eyes never once sought the count's face; she only sat there perfectly still, and to all appearance perfectly indifferent.

The meal proceeded. The count, with his unfailing politeness, insisted that his young host should not disturb his arrangements on any account. So Ivor gave orders for the dog-cart to drive his guest to the station, some eight miles distant, and bade him farewell with less cordiality than he would have shown had not this sense of something mysterious been oppressing his frank and honest mind.

Before that day ended another surprise awaited him.

Though he spent his usual half-hour at his mother's dressing-room fire, and though she was as loving as—if possible more so than—ever he had found her, the name of Count Savona never passed her lips.

He alluded to the count's departure. She made but brief response, and changed the conversation as soon as possible.

"I don't think you liked my Italian friend," he said jestingly, as they both rose at last in answer to the summons of the dinner-bell.

"Your friend!" she said hurriedly, and her eyes met his, a strange wild disturbance on her face. "Don't call him that, Ivor, for Heaven's sake. You are right. I—don't—like him."

Anger, and fear, and shame contending for victory, suppressed and kept back by the stern self-control of years. He had never seen her so moved, so strange. The white hand with its glittering gems trembled as it clasped his arm. Involuntarily he bent and kissed it.

"No enemy of yours can be friend of mine, dear mother."

"Enemy!" She shuddered and turned paler still. "No, not that. I did not call him that, my dear."

Ivor made no answer, but in his heart he said:

"No, but you meant it."

And the wonder grew deeper and more troubled, as all perplexed and unanswered doubts must grow.

Away in the rising moonlight stretched the rich woodlands and the vast acres that he deemed his own, that marked as goodly a heritage as the heart of man need desire. Perhaps as her eyes looked out through the oriel windows of the gallery it was as well that her son could not read their meaning. As well, too, that he knew nothing of the price paid, and still to pay, for that heritage—the tears of blood and shame its purchase-right had cost.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Snowdon House.

(A SHORT SERIAL STORY.)

### PART V.

WITH the near approach of the day fixed for the wedding, Mr. Wayre became more genial and kindly in his demeanour; there was less of the cynical tone in his conversation than there once had been, and—although in this there was, perhaps, no marvel—to Agatha he was constantly gentle and thoughtfully kind. On her side there was fully as marked a change in the girl. Her manner had always been attentive, if not deferential; but there was now something a great deal beyond this. If not actual affection, there was certainly anxiety to please, with—or so it appeared to her father—a deep sense of the responsibility she was about to assume. He was not sorry to see her in this mood, although rather surprised; indeed, he was surprised altogether at the earnestness with which she had now joined in his plans, and augured favourably for her happiness in the future.

A day had elapsed since his receiving such strange information from Brooks, and he had done nothing in the matter. He could not make up his mind as to what steps he should take; yet he was a man of decision, and not accustomed to waste much time in fruitless speculation.

On the second day he went over with his daughter to Snowdon House, it having been arranged that they should go with Mr. Wayre for a drive; but when he saw that gentleman, he explained that some business imperatively demanded his attendance in Bridgeley, and so he could not go. Agatha, however, would be happy to ride over to Beacon Mound—a place of some celebrity in those parts—and Wayre, knowing that a doctor's time is never his own, was not surprised at the disappointment.

The drive was intended to test the pair of black ponies and the beautiful new carriage. A man from Mr. Dutton—the vendor of the animals, we hope the reader bears in mind—was sent to drive, as being used to the ponies, "Not," as the charioteer himself said, "not but what they was as quiet as lambs, and just as harmless."

Fulham lingered to see them depart, and passed many encomiums on the beauty of the turn-out, which were certainly deserved. As he turned from the spot, he saw Ezra Crake standing near him. The man had evidently been watching the horses and carriage with something of the doctor's admiration, mingled with a feeling not quite so complimentary, to judge by a slightly contemptuous curl of the lip. The matrimonial weakness of his master was distasteful to Ezra, as the latter had often made known in conversations with his wife.

"Good-morning, Ezra," said the doctor; "are you very busy to-day?"

"Pretty middling, sir," replied the man, who touched his hat and turned away.

He did not actually dislike the doctor, who had always been civil to him, but he could not actually like him, either, for he was the father of the girl who was going to turn everything topsy-turvy at the house, and it was he who had introduced her there.

"Stay a moment, Ezra!" exclaimed Dr. Fulham; "I have a question or two to ask of you, and, even if busy, I think you will find time to answer me."

Ezra stopped, and half turning his head, waited for something further.

"Come into the house," continued the doctor; "I mean business, Ezra, as you will find."

Ezra's face relaxed a little at this, for he was quick in taking any hint which appeared to promise profit, and he knew what the doctor's reference to his meaning business signified.

The latter led the way into a parlour, Ezra followed, and the doctor began:

"You have lived with Mr. Wayre for many years, Ezra, have you not? I thought so. He knows, I suppose, when he has a good servant; you know when you have a good master. Do you remember Mrs. Wayre?"

"Yes," said Crake; his eyes were fixed with a wary expression on the doctor's face, and he evidently did not mean to commit himself by saying too much.

"She died many years ago, I believe?" continued Dr. Fulham.

"Yes," said Ezra again.

"I believe Mr. Wayre had one son," the doctor went on. "Did you know him?"

"I don't see what you are asking me these questions for," returned Crake; "and I don't know that Mr. Wayre would be best pleased if he knew I answered them."

"I shall ask you nothing that will in any way injure Mr. Wayre, of that you may be sure," said the gentleman. "Here is a sovereign for your trouble, Ezra, and be assured you may answer me freely. I shall be closely allied to Mr. Wayre, I hope and expect, in a few days, and I feel a natural curiosity to learn all I can of him. But some of the matters on which I wish to enquire may have painful memories connected with them, if what I am told is correct. Now I have been told a good deal by a person whom I met casually a few days ago. I only wish to know, from so trustworthy a person as yourself, if what he said was true. I do not seek any fresh information from you at all. You cannot object to that, I suppose?"

"Well, I suppose not," said Ezra, half sulkily still, yet somewhat mollified by the sovereign. "I know about all in Mr. Wayre's life that there is to know."

"Of course you do!" exclaimed Fulham. "Well, then—there was a son?"

Crake nodded assent.

"I am told also that this son occasioned some trouble to his parents, and in fact shortened his mother's days. Is that true?"

"That is true, to say the least you can," returned Crake sternly. The doctor smiled inwardly, if such a thing can be done, as he saw that the morose Ezra was moved at last. "He was always a wild, half-savage, reprobate fellow. He broke his mother's heart, and his father banished him from his house. He was always in some evil. He took away the prettiest girl in the neighbourhood from her sweet-heart, persuaded her to look down on an honest, hardworking man, who meant what was right by her, and to take up with him. And much good it did her!"

"I heard something of this," said Fulham, venturing on a chance shot. "I did not learn the particulars, but it was said he took the girl away and beat her old sweetheart. Is that right?"

Crake did not answer in any direct manner, but he scowled so bitterly, as he uttered two or three oaths more bitter still, that Fulham felt sure he had now found out why Ezra Crake hated the son of Luke Wayre, and would injure him if he got the chance to do so.

"He never became friendly with his father again, I understand?" resumed the doctor.

"Friendly! No, I should think not," cried Crake. "He soon put all hope of that out of the way. He had a good chance, though, if he had only known it, for the old man softened down a great deal, and, as I can tell, used to blame himself a great deal for the separation—thought he had been too strict, you see."

"But I heard much more than that," said the doctor. "I was told that he committed a crime, and was sent into penal servitude."

"So he was—hang him!" exclaimed Ezra. "I can't think who you could have got hold of to know that, but he was right. Young Wayre did not do so very much, after all, but he half-killed the officer who tried to arrest him, and that's how it was."

"Well, then, I heard that he got out on a ticket-of-leave," continued Fulham; "but the man, who was, as I have told you, a stranger to me, did not know what became of him afterwards. Do you?"

"Yes, I do," replied Ezra. "He is dead, and a good job too. If he was alive, the police would have him again, for he stole a horse, or something, and broke his leave. He is dead, sir; there's an end of him."

"I am much obliged to you for the information, Mr. Crake," said the

doctor, speaking with a change of tone, as though to show the conversation was concluded; "you see you have said nothing that any one could object to, while you may have saved me from making some painful allusions in Mr. Wayre's presence. By-the-bye, though, I should think you must be mistaken in one point. I can never believe that Mr. Wayre would be weak enough to blame himself in such a matter. He seems to have too much firmness for that."

"Firmness! He is firm enough, and obstinate enough, too, in everything he takes into his head," returned Ezra; "and so you will find before you have done with him; but on this point it is different. If that young fellow—Saul, his name was—hadn't died, and was to ask for half of all his father has got, he'd get it—yes, and the other half as well, if that wasn't enough. I know Luke Wayre too well, sir, to make a mistake."

Fulham laughed slightly at this, not as implying a jest, but to show that he was pleased by Mr. Crake's penetration and candour, and then bade his informant "good-day."

Ezra's story completely confirmed that which he had already heard from Saul Wayre, or Brooks as he was called, but this did not in the least surprise the doctor. He had made up his mind that the story was true, even while the man was telling it; his anxiety arose from a very different cause to doubt or incredulity. Fulham was a man of fair and honourable conduct enough, as things go; he had never seen it greatly to his profit to take a different line. Had he seen such an opening he might have embraced it, for his moral sense was not very profound; he might, or he might not, have hesitated at committing a great crime, in pursuit of his ends, but he was certainly not the man to give up a great gain, a tangible benefit, for sentiment. Consequently, Ezra's news, and his comments thereon, had greatly disturbed him.

If he mentioned this man's existence to his father—this wretched convict who ought to have died, and saved everybody trouble—why, Mr. Wayre, who had probably a monomania on the point, would make himself a comparatively poor man in his favour.

"Egad! if he were to learn it at once," thought the doctor, "it might stop the marriage—or my loan."

Even if the proposed settlements were executed, and the marriage had come off, there would be a vast difference between a wealthy man without a person in the world, beyond his wife and her friends, for whom he cared, or to whom he was likely to leave a shilling—there was a great difference, the doctor repeated, between such a person, and the same man with a son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren, all as hungry as leeches, draining this man of every shilling.

There is no doubt that if Fulham could have procured the arrest of Brooks, and his re-committal to Portland, without his real name being mentioned, he would have done it; but he saw at once that such an attempt would be fatal. The convict's identity would certainly be proved at the examination before the magistrates; Mr. Wayre's self-reproach would be intensified; the wife and children would have all, and even more than, he would have given to his son, while, if the doctor's agency were suspected, every chance of favour that he now possessed would be gone, while the marriage would almost certainly be abandoned.

Yet Wayre must in some manner be informed of this man's existence. Wayre might yet have children, and if so, the provisions in the settlement—which the doctor had of course seen—would, or could, be held to apply to this horrible spectre which had so suddenly sprung up, and he would get the money intended for Agatha's children. It was not an easy problem to solve, and the doctor applied himself earnestly to think it out.

Meanwhile Wayre and Agatha pursued their drive over the beautiful downs and gently swelling hills which lie in the vicinity of Bridgeley, every fresh ridge showing a prospect more beautiful than the last. Presently they were able to look down upon Bridgeley; its streets, its smoke, its dingy houses all being refined and beautified by distance—even Shalgtown looked cheerful from there. As for the ponies, they had behaved to perfection, and Mr. Wayre felt that Mr. Dutton's encomiums on them, warm as they had been, fell short of their merits.

A certain hotel was the limit of their journey, and here, while the driver and the ponies were resting, and after Wayre and Agatha had themselves taken some slight refreshment, they walked to a seat which was noted as commanding the finest view for miles around.

Mr. Wayre and Agatha sat down, and for a few moments contemplated the splendid panorama in silence.

"Agatha," said Mr. Wayre, with such suddenness that the blood rushed into the girl's cheeks and then left her pale and white, "I will say now what has been in my mind for many days—ever since, indeed, you gave me your promise to brighten a life that for years has had little to make it cheerful. I hope you think—I hope you know I love you dearly."

"Yes—yes, I am sure of it," said Miss Fulham, speaking in a

low tone, for her companion's earnest manner and this strange commencement of his speech almost awed her.

"And I have indulged the hope that I have, in a measure, won your love," continued Wayre. "I do not venture to believe that—but no, I will speak no more in that strain. I wanted to say this to you, Agatha, and I could not feel I had done my duty unless I said it—with all my love for you, with all the happiness which your promise has brought, the chief anxiety of my mind is for your happiness, not my own. Did I ever think that the consent you have given, the step you are about to take, was in any way forced upon you—by circumstances, I mean—did I ever suspect that your whole heart and earnest free-will were not in that promise, that you held in your mind hidden regrets for what your tongue had spoken, I should be the most unhappy man in the world. Is it so—is there any reason to hold you back—anything which would make you hesitate? If so, confide in me as your truest friend, as I hope to prove myself always."

This was a lengthy speech, and while it was in utterance a multitude of strange emotions rushed through Agatha's mind, almost overpowering her. It was only by a great effort that she retained sufficient composure to listen. In Mr. Wayre's language she seemed to hear strange unearthly echoes to voices of the past. There was at once before her the lifelong importance of her decision of that moment, with the full consciousness of her utter inability to give now any decision at all, or to alter in the slightest degree the die which she had cast, or which had been cast for her.

For a while her brain swam, and she felt as though she should faint, but even then she knew that if she did so, although uttering no word, she would have given a most painful answer to this appeal.

"You are very kind, Mr. Wayre," at last she said; "as kind as I have always thought you. Had I any wish—were it possible, indeed, for me to alter—I should not fail to take advantage of your unselfish, generous candour. But I cannot retract a word I have said."

"It makes me happy to hear this," replied Wayre, "and Heaven knows how earnestly I hoped your reply would be as it is. You must never dream that it was from indifference to the value of what I have won, that I spoke as I did just now."

"I never shall," interposed Agatha, and in saying this she spoke the barest truth. "I shall ever be grateful when I think of your words."

"Well, then," said Mr. Wayre, "we will dismiss the subject for ever. I could not have felt easy unless I had spoken what was in my mind. I will not inflict my reasons upon you; I hope you will never learn them; but I have suffered in past years so severely from want of candour, have given and received so much pain which an interchange of simple, kindly words might have averted, that I, of all men, should take care to be truthful and frank in the future. But, come," he added with a change of tone, "I can see the driver looking reproachfully in our direction, as if to enquire how much longer we mean to sit here. We will go and relieve his mind."

They rose, and went to their carriage, Wayre being more cheerful and lighter in his conversation than Miss Fulham had ever before seen him; he seemed, indeed, with the close of the dialogue just detailed, to have thrown off a gravity and a shade which had nearly always hung around him, and to speak with the air of a man thoroughly cheerful and at ease. When they separated, his manner was more affectionate than usual, and he reminded Agatha that in a few days she would be his to part no more.

Agatha smiled and blushed as became her at this speech, and as she left Snowdon House in the carriage, leant over the side, and waved her hand and smiled as long as she was in sight of Mr. Wayre, who watched the vehicle until the tall hedges hid it from his sight.

Cheerfully as Agatha bore herself, she was yet glad to find, upon her arrival at home, that her father was absent, and she went to her own room without delay.

"This is the last time," she exclaimed, lifting her face from the pillow in which she had buried it, "the last time I will ever give way to regret for the past, the last time—if I can so far control myself—that I will ever dwell upon it. No! I resolve from this moment to do all I can to cheer and please the honourable, kindly man who has chosen me. I will strive to deserve his love, and if I cannot be entirely worthy of him, I will do all in my power to prevent him from regretting his choice. Between me and all that is past is now a gulf. I hope that in what I am about to do I may be forgiven. I act for the best—I act as I must. But oh, why did not all this happen one short year ago? What memories I should have been spared! What anguish and what peril I should have escaped!"

Her paroxysm endured but a short time, but she sat alone in her room until long after dark, and until after she heard her father

come in. On his part, he had his own reasons for wishing to be by himself, but finding that his daughter had complained of a headache, and had gone to her room to lie down, he went up to enquire after her.

"I am very glad to hear it," he said, when she assured him she was now recovered, and thinking of joining him in the parlour; "but I would not trouble myself to come down if I were you. I thought the glare of the sun on the white roads over those hills would be too much for you. Keep in the dark, and your head will be all right by the morning. By-the-bye, Aggy"—the doctor rarely called her "Aggy" unless he wished to appear specially affectionate, or was in high good-temper—"your aunt is not in a great hurry to answer my letter. I am afraid Mr. Tummell has taken it a great deal to heart. Only think what you have lost, Aggy! You might, if you had played your cards well, have been the leading groceress in that delightful Cheshire village."

It was arranged that the bridal trip should occupy but a few days—the real honeymoon holiday was to be taken in the next summer. So after a few days on the southern coast, they would return to Snowdon House, which was still further to be remodelled under its mistress's eye.

Only two days before the ceremony, however, Mr. Wayre had occasion to remind the doctor of a matter which the latter had neglected. The trespasses on Snowdon House grounds had been resumed, and some fowls stolen. The theft was annoying in itself, but the trespass was even worse, as Nero had given no alarm, and, there was every reason to believe, was quite cowed by the punishment he had received in the struggle already referred to.

"So the sooner you get me the other dog the better," concluded Mr. Wayre, "and you can take away Nero. I should like the poor old dog to be well cared for, and will pay for his keep with any decent person you know; but he is no good here. Now, will you see about this while we are away?"

Dr. Fulham, of course, promised that he would do so, and kept his word by writing at once to his agent.

"I believe that Wayre has a slight monomania on this trespassing business," muttered the doctor as he sat at his desk. "It is said we each have our weak point, and I am convinced his is trespassing. It can't be my friend Brooks, or whatever his name is, this time, for he is away; of that I am certain. I wish he would go trespassing on somebody's fishpond, and fall in and drown himself. I would give another fifty pounds, this moment, to hear of it."

To explain this allusion of the doctor's, we may say that he had given Brooks a present to that amount, telling him that he was paving the way for a disclosure which would most probably result in the entire accomplishment of the ex-convict's wishes.

He gave the man the sum he had just named, and made it a condition that he should go away from Bridgeley for a time, adding something like a hint that Ezra Crake had been talking a good deal of late about a curious resemblance he had noticed in one of the factory-hands to someone he had known a long time ago. Brooks was to stay at a certain small town till he heard from the doctor, taking up his abode at a quiet out-of-the-way inn, the landlord of which was known to the latter, and who was privately instructed to write to Dr. Fulham, announcing the arrival of Mr. Brooks, and, furthermore, to keep a vigilant eye on that person. The doctor had received advice of his *protégé's* safe arrival at Quillington, the name of the town in question, so he knew the present trespasser could not be Mr. Brooks.

It will, however, be seen from the general tone of his remarks, that this individual was still a source of embarrassment to him, and, although no crime had ever marked the doctor's career, it would have been a hazardous experiment for Mr. Brooks to put himself wholly in his power. At any rate, he was got rid of for a time, and the best thing, according to the doctor's present views, which could be done with him, was to sacrifice part of the loan from Mr. Wayre, hand it over to Brooks—as he always chose to call him in his own mind—with a message, purporting to come from his father, stern in its tone, and conveying an announcement that he need never look for any further help.

As a condition of his receipt of even this, Brooks was to go to some country with which no extradition treaty existed—Mexico, the doctor thought the best place—then, by a third party, the police should be informed that he was alive, and take care that Brooks heard of this information, so that he would never dare to come back. When all this was done, Mr. Wayre should be told of the existence of his son, the latter's conduct being coloured so as to convey such impressions as were most favourable to the doctor's interests.

This plan was rather complicated and rather hazardous, it may be, but the doctor thought that as he would have all the threads in his own hands, he could keep them from entangling.

At any rate, his management proved remarkably successful, so far as the first and chief aim was concerned. His daughter was

duly married to Mr. Wayre, and the bride and bridegroom started for their few days' trip as arranged. During their absence Dr. Fulham had much to occupy him; for one thing, the purchase of Dr. Z——'s business was now virtually completed, and it was understood that the money was to be paid directly upon Mr. Wayre's return. Dr. Z—— had seen that gentleman more than once upon the subject, and learnt his willingness to advance the required capital, so Dr. Z—— was perfectly ready to meet Dr. Fulham's wishes, and oblige him in every way, which might not have been the case had the latter been compelled to trust to his own unassisted credit.

So Dr. Fulham was often at what was to be his new professional residence, and often also at Snowdon House, according to a promise he had given to Mr. Wayre. These matters, in addition to his attendance on his own practice, would have sufficiently occupied his time and his mind; but, in addition, he was considerably disturbed by the receipt of letters almost every day from Brooks, urging the settlement of his claim.

As with many other extremely clever and cunning persons, the doctor had been a little too successful in his craft, and had not only inspired Brooks with sufficient fear of Ezra Crake's activity to make him keep away from Bridgeley for a while; but the man was, or pretended to be, in great terror lest he should be followed, and so was anxious to get abroad without delay. It was entirely out of Dr. Fulham's power to send him any considerable sum of money until the return of Mr. Wayre, and he had already had to feign a necessity for a larger sum than the new purchase required, to obtain from the latter the means of getting rid of Brooks; he had enough to do to pacify his suspicious correspondent.

Take it all in all, the week of Mr. Wayre's absence was about as trying and tedious a period as was ever passed by the doctor, and then, to his increased annoyance, he heard from his daughter that their return would be delayed for a few days, as the weather was so charming at the coast town where they were staying.

This delay at once exasperated Brooks, as the doctor foresaw would be the case; and the man told Fulham plainly enough that he believed the latter was attempting to trick him, and only inventing excuses to keep him quiet.

At last, even the extra days were past, and a telegram from the southern coast advised the doctor that Mr. and Mrs. Wayre were just starting on their homeward journey.

An hour or two after the receipt of this message, two letters were delivered by post, the perusal of which appeared to disturb the doctor greatly.

The first was so short that we may venture to give it entire.

"SIR, "Red Lion Inn, Quillington, 18—

"Mr. Brooks has left my house. He went off this evening in spite of my persuasions, saying that he did not intend to come back. He has been in a bad temper, and has given a great deal of trouble for several days.—Yours obediently, etc."

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 138.)

## A Storm.

DEEP in the sheltered country,  
Where the valley lies secure,  
They hear the far-off thunder  
Of the tempest on the moor.

They see where the clouds are flying  
Over the pale moon's light;  
They watch the great trees bend, and say,  
"There will be a storm to-night."

Under the hill, the roof-tree,  
Lies quiet, safe, and warm,  
The oaks stand fast, to the roughest blast;  
They do not heed the storm.

But away on the iron sea-board,  
With fear, and prayer, and wail,  
They read the signs in sea and sky  
That tell of a rising gale.

For they know as the mighty rollers  
Crash on the hollow shore,  
And to the wind's fierce challenge  
Answers the ocean roar,

That o'er the wild wan morning  
Breaks o'er the angry waves,  
The driving moon may have gleamed to light  
Stout sailors to their graves.

They know that, to the foam-flecked sands  
On the rising tide may float,  
Spar and cordage and tangled wreck  
Of many a gallant boat.

And tossed with shell and seaweed,  
Up to the shelving sands,  
Somebody's darling may helpless come,  
To be streaked by stranger hands.  
And oh, it is 'mid their sobbing prayers  
That with lips all pale with fright,  
Wives and mothers and sisters say,  
"There will be a storm to-night!"

## A Dancing Girl.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

A YOUTH was threading his way northward through streets—streets, streets, wide and narrow, short and long, there was nothing else but bricks and mortar, though the locality was called a suburb, and the youth was country born and bred, and had the innate love of greenery such a lad must have.

Three months he had been in London, and his life seemed to grow more narrow each day, such a contrast was it to the measureless hopes with which his soul had panted as he rolled away from Lattermere village in his father's gig. An aunt, Miss Ursula Money, had said she would give him a home, and this lady had a certain authority over the various branches of her family by reason of her spinsterhood, and her "stocks and shares," consequently, young Oswald Money was advised to try and make himself content with this home. Country doctoring was not profitable enough for him to follow his father in his village practice, and here again Miss Ursula's words carried weight.

"Let Oswald come up, and grow into a merchant—there's my house for bed and board, and I have enough interest with Drayson Brothers to get him in."

A lady with a strong will and a narrow mind was Miss Ursula; but there, we cannot waste time over an analysis of her character. She had Oswald Money under her roof.

Yes. And she was pinching the dear life out of him.

Three months had taken the tan of sun and wind from off his face—a handsome young man he was, with an elastic tread, and an upright manly bearing; city ways had not robbed him of that heritage. No, he never could be robbed of that; the freedom of the fells and of the dales was in his blood, and though he might chafe, and, perhaps, would fight against a limited, bounded existence, he surely would never be beaten in spirit.

It had been a brilliant October day, the sun had been hot like June; the air was clear, and keen, and invigorating, and had set a different humour upon the grimy office where he worked. As he threaded the streets, upwards to Holloway there was the spring of a wild animal in his muscles, and once he actually threw out his arms instinctively as if he could, Samson-like, break down the walls of his imprisoning Gaza.

That very action threw him further back into the narrowness of his days. He walked along one degree less quickly, and he cared not at all to look at any person or thing he chanced to pass. Generally he followed the high-road—now, this dulness of spirit having got the upper hand, he turned off down a side-street. This, and some other side-streets, would take him more quickly home to the substantial, routine orderliness of Miss Ursula.

The street had a red gleam of western sunset light glinting along it, the last ray of daytime. One bar of fiery scarlet shone far away where a break in the universal brickwork let one see the lower sky. One bar of scarlet, and the rest all murky grey. Gazing on it Oswald went dreaming on, and thought of the autumn sunsettings over Lattermere Tarn.

A chill wind coming round a street-corner woke him—the grand red fire was burnt out, and only the thick city smoke and fog remained. He had missed his turning. Never mind, it only made a change of streets.

Some of the houses were closed for the night, and had lamps and gas lighted, other windows glared grim and hollow like eyeless sockets; some were eerie, some were gay with the flicker of firelight—comfortable people like a fire in October even if the sun does shine.

One was ruddier than the rest, it shone warmly in front of Oswald with its bay-window and with the firelight making its crimson, undrawn curtains declare themselves very decidedly.

A little square of garden before the house kept it well off the public road; it was one of some dozen semi-detached villas, and Oswald roused from his dulness to look over the railings to the room.

There was a red curtain at each side of the window, the centre pane being broad and open. No blind was drawn down, and one could well see a bright fire flashing and leaping and making queer figures and apparitions of the people and things inside.

There was a white-capped lady in a chair by the fire; presently a child's head bobbed up, and she threw something on the fire—nuts.

Then other girls came running from the mysteries of the room, some must have been sitting on the rug before the fire, for they sprang up, so it seemed to Oswald, from a dark hollow.

A peal of laughter rang out through the closed window and across the little garden.

Oswald saw a dark girl clasp her hands, and then a fair one twirled round, waving her arms in the air; then two others linked together and danced round. He could hear a voice singing a well-known waltz-tune—gay, and glad, and fanciful. How he wished he could go in!

The dark girl next seemed to be gesticulating—was she praying or beseeching? If so it must all have been in fun. So quaint was it! sometimes seen in a flash of brilliant light, then, as the flame flickered away in another direction, there would only be a vague swaying and bending—just a vision of misty grace and beauty.

The girl must have been asking the lady to play, for she rose, and moving to the rear of the red curtains, Oswald heard the notes of a piano. What was it she played?

It was strange to the young man—a monotonous swinging, a springing regularity, quick and yet regularly swaying—neither polka nor waltz assuredly.

But his eyes were occupied—let sounds go!

He saw waving arms, and heard the click of—would it be castanets?—rising and falling, swaying and twirling, softly, gracefully, gently, but oh, so quickly.

The dark girl was evidently teaching the rest. She stopped them with a sharp click of her castanets.

Her head nodded and shook, and she made the fair girl dance by herself.

A gay laugh rang out—evidently the performer had made some egregious mistake.

A rapid flourish of the hand, a click-click of the castanets, an angry shake of the head at the laughing girls, and the dark one, she must have said, "Look at me, I will show you," then danced alone.

Steps could not be seen, of course, but the easy rising and bowing could. Now the slim figure lifted and turned; now spinning round so swiftly she yet bore the same strange monotone of grace that the quaint minor-keyed music had. Now she seemed to run within the circle of girls, lifting her arms on high, swaying them, waving them, clicking the gay castanets all the while, sometimes, too, giving a little short cry as she went on.

All at once she stopped, talked with vivacity, pointed here, pointed there, set the laughing girls apart.

She must have bidden them dance with her, they all began again, rising, falling, gently swaying, skimming round and round.

Who was she, that girl?

She was dark and tall, and her head had closely knotted hair; all the other girls had the universal fringe and friz variously arranged. All the girls had a gay merry grace; the dark one was different, she was the perfection of grace.

Oswald Money said to himself as he moved away that he understood now what was meant by "the poetry of motion."

He and Miss Ursula Money dined together in punctilious order, after which she retired to her drawing-room—so went the nightly routine. An hour after, also by routine, Oswald went upstairs to her, and together they had a cup of coffee.

She had heard his experience of the dancing-girl at dinner-time.

"No news to-day?" she asked abruptly.

"None—no, nothing."

"Business flat?"

Oswald shrugged his shoulders.

"Very much the same as usual. Thompson has a lift; they've given him the offer of the Canaries."

"Don't talk business jargon here," reprimanded the lady stiffly.

"The offer of the Canaries! Is the group of islands to be given to the young man named Thompson?"

"King of the Canaries!" laughed he. It was a sorry joke, but Oswald was free and buoyant of heart, and under such conditions one does laugh easily. "He is offered the management of the house there, I mean."

"I could divine so much, but I admire perspicuity of language and fit phraseology."

Miss Ursula was prim and precise.

A silence followed.

"I wish you could have seen that girl, aunt—those girls, I mean," presently the young man began.

"A suitable correction, Oswald. Let no special 'girl' or female of any rank occupy your thoughts for some years to come. Girls taken generally are ennobling elements in a young man's society—they refine it. One girl," she extended a hand oracularly, and spread out her bony, jewelled fingers, "must be relegated to the uncertain future."

Oswald did not laugh, but he stood up before an ancient mirror and fingered his thick fair moustache. Those words of his aunt's



fixed a vague germ in his mind ; it was a healthy living germ, and it would grow.

"I never saw such dancing !"

"Inane, idiotic folly, sinful desecration of human strength !" exploded Miss Ursula.

"Rather strong, aunt," ejaculated her nephew. "Did you ever see graceful dancing ?"

"I have seen in my youth apeish gesticulation and posturing. I do not wish to hear more of it."

"Then what I saw does not come under that head."

Miss Ursula looked astonished. She thought she had nearly brought this lad, this Oswald Money, her nephew, into decorous behaviour—lo ! he was displaying quite as much independence of spirit as he had done at home.

"Tut, tut ! the subject is distasteful to me. Reach me the paper. Have you read the report of the Social Science Meeting ?"

She read.

Oswald lazily moved about the room.

"Really !" she cried, "I cannot endure your aimless fidgets. Has Herodias bewitched you ?"

Oswald smiled.

"Herodias—or Salome ? No, aunt, I am in possession of myself, so far."

"Ha ! you twit me on the score of names. I think I knew my Scriptures before you were born, sir. Herodias answers my purpose. Dismiss her from your thoughts, boy."

The boyishness of Oswald Money was not yet extinct, and it set him to disobey the old lady.

"It is the dance, aunt, that has bewitched me. If I only knew the name of it I dare say I could exorcise my demon."

"A minuet ?"

The young man laughed lightly. Then he described what he had seen.

"Castanets ?" said the old lady sharply.

"I suppose so."

"Tarantella—a witch's dance."

"A fairy's dance, if you will."

Another silence fell, and Miss Ursula either dozed or ruminated—she certainly did not read, for the paper had got turned upside down in her angry contempt, and she never righted it.

Presently she said suddenly :

"Where did you see that foreign folly ?"

"The dancing ? In Lansdowne Villas. There were four fair girls and one dark one. Do you know any people answering that description ?"

He tried to seem careless, but failed.

"I may or I may not."

"Then perhaps"—he took the "may not" for simply being words thrown in for his behoof, and therefore heeded them not—"perhaps you may some day come across Herodias—I beg her pardon for so misnaming her."

"Do you mean to say that you did not know that Drayson's head-clerk lives there—in Lansdowne Villas ?"

"Well ? Not at that house, surely ?"

Oswald actually flushed.

"I am ignorant of which your house is." The old lady jerked her head as she set her gold spectacles more tightly on her nose. "I know that he has taken some Spanish girl to educate with his daughters—a nice thing for his wife to have a young Popish minx undermining her family !"

"The family seemed happy under the process," carelessly said Oswald.

"Pshaw ! he'll repent it—mark my words."

"The daughter of one of our correspondents, I suppose," mused the young man.

"Suppose nothing," commanded Miss Ursula grimly, "or you'll repent in worse dust and ashes than poor Mrs. Reddison. I'll have no Papistical dancing niece brought here—mind !"

She only strengthened that vague germ of fancy of which we have spoken. Such things may exist slumberously for a long while, but just give one flick of opposition to the fancy and it starts into a full growth at once.

Oswald Money before long was a welcome guest at the house of his fellow-clerk. The old clerk would continue in clerkdom, but Money all the world knew would rise to mastership either in "Drayson's" or in connection with "Drayson's"—a man may be glad enough to welcome such a fellow to his house when there are four fair young daughters with an unseen future before them.

Alas and alas for the Reddison hopes !

It was Carolina, the Spanish girl ; she was as full of grace and of all sweet charms in the clear light of companionship as she had been through the misty October light ; she it was for whom Oswald Money angered his aunt.

Yes, without doubt he offended her beyond any retrieving. She soon knew all, and she spoke some few of her strong words. She turned Oswald out of her house, and she altered her will.

Things happen strangely in this world which looks so utterly commonplace.

Three years went by.

Oswald was working hard, and would rise by his own worth and capability. Lina had left the Reddisons, and for six months went to stay at Brighton with some relations of her own who were in England—by-the-bye, she was of high rank, and her father was Don X—. She was a girl strangely particular in the matter of lovers, she would need perfection. But all that could wait until she went home when the relations returned to Spain. Perhaps she had some sure perception of that perfect lover, though as yet no one had declared himself to her under that name.

No ; Oswald had his ideas of manly honour—he was not rich yet.

Miss Ursula Money became ill, and she also went to Brighton. One day, driving along the King's Road, her horses took fright at some hideous clang of so-called music, and an accident happened. The old lady's collar-bone was broken.

Things are done with barbaric freedom at such times ; they carried her into the house occupied by a Madame Molinez. She might have been carried home almost as easily. Well, she was not, and here came the ordering of fate. A tall, dark girl, whose touch was gentleness itself, and whose voice was music, though it bore what once Miss Ursula would have condemned as a foreign ring, nursed her, or helped to nurse her.

The girl was Lina X—. Miss Ursula thought her name was Molinez, and that she was a daughter of the lady who so courteously housed her—the invalid.

While this was going on Oswald Money got his promotion—would he accept the post of manager of the branch house at Lisbon, becoming thereby a partner in the house of Drayson and Co. ?

Accept ?—of course he accepted at once.

He wrote a letter home, and he went off at once to Brighton ; he knew enough of Senor Molinez to be able to call at his wife's house.

Miss Ursula was weak and fretful ; she heard sounds about the house, and she missed her sweet young nurse.

"Why do you not stay with me ?" she called when Lina came back after a long absence.

The girl was flushed, and tears of gladness shone in her eyes.

"What is it ? Are you ordered back home ? You do not want to go ? Come and stay with me in London." The old lady spoke sharply but not unkindly.

"Yes, I go," she said. "But many things are changed ; I do not go to stay at my father's house—"

"Some marrying nonsense !" snapped the old lady.

Lina laughed, then she directly after began to cry.

"I will not cry !" she burst out ; "I am too happy ; but ah ! how can I tell you all ? I will make you angry with me—hate me !"

"Stuff ! Who are you going to marry ? Is he a gentleman ?—is he an Englishman ?—is he rich ?"

"Yes—yes—yes. All three—yes. But you do not think I care about the last—do you ?"

"I do. Lovers are fools," growled Miss Ursula. "Is the creature in the house ?"

"Yes."

Lina's face was a study of brilliant purpose. She clasped her hands energetically.

"Bring him to me."

"And you will say he is good ? You will say that I, Lina, am good too ? You will not be angry with me ? You will not say, 'Bah ! I will have no foreign niece' ?"

"Ah !"

Lina was gone.

The poor old lady was weak ; she fell a-crying and so they found her—they, Oswald Money, her nephew, and Lina X—, her future niece.

"You !" she cried, and she brushed her unusual tears away. "You !" she shook her hand at Oswald. "She's taken me in altogether, and—and—there ! give me a kiss, child !"

## The Editor's Note Book.

SIR CHARLES DILKE is going to work with an energy for which few of the people concerned seem to have been prepared. After a long course of travel in the slummiest districts of London, and after making himself thoroughly acquainted with the facts of the case as they really are, he has turned to a consideration of the existing law, instead of lamenting that nothing could be done unless somebody else did something unexplained.

THE result is that it appears that existing Acts of Parliament give considerable powers to vestries, which have been little, if ever, exercised in some places, and that the Local Government Board is stirring up the local authorities with startling vigour. There is a great deal of dogged, stolid, inert opposition to overcome, but it is pretty certain that a Minister like Sir Charles Dilke will get his own way in the end.

AND another thing is also certain—a thing which should be carefully considered by party politicians. When the country finds a Minister who will set vigorously and energetically to work, as if his office were a matter of business and not intended merely for political purposes, the country will believe in him and trust him, without caring a jot whether he calls himself a Radical or a Tory.

THE great majority of the public will have read with satisfaction the intimation which has been sent by the Board of Trade to the promoters of the Channel Tunnel, that the Government will feel it their duty to oppose in Parliament the Bills authorising the construction of the Tunnel of which notice has been given. Naturally, the satisfaction will not be shared by Sir Edward Watkin; but then, unfortunately, Sir Edward Watkin's views are not often identical with those of the public nowadays.

IT is the fashion in this age of pessimism to make the beginning of a new year, not so much a period of hopeful anticipation, as a time for Jeremiads over the past. The country, we were assured by all our journalistic instructors last week, is rapidly going to the dogs, politically, socially, and financially—the particular kind of dog varying with the party to which the individual writer belonged.

EVERYBODY, however, unites in complaining of the depression of business, of the small profits of masters, and of the diminishing earnings of men. It is, therefore, not easy to explain why the Revenue returns are infinitely more favourable than could have been hoped, or why, when two Colonial Governments put loans to the amount of eight millions on the market, they should have been taken up at once. Perhaps, after all, things are not so bad as they are said to be.

AS few things can be worse than any uncertainty in the administration of the law, it is to be hoped that the Government will have time to bring in and carry a short Bill to settle the point as to the admissibility of the personal statements of prisoners who are defended by counsel.

IT was supposed to have been settled at the meeting of the judges the other day that such statements could not be admitted, but now it appears that the solemn decision of the judges is not worth the paper on which it was written.

MR. Justice Watkin Williams has declared not only that he agrees with Mr. Justice Stephen, who dissented from the view of his learned brethren, but that he does not consider the decision of the judges as binding on him. Mr. Poland, sitting as Recorder at Dover, has gone a step farther, and has actually admitted the statement of a prisoner, who was afterwards acquitted. As the man's counsel (who made the application that he should be heard) was Mr. Henry Dickens, himself Recorder of Deal, it seems likely that the Recorders of Kent agree with Mr. Justice Williams.

SINCE the above note was written I have had reason to modify this last opinion. Mr. Smith, Recorder of Margate, differs from Mr. Poland, and things are consequently more mixed than ever. It is certainly time to put this matter on a proper footing.

MOST people are aware that a sentence of ten years' penal servitude does not mean that the convict will have to serve the full term, but it is probable that people who read about a man being sentenced, in addition, to seven years' police supervision are impressed with the idea that for that term he will be well looked after and harmless.

THE history of the man calling himself Ralph Williams, who stands charged with a number of burglaries in Chiswick, is calculated to weaken, if not altogether to destroy this faith. Williams, it is stated, was condemned in 1871 to ten years' penal servitude, with seven years' supervision. Supposing the ten years only to have meant seven, the man would have been at large in 1878, and should have been under the eyes of the police until 1885. In 1880, however, he was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for another offence, and now that he is charged again, it is said that he is well known to the detectives of London. Police supervision seems, if we may judge from this sample, to be a sham altogether.

## Facts and Fancies about Church Bells.

Vivos voco,  
Mortuos plango,  
Fulgura frango.

*Inscription on the Schaffhausen Bell.*

OF all inanimate objects, except sacred emblems, which have become intertwined with our joys and our sorrows, with our home life and our religious feelings, perhaps none have taken so high and universally recognised a position as church bells. It is difficult for us in these days to conceive how the Early Church could have existed without them, as exist it certainly did, for even if bells could have been cast, their use would have been very imprudent, as it would have been an advertisement inviting persecution. It is no less difficult for us to imagine the state of a country reduced to such straits as was England when the papal legate put it under an interdict, whereby all religious observances were suspended, and, consequently, the church bells were silenced in their towers.

The powerful voices of church bells have ever deeply affected the poets; indeed, few minds are so utterly devoid of feeling as not to perceive that church bells speak to him not only as a poor mortal, though subject to a heavenly King, but that they also enter into his personal affairs, rejoicing at his birth, his baptism, or his marriage, announcing to his neighbours that his house is on fire, proclaiming a holiday for his recreation, ushering his soul into eternity, mourning over his grave; alas! too, sending forth fearful commands for the massacre of devoted fellow-creatures.

It is this personal interest which seems to be the original reason for giving bells a name, such as Mary, Meg, Tom, Gabriel, and so forth.

The Germans claim to have been the inventors of church bells, as we now understand them, for the small bells formerly employed by the Jews and Romans in their worship, had an entirely different character and use.

In the earliest days of Teutonic heathendom the worshippers were summoned to their sacred places by blows struck upon a kind of tambourine formed of skins stretched on a framework. As the skin was injured by the weather it was replaced by a plate of metal something in the manner of the "thunder" of the theatrical property-master. During the nomadic condition of the Teutons a spear, struck upon a shield, formed a happy substitute for the "thunder." Three or four of these shields, fastened together with rivets, would form a much better instrument for the production of sound, and would perhaps furnish the idea for the proverb, "Empty vessels make the most sound." A clapper was then only necessary to give us a bell.

In the way thus indicated were the first bells made, and it was very long before a step in advance could be taken, before bells, in fact, could be cast in one piece. Such a bell was, in the year 613, rooted out of a marsh near Cologne by a sow. It may be that it had been hidden there by its heathen possessors to prevent its desecration by the Christians. It was baptised by Archbishop Kunibert, after which it was long in use at the Church of St. Cecilia, but is now preserved at the Walrafianum. In shape this bell is octagonal, and is composed of three pieces riveted together. It has a height of fifteen and a half German inches, a diameter at the rim of thirteen and three-quarters, of eight and three-quarters at the body, and five and a half at the crown, whilst its thickness at the rim is one and a quarter.

This bell is far from being a unique specimen, for many such have been found in the Rhineland, the oldest of all being, perhaps, that of Odindar, which probably dates from before 600 A.D.

Bells, it will be seen, were a heathen invention. The Christians were summoned to worship by "runners." When the heathens became a minority, the Christians, feeling they could be more public in their actions, used rattles, clappers, trumpets, or even hand-bells; but when Odin worship became a thing of the past, these bells, made of shields or plates of metal, were seen to offer the readiest means of announcing the hours of service, and they were, therefore, whenever found, consecrated by baptism, to convert them, in the eyes of the populace, from heathens to Christians.

Pope Sabinian, who died in 606, ordered the hourly use of bells to mark the times of the services of the Church, and we may, therefore, fix this date as the period when bells became general.

On the other hand, some antiquaries claim Bishop Paulinus of Nola, in Campania, as the inventor of church bells, and in proof of this they adduce the word *campanile*, the low-Latin combination of Campania and Nola, which gives us the French word *campanille*. If all this be true, which may be considered doubtful, bells would date from the year 400.

Bells were not introduced to the Eastern world until the year 865, when Patrizias, Doge of Venice, made a present of one to the Emperor Michael of Byzantium, in acknowledgment of services rendered to the republic in its wars with the Saracens.

It has been mentioned above, that bells were baptised. Perhaps in the first instances, where the bells of the heathens were used for Christian purposes, this may have been necessary to mark the transition from one life to the other, and to do away with any lurking belief that the old heathen gods might somehow or other return to claim their own.

Bell baptism is often mentioned in the decretals of Charlemagne, and the Popes contemporary with him set apart a special service for it, which is substantially the same as that now in use in the Roman Church. This office consists usually of the *Misere* and the twenty-

eighth Psalm; the bell is then sprinkled with a mixture of holy water and salt, and anointed with holy oil. It is then signed with the cross, and the formula of baptism is pronounced over it, when the name of the patron saint, or of some other benefactor, is given to it. This ceremony of baptism of an inanimate object was one of the matters which gave offence to the Reformers, when they handed in their protest to the legate of Adrian VI.

Indeed, Protestant Churches generally have set themselves against such canonical baptism, though they do not as a rule object to celebrate the inauguration of a bell by a service in the church, and in many instances they even permit, or at least connive at, the bell being inverted and filled with some generous liquid for the comfort of their congregations. Even in the Roman Church bell baptism has not been always regarded with favour, for bells, like other infants, require godfathers, who are expected to be munificent in the way of christening gifts; and on these occasions the religious communities oftentimes showed themselves so rapacious that serious riots and disturbances took place.

Perhaps this custom of canonical baptism has, more than any other circumstance, endowed bells with a factitious personality or imaginary vitality, which in an uneducated age could not but conduce to the propagation of superstitious beliefs. Thus bells were rung during heavy storms to drive away the evil spirits who produced them; under the name of "passing" or "soul" bells they were rung when Christians were dying, to drive away the evil spirits which were supposed to contend for souls with guardian angels; at Dewsbury they were tolled dolefully on Christmas Eve to mockingly celebrate the death of the devil, but joyfully on Christmas morning for the birth of the Saviour.

The offices of bells were therefore manifold, and hence we have the monkish lines which are preserved by Sir Henry Spelman, "*Laudo Deum verum, Plebem voco, congreco Clerum, Defunctos ploro, Pestem fugo, Festa decoro,*" which under various readings are inscribed on so many bells.

The Church having sanctioned so many legitimate uses of bells, must also be held responsible for many of the superstitious tales which were connected with them; especially as, to the thoughtful mind, the evidence in favour of one class of ideas was not a whit more substantial than that in favour of the other. Bells have therefore furnished the poets with many of their most telling ballads, and many of their best legends. We hear of wonderful bells under the sea, bells buried in the bowels of the earth, bells hidden in the recesses of the woods, and bells hung in the airy clouds. One of our own legends is very pretty and poetical. It states that when the bells were hung at Rostherne in Cheshire, one of the men uttered an oath at the weight of the Tom, whereupon the bell broke loose, crushed the profane swearer, and rolled into the mere where it may now be occasionally heard. The legend goes on to say that on Easter Monday a water nymph who lives in the lake rises to the surface riding on the bell, but the legend very prudently adds that this sight is only visible to those about to die. Etchingam Church, we are told, was enclosed by a moat, wherein lies a bell which can only be drawn thence by a yoke of six pure white oxen. A small silver bell in the papal palace at Avignon was supposed to proclaim of its own accord the death or election of a Pope; another at Barcelona rang each time a member of the house of Austria died, or even when a great public danger was impending; a third at Vellila in Arragon, which always rang when any danger threatened Spain, announced in 1564 the outbreak of the plague at Saragossa, and in 1578 the death of Sebastian of Portugal at the battle of Alcazar; whilst a fourth bell at Roquemada proclaimed in the same way danger to those travelling by sea. Some bells are said to have prevented crime. Thus when the Huns attacked the nunnery of Lieu, all the bells in the town, through the influence of St. Commarus, patron of the place, began of their own accord to ring so lustily that the heathens were frightened away. In the same way the bells rang when the bones of St. Isidore were to be translated to Madrid. Stolen bells were supposed to express their displeasure at the change of owners by obstinately refusing to ring at all. The Bosham bell, however, would not even leave the village when stolen by the Danes, but sank through the ship into the harbour, where it even now rings in company with its brothers in the church tower.

The discerning reader will perceive that many of these bell stories will, if analysed, be found to have originated in an echo, especially those stories in which water or a wood forms a part, and that they are therefore merely expressions of that natural poetry which may be found even in the roughest human heart; whilst others may be traced to a well-known acoustical law which, when an incomplete chord is struck, produces complementary chords to satisfy the ear. Of course, too, many of these legends are doubtless mere monkish inventions to enhance the sanctity of some particular shrine, and may therefore be traced rather to gross superstition than to natural poetry. Thus bells were supposed to be utterly unringable for an unholy purpose, and they were especially obstinate during an interdict. Then again the saints in heaven were said to speak to mortals through the sound of bells, as for example those heard by the mother of St. Gaucherius, and those which awoke Pope Celestinus at the hour of prayer.

The devil, too, was said to have his bells, an example of which may be cited in that possessed by the necromancer Virgil, which so affected the hearers that they were powerless to resist his will.

It was many years after the introduction of bells that they could be made of any size, for the resources of the early founders were very

inadequate to the production of large works; indeed, though great advance had been made during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in this direction, it was not until the fifteenth century that gigantic size became a matter of rivalry. The city of Moscow has distanced all competitors in this respect, for Moscow is the metropolis of bells. The Kremlin bell weighs four hundred and thirty-two thousand pounds, the Tsar Kolokol, now broken, weighed three hundred and sixty-nine thousand two hundred pounds, and the Iwan Weliki one hundred thousand pounds. In Central Europe the most noteworthy bells are those of Olmütz, which weigh three hundred and fifty-eight thousand pounds; that of Vienna, three hundred and fifty-four thousand pounds; the Maria Gloriosa or Susanna of Erfurt, twenty-seven thousand five hundred pounds; and the bell of Notre Dame, which weighs thirty-four thousand pounds. Our English examples are far below these great monsters so far as size is concerned. The Big Tom of St. Paul's is but eleven thousand four hundred and seventy-four pounds, though his big brother Paul, our great exception, is thirty-seven thousand three hundred and eighty-three pounds, Tom of Lincoln weighs twelve thousand and ninety-six pounds, "mighty" Tom of Oxford seventeen thousand three hundred and sixty pounds, and Great Tom of Exeter thirteen thousand four hundred and forty pounds.

The earliest casters were the monks themselves, and there are several instances on record of their being so unfortunate as to set their monasteries on fire during the process of smelting. The patron of the casters is St. Forquernus, once a founder himself, afterwards a monk, and eventually a hermit. He is represented in Roman costume with the adjuncts of a casting-house, a bell, and the usual implements of the craft.

Bell-metal consists generally of a mixture of from three to four parts of copper to one of tin, and no other metals or proportions have ever been successfully employed. Iron bells are a complete failure in tone, and require a clapper of very large size in proportion to the bell; while iron bars which have been sometimes used on account of their comparative cheapness, are simply monstrosities, deserving the name of devil's bells, if ever there were such things. It is a popular fallacy that all bells of sweet tone have a proportion of silver in their composition; but in point of fact the silvery tone, as it is poetically termed, is produced not by an admixture of silver, but by scientific knowledge of the founder's art—indeed, if the precious metal were added it would entirely destroy the tone. Of course it is a matter of history that silver has been given by the faithful for this purpose, but it is questionable whether the silver ever found its way into the bell—indeed, if it did it was rather through the caster's ignorance than his honesty. Founders have occasionally even gone to the length of allowing the faithful to throw their own silver into the melting-pot, but they previously took care that the melting-pot had a false bottom, a trap-door, or other contrivance for passing the metal thus obtained into a receptacle where the artisan could readily appropriate it to his own use afterwards.

The art of bell-ringing cannot be noticed in this paper. Suffice it to say that for a peal of four bells, bass, tenor, quint, and octave, the diameters of the bells should range as the numbers thirty, twenty-four, twenty, and fifteen, and the weight as the numbers eighty, forty-one, twenty-four, and ten.

It would also be a very wide subject to treat of the relation of bells to poetry, for the tuneful nine have ever been in love with bells, but it will not be out of place to notice that a masterpiece of German literature, and probably the best lyric ever written, is undoubtedly Schiller's "Song of the Bell."

The inscriptions on bells are often curious, and usually give what may be called the historical particulars—occasionally, too, fantastic verses. The longest inscription on a bell which has come under our notice is that on the Maria, or Susanna, of Munich, which may be thus rendered into English:

"I am called Susanna; I was cast in the names of Jesus, Luke, Matthew, Mark, and John; His Highness the High and Mighty Prince and Lord, Albert of the Rhine, Duke of Upper and Lower Bavaria, was my Godfather; I was brought here from Regensburg; I dispense Storms; I guard from Death; Hans Ernst cast me when People counted from the Birth of God one thousand four hundred three-and-ninety years."

It would not be paying due respect to Great Paul, our own Triton among the minnows, to pass him over without some slight notice. He weighs, as already stated, thirty-seven thousand three hundred and eighty-three pounds, and is composed of thirteen parts of copper to four of tin; his note is E flat, and his cost was three thousand pounds. He was manufactured at Loughborough by Messrs. J. Taylor and Sons, and it is worthy of notice that he is the only big bell which is properly hung, so that while our Great Toms are struck, Great Paul may be rung in the ordinary way.

## Cookery.

### A BUNDLE OF RECIPES.

AMONG the following simple recipes are a few of Eastern origin which may be useful to many of our readers who desire either to taste dishes with the names of which they are familiar, or who want some little change from the national everyday fare.

Pilau ought to be much more popular in England than it is. Rice

and meat thus served form a perfect food, and when it is desired to make the dish more savoury, the rice can be cooked in broth or in the liquor of boiled bacon.

Among the other recipes, mutton brawn will be found useful at this time of the year, especially for those who do not care for brawn made of pig's head. Great care should be taken in cleansing the sheep's head, and if the plan, before recommended in these pages, that of throwing away the first water in which it has boiled for ten minutes, is followed, perfect cleanliness will be secured.

#### TURKISH PILAU.

Boil Patna rice in plenty of water for twenty minutes, taking care that each grain is separate and rather under than over done. Having strained the rice, stir in a small bit of butter, and season with salt and pepper. Place the prepared rice on a dish, and on the top of it a chicken thoroughly well boiled, or mix with it small pieces of fried or roasted mutton or lamb.

#### TENGÉRÉ KEBOB.

Fry a piece of meat in butter until it is half cooked, then place it, together with some lemon-peel, a glass of red wine, and a small quantity of spices, pepper, and salt, into a stewpan. Cover it up closely and stew it for four hours over a slow fire.

#### KIENFTÉ.

Pound in a mortar some beef-suet, half-boiled onions, parsley, eggs, pepper, salt, and a little water. Make this up into small balls, then flour and fry them.

#### MOHALIBI.

Boil some milk mixed with sugar, and pour into it gradually rice-flour, stirring it all the time over the fire until it becomes as thick as honey. Turn it out upon a plate, and after it has become cold sprinkle it with powdered cinnamon and sugar, and add a few drops of rose-water, or any other perfume.

#### POLENTA.

Put one pint of water into a stewpan; when it boils add a little salt, stir in with a stick sufficient coarse yellow maize-flour to make it very thick, continue stirring till the mixture is well cooked, which you can tell by its rising in bubbles, then take it out with a spoon on to a napkin and mould the paste into the shape of a ball; let it cool for a few minutes, then cut in slices, lay them in a dish, and sprinkle each layer with Parmesan cheese, and pour two ounces of dissolved butter over it. It may be eaten in this manner, or put in a brisk oven and baked.

The polenta, when it comes out of the stewpan very hot, is nice served with sausages or little birds; the latter laid on the polenta, and gravy over them.

#### MUTTON BRAWN.

Boil the head and four feet of a sheep until all the bones come out. Cut the meat up into smaller pieces, and mix with the gravy in which it has been boiled a tablespoonful of minced onions, a teaspoonful of pepper, half a teaspoonful of salt, a teaspoonful of mint, a teaspoonful of parsley, a tablespoonful of Reading Sauce, and a dessertspoonful of ketchup. Mix all these well together and boil them for forty-five minutes in a mould or basin. When quite cold, turn it out.

#### MUSHROOMS.

Take two small newly-gathered mushrooms, cleanse them with a cloth, but on no account use any water, and cut the stalks closely down. Prepare a slice of toast to fit under a tumbler or finger-glass; then place the mushrooms head-downwards on the toast, and put inside them salt, pepper, and butter. Place the toast on a plate, with an inverted tumbler, or finger-glass, over it, and subject it to the heat of a strong fire. When the mushrooms appear to lie flat on the toast, and the evaporated moisture has dripped from the glass on to the toast, the dish will be ready to be served up to table.

#### ÉPINARDS AU LAIT.

Having boiled some spinach, put it into muslin and squeeze it quite dry. Place it in a saucepan, and add one tablespoonful of butter, one teacupful of milk, and pepper and salt. Stir it up well, adding the milk gradually, and boil it slowly for ten minutes.

#### PLAIN BUNS.

Take four pounds of sifted flour, and add to them one pound of good moist sugar. Make a cavity in the centre, and stir therein a gill of good yeast and a pint of lukewarm milk, with sufficient of the flour to make it the thickness of cream. Cover it over and allow it to lie for two hours. Melt to the consistency of oil—it must not be hot—one pound of butter, and stir it into the other ingredients with sufficient warm milk to make it into a soft paste. Sprinkle it over with a little flour and let it lie for an hour. Rub a baking platter over with butter, and having moulded the dough with the hands into buns about the size of an egg, place them in rows fully three inches apart. Set them in a warm place for half an hour, or until they have risen to double their original size, then bake them in a hot oven until they become a good colour, and wash them over with a brush dipped into milk after having taken them out of the oven.

#### PARKIN.

Mix half a pound of butter, two pounds of treacle, one ounce and a half of ground-ginger, one ounce and a half of caraway-seeds, and half an ounce of cinnamon. Put these into a brass pan and stir them

together over the fire until they become hot, but do not let them boil; then pour them into three pounds of oatmeal and mix the whole well together. Bake it in tins in a moderately hot oven, so as to avoid scorching it.

#### SHORT BREAD.

Take two pounds of flour, six ounces of pounded loaf-sugar, one pound of butter, half an ounce of caraway-seeds, and one ounce of sweet almonds. Beat the butter into a cream, gradually dredge in the flour, and add the sugar, almonds, and caraway-seeds; the almonds to be blanched and cut fine. Work the paste till it becomes quite smooth, and divide it into six pieces. Place each cake on a separate piece of paper, with the paste cut square to the thickness of about an inch, and pinch it up on all sides. Put the cakes into a good oven and bake them for twenty-five to thirty minutes.

#### MACAROONS.

Blanch four ounces of sweet almonds, dry them well in the sun or a cool oven, and pound them thoroughly in a mortar together with half a pound of sifted sugar, and rub both well together; then add the whites of four eggs one by one until the whole be formed into a thinish paste, and add half a teaspoonful of essence of almonds. Pour drops of the size of a walnut on wafer-paper, and sprinkle over the top some sliced almonds and sifted sugar. Bake them in a slow oven until they become a light brown colour.

#### SEED CAKE.

Take one pound and a quarter of flour well dried, one pound of butter, one pound of loaf-sugar crushed and sifted, eight eggs, two ounces of caraway-seeds, one grated nutmeg, and cinnamon equal to it in weight. Beat the butter into cream and put in the sugar; beat up the whites of the eggs and their yolks separately, then mix them with the butter and sugar. A little before baking beat in the flour, spices, and caraway-seeds. Bake it for two hours in a moderate oven.

#### CANDIED ORANGE-PEEL.

Boil the peel in several waters until it loses its bitterness, then in a syrup until it becomes soft and transparent; take it out, drain, and dry slowly in the oven. Lastly sprinkle over it a little powdered sugar.

## The Lincolnshire Fens.

THE history of the Fens' drainage is a romance in itself. In James I.'s time, a local jury decided against further draining; but in 1626, the king granted leave to Cornelius Vermuyden, a Zealander, who offered for a third part of all he could reclaim to retrieve seventy thousand acres in Axholm alone. The Van Peenins, Valkenburghs, and Vrenattis, rich merchants of Dort and Amsterdam, encouraged the enterprise of their countryman, and his skilled Dutch and Flemish workmen soon got near the end of their work. The fenmen became furious at the improvements. They complained of unjust distribution of the new lands, and of wilful injury done to the old. Openly countenanced by Portington, a turbulent justice of the peace, they frequently fell on the foreigners, broke down their new embankments, and burnt or destroyed their obnoxious implements. The resolute Dutch, who had checked the Thames at Dagenham, and had drained Windsor and Sedgemoor, were not, however, to be baffled by the stilt-walkers of the fens. Vermuyden collected round him French Protestants from Picardy and Walloons from Flanders, refugees whose fathers had fled from the Duke of Alva, and settled in eastern England, along the edge of the fens, especially at Wisbeach, Whittlesea, Thorney, and Spalding. Slowly he carried the waters of the Sole into new deep channels, for ever to be tributary to the Trent. The waters of the capricious Don were also forced henceforward to flow directly into the Ouse, near Goole. Farmers had no longer need to ferry from Axholm to Sandtoft: not again would a boat with coffin and mourners be lost, when crossing from Thorney to Hatfield. Nor, on the other hand, would future time ever see the glorious sight that Prince Henry beheld, when five hundred deer were driven before his one hundred boats, from Hatfield to Thorney Mere. Unfortunately for the industrious Dutchman, one single error in his first plan rendered his whole life miserable. Vermuyden forced the Don at first through its northern channel alone into the river Aire. This cutting proved insufficient, and fresh lands were flooded. The people of the northern Don henceforward became the chief enemies of the improvement, and some of Vermuyden's men killing one of the rioters, led to fifty successive attacks on the works, till at last a royal proclamation read in Axholm by the sheriff, escorted by fifty horsemen, mingled with threats of fire and vengeance, led to some transient quietude. Vermuyden, though proud, resolute, and sometimes driven to retaliation by the stupid boors who did not know their own good, succeeded at last; in 1629 he was knighted by Charles I., and took a grant from the crown of Hatfield Chase for the sum of sixteen thousand and eighty pounds, and an annual rent of one hundred and ninety-five pounds three shillings and fivepence halfpenny, and one red rose.

The Dutch and German settlers were now allowed to build chapels in their villages. Still, the conservative fen-men continued turbulent and complaining. Their houses and farms were flooded, they said, their corn was washed away, their cattle were drowned, and the old rights of common cancelled. Unfortunately for Vermuyden, he had



now either lost his temper or grown too arrogant and despotic. He threatened petitioners against him with the gallows, which indeed many of them richly deserved. He threw many offenders against his Dutchmen into York Gaol. He ruthlessly stopped the old freeholder's privilege of cutting moor turf, till he had, at last, to restore many old rights, owing to the interference of Lord Wentworth, president of the North. Eventually Vermuyden washed his hands of ungrateful Lincolnshire altogether, and sold all his property there. In 1642, when the Royalists were threatening the fens, Cromwell's party broke the dykes, pulled up the flood-gates, and again laid Hatfield under water. The tide had turned, and henceforward all—except short gleams of success—went ill with Sir Cornelius. He became involved in a spider's-web of lawsuits, and found his way into prison. The Dutch speculators who had lost by the "Dutch-Canal" also took legal proceedings against him. But indomitable as ever, in 1629 he commenced the great Bedford Level for the Earl of Bedford. The clamour against the brave, resolute, industrious Dutchman then became louder than ever. The street ballads sung against the drainers contained such verses as the following:

Behold the great design, which they do now determine,  
Will make our bodles pine, a prey to crows and vermine;  
For they do mean all fens to drain and waters overmaster,  
All will be dry, and we must die, 'cause Essex calves want pasture.

Wherefore let us entreat our antient water-nurses  
To show their power, to grant us t' help to drain their purses;  
And send us good old Captain Flood to lead us out to battle,  
The two-penny pack, with scales on 's back, will drive out all the cattle.

The noble captain yet was never known to fail us,  
But did the conquest get of all that did assail us;  
His furious rage could none assuage, but to the world's great wonder,  
He tears down banks, and breaks their cranks and whirligigs asunder.

Still the Dutchmen plied their spades, and Charles I. urged forward the work, which was, however, stopped by the agitation aroused by Oliver Cromwell, "Lord of the Fens," as he was called, who urged the gross exactions of the Royal Commission, and the inevitable plunder that would fall on the helpless smaller proprietors at the great man's voice. The work stopped, and the Earl of Bedford died poor. In 1649 the new earl and Vermuyden again set to work, afterwards aided by Cromwell's Scotch and Blake's Dutch prisoners, and by the year 1653 forty thousand acres of land were reclaimed. There are now in Lincolnshire and the Great Bedford Level sixty-one thousand acres of land, worth on an average at least four pounds an acre. Ely is now healthier than Pau, sheep feed where fish once floated, the fen-men are no longer savages, more irreclaimable than were their fever-haunted marshes. The fate of poor Vermuyden was sad indeed. During the Civil Wars he had sold all his lands in Dagenham, Hatfield, Sedgemoor, Malvern, and the Bedford Level, to pay his Dutch workmen. The ungrateful company then preferred heavy pecuniary claims against him. He could not meet them, and in 1656 appeared before Parliament, four years after the completion of his great work, as a suppliant for redress. It is supposed that he soon after went abroad, and died a poor, heart-broken old man. Yet Vermuyden did a brave work, and he left large-brained descendants. Through the Babingtons (the mother's side) the late Mr. Macaulay was descended from the patient, far-seeing Dutchman.

## A Chapter on Wood Carving.

CARVING in wood is one of the most fascinating employments possible to a truly artistic and imaginative mind. It admits of immense and charming variety. It gives full and free scope to genius and originality of invention, and, what every true lover of art prizes above all, it not only allows, but seems to cry out for a faithful following of Nature. It is an encouraging work and a hopeful one. Even an invalid may carve wood, the rougher and harder work being done by another hand. We have known cases in which a very beneficial effect has been produced by the exercise of carving, when none other could be taken. It should, however, be done under medical advice, and prudently, with considerable intervals of rest.

WOOD-CARVING requires a great deal of patience and caution, and a considerable amount of ingenuity, especially if the carver invents his own designs, but this plan is, of course, impossible to a great many who have neither a correct eye, nor the gift of invention, though it is by far the most interesting manner of working. Very beautiful designs may be composed from natural objects, such as a bunch of filbert-nuts, with leaves tastefully grouped around them; a spray of blackberry-briar, with both flowers and fruit; a simple group of vine-leaves and tendrils, with or without fruit; some animate objects also look well, but are rather more difficult to arrange and harder to carve.

THE great secret of success is not easy of attainment. This is the tasteful arrangement of the objects forming the group to be worked out. If they are formally or stiffly arranged the effect is unpleasing. The best plan is to gather what you require, and arrange them whilst perfectly fresh in a group, as naturally as you can, upon a piece of flat board, or a small tray, make any alterations you think necessary, and at once transfer the whole to paper, either in drawing with a lead-pencil, or etched with indian-ink, taking only the outlines.

OF course it requires the experienced eye and practised hand of an expert draughtsman to do this, and unless these are at your command, it is wiser to trust to ready-drawn designs. It is always safer to do this in the beginning as anyone unaccustomed to pattern-composition is apt to crowd too much into the given space, and so to render the execution doubly difficult. As in all such pursuits, there should be a gradual progress, the first piece of work attempted should be a very simple one, scarcely more than a piece of fretwork, left thick enough in parts to bevel and shape here and there. Then by degrees, as the eye becomes trained, and the hand answers mechanically and without effort to the will, using the tools easily and skilfully, work of a more ambitious nature may be attempted with every probability of success.

DECIDEDLY the best wood for a beginner is white holly. The work can be distinctly traced upon it. It is firm in texture, fine in grain, and will take a beautiful polish; but, in spite of its firmness and close grain, it is soft enough, without being woolly, to carve easily. It has the additional advantage of hardening as it is exposed to the air. Chestnut, sycamore, beech and birch, box, walnut, and oak are all of them good material, but more suited to an experienced hand, but for a first attempt nothing is better or so good as white holly. The Naples two-pound macaroni white wood boxes are very easily made into many useful articles, and are of such hard wood that most intricate and delicate work may be done upon it.

THE most beautiful bracket we ever remember to have seen was carved by a young groom. His master, during some alterations, had been reluctantly forced to have a huge old laburnum-tree cut down. Not thinking it likely that the wood would be of any value in any other way, he gave orders to have the stem, which was two yards in circumference at the thickest end, cut up for firewood. The groom asked leave to buy it, and his master, knowing his taste for all sorts of wood-workmanship, gave him the whole trunk. The bracket we saw was from this laburnum-tree. It was a group of filbert leaves and nuts, and was exquisitely imagined and carved. The general colour of the wood, its beautiful markings and varied tints, surpassed any that we have ever seen before or since. A carpenter will always be able to procure different woods for you, and will cut them in slabs the thickness you require.

CASES of carving tools may be purchased at various prices, but a better plan than buying them in the lot is to get them separately at a good cutler's, as you grow to require them.

As fretwork may be considered a necessary introduction to carving in wood, we may take it for granted that you possess all the tools, etc., required for it—i.e. a fret-saw frame with saws complete, a set each of chisels, bradawls, and files, a screwdriver, a couple of gimlets, and a good knife with two blades. Besides these requisites for fretwork, a few additional tools must be procured for carving—a set of gouges, a countersink, a couple of scratch-awls, a carpenter's square, and a carving-knife which has finely-pointed blades, especially meant for carving. A V-gouge is a very useful little implement for veining leaves and stroking stems, and for other delicate work of the kind. A good plane of a small kind is also required, and a few rasps are a useful and cheap addition to the files. These latter should be of various sizes and shapes—some flat, some round, some round and pointed, and some with one side round and the other flat. A supply of glass, sand, and emery paper, in various degrees of coarseness, should be provided, likewise some pieces of freshly broken white bottle or window glass, for scouring and refining.

THERE is generally a difficulty found in getting the tools properly sharpened, for, as a rule, they are not sold ready for use; every cutler will do this for you at so much the dozen, small and large, but a carver in wood should endeavour to learn how to do it for himself, on an oil-stone. The best plan is to get a lesson from some carpenter, or other person, who knows how to do it. If you try to teach yourself you will probably ruin your tools.

A SIMPLE article for a beginner, who has not yet attained complete mastery over his tools and hands, is a book-slide of plain pattern. Having either designed your own pattern, or procured one ready drawn, first trace it out afresh on oil-paper, expressly sold for the purpose, reserve the original copy, and use the traced paper. In this way you always have the pattern at hand to work from. Gum the traced paper on the slab of wood, let it dry, and then with a fret-saw cut out all the open work. Having done this, take your common knife, and cut away all parts that require it, following your pattern exactly. Some parts will be taken out with a rounded cut, in order to leave a hollow, others with a sharp triangular cut, taken out abruptly. Some groundworks are finished with a sort of diaper pattern, that is, the level wood taken out in regular order, by dipping the point of the sharpest and most needle-like blade of the carving-knife in, and taking out a piece of wood not larger than a pin's head.

VERY much professional diaper-work is done by means of a little stamping machine, like a wheel for marking pastry, which is pressed heavily over the wood, after it has been soaked in cold water and is still wet. These wheels mark an impression of stars, trefoils, crosses, or any very minute pattern, but they have a poor and stiff effect, and



the diaper wears out in such articles as trenchers and butter-dishes as soon as the article is washed.

In carving raised work of a more intricate character, the best plan is to have two or even three copies of the design: the flat pattern simply traced out, the intermediate stage, as it would appear when the roughest outer work was done, and the completed carving. Lay the flat pattern on the block of wood, for in deep carving the wood must be a considerable thickness, and should be measured rather deeper than the whole depth required by the design, to allow a margin in case of accidents. Then following the pattern, cut away freely all spaces between the pattern. Freely, but also cautiously, remembering that if you make a mistake, and cut away any part that should be left, you will have to plane your surface afresh, and begin again. Having got the work into ship-shape, and cut away all that you can so far, take your next paper and work up to it, leaving all the leaves, flowers, fruit, or what not, in simple blocks for the present, merely following their outline without attempting to model them.

As the work progresses take the copy of the completed design, and endeavour to carve your leaves, berries, and flowers, etc., to match. When the whole thing is brought as near perfection as you can, finish the leaves and flowers with the V-gouge, marking the veins of the leaves and the markings along the stems, sharpen out all corners with suitable files, and hollow out any parts that require it with a fine gouge. Then rub every part with sand-paper till every trace of roughness is removed; in some parts, where the wood is knotty and hard, it is better to smooth it with a sharply-broken bit of glass. The last process should be sand-papering the whole, first with coarse glass-paper, then with the next degree finer in sand-paper, and afterwards with emery-paper; this last must not be used for white or light-coloured woods, as it spoils the colour. It is impossible to give directions for every stroke, or even for every hundredth stroke; advice and instruction for the various kinds of work is all that can be attempted, the rest must be left to the eye and the hand of the artist, who must guide both by his intuitive sense of right and wrong. A little practice is worth a great deal of theory, and plenty of practice will soon make an earnest worker perfect.

VERY pretty effects are produced by working in striking contrasts; for instance, carving a bracket in white holly, and placing it upon an upright shield of dark wood. We have seen very pretty brackets carved in very dark wood—walnut or rose, of a very dark shade—in foliage designs, with a small bird cut out in white wood perched on a twig or leaf-stalk. The contrasting part in white is carved separately and glued in its place after the rest of the work is finished. A bright effect is also given by a bunch of flowers in a group of foliage being worked in white wood.

## Law Makers in the Far West.

OF course there must be a legislature as soon as a territory, however rude, is organised, and somebody must "run" for it, and somebody be elected in the various divisions to sit in the local parliament, all who are so chosen having the title of "honourable." But, indeed, it would seem that in these parts every government official, except the policeman, is entitled to this handle to his name.

In the wilder parts of the western settlements, in old days, members of legislature have often been elected not so much for their talents as for being "good hands at poker," or "great on a spree," and one of these ("the honourable gentleman from Mariposa"), on getting up for the first time to speak in the Californian legislature, and essaying several times without much success, was greeted with shouts of "Git out! Oh! Git out!" They mistook their man, however, for, as one of his supporters remarked before his election, "He ain't much on the speak, but jist git him mad once, and he'll give 'em fits." "Look ye here, gentlemen," he remarked, cocking a Derringer pistol, "ye may holler 'Git out, git out,' as long as ye're let to, but my speech is already begun, and the next man who shouts 'Git out' in the House will bring to his ears the ominous click of small-arms. What is it the gentlemen wish, and what would they have? Is my life so dear, or my peace so sweet, that it must be purchased at the expense of incapacitating a few on ye for militairy service? No, sir-ee! I don't know what course others would take, but as for me, I'll finish my speech or there'll be a dead senator found round these premises in about fifteen seconds by the clock." He was allowed to finish at his leisure.

The late Dr. Henry, formerly Surveyor-General of Washington Territory, among the good stories which he used to tell, had one at the expense of the territorial legislature. An hotel-keeper in one of the fashionable towns in the Eastern States used to stand at the head of the table and read out the bill of fare in what the elocution-teacher would call a "clear articulate voice," though there was a printed carte on the table. This irritated his aristocratic customers not a little, until at last one said: "Say, cap, why do you read out the bill of fare? Do you think we can't read?" "Oh, gentlemen," was the reply, "you will excuse me, I hope. It is solely the force of habit. I once kept a ho-tel in Washington Territory, and most of the legislators boarded with me, and I'm blessed if half o' them could read or write!"

It is a matter of history that when the convention met to form a constitution for California, on the usual preamble being read, "that all men should be judged by a jury of their peers," a man from Oregon, who happened to be a delegate, moved, to the great amusement of the other members, that the word "peers" should be struck out. "This warn't a mon-archy—there warn't no peers in this here State!"

Disgraceful scenes of drunkenness were sometimes seen in the legislatures, but in that respect they did not stand alone. One of the Californian members of the United States Senate at one time was distinguished as "the sober senator," such a virtue as sobriety being rather uncommon in the then Congressmen from that particular State. Corruption in these State legislatures prevailed to a frightful extent, and was so open that newspapers even had the hardihood to give a list of the sums paid to each senator for his vote. In the more refined States, official embezzlements were styled "pickings," but in the Far West and the Pacific States plain English sufficed, and they were known as "stealings." On more than one occasion prominent government officials have asked me, while in social intercourse, how much salary I got for such an office, and when I stated it, "Wal," would be the reply, "that ain't much for this country, but of course you have got your little stealings?" I was naturally rather indignant, and inclined to resent the insinuation that I could be guilty of robbing my Government, or employers of any sort, until they assured me that no harm was meant. It was the regular thing there, everybody did it. "Why, sir, do you think I can support my family on fifteen hundred dollars a year in greenbacks at sixty cents to the dollar, or that I would come to this one-horse place, after having had a practice as a lawyer in 'Frisco of ten thousand dollars, for that? I guess not!"

All members of these legislatures are paid, and also receive a certain mileage or travelling allowance for their homes to the seat of government. This recompense, or "per diem" as they call it, varies from about ten to fifteen dollars a day, and is generally paid in the Pacific States in gold. The mileage is about twenty-five cents a mile. Now this to Congressmen travelling from the distant States of the Far West comes up to a good round sum, and, indeed, is regarded by them as their principal pay, always exclusive of the "little stealings" already mentioned.

In the Far West, as elsewhere, there are legislators not too much in earnest. I recommend to some of our candidates for British suffrages the following noble close to a Far Western election address: "Gentlemen," said the candidate, after having given his sentiments on the "constitootion," the "Munroe doctrine," and such like topics; "gentlemen," and he put his hand on the region of his heart, "these are my sentiments—the sentiments, gentlemen, of an honest man—ay, an honest politician, but, gentlemen and fellow-citizens, ef they don't suit you, they ken be altered."

## Household Gardening.

AFTER having given instructions last week for making rockeries, we intimated that some suitable plants would be named for planting them. As planting should be done in either autumn or early spring, and as it is too late for one season and too early for the other, the matter is not urgent; and further, as some time must elapse ere the mounds in question can be prepared, the information referred to may without inconvenience be postponed in the interest of other seasonable notes on operations of more immediate importance.

### DIGGING, TRENCHING, AND MANURING GARDENS.

Of all winter work that which is applied towards the amelioration and enrichment of the soil is of the greatest moment. It is plain and simple work, too, requiring in the opinion of many only willing hearts and strong arms to accomplish it; and therein lies the danger of the work being profitless.

Very much more than physical strength is needed in preparing ground in the best, most economical, and most effectual manner for the reception of the crops that it is desired to cultivate. No matter what these crops are, whether flowers, fruit, or vegetables, thought must be exercised in the work in question, and the brain must ever guide the hand in its accomplishment.

In the consideration of the three primary operations under notice, we will take them in the inverse order in which they are named, not as indicating their relative importance, for one or the other of them may claim priority in this respect according to circumstances, but as being in more strict conformity with the routine of gardening practice.

### MANURING SOIL.

When material of whatever kind is added to the soil for rendering it more fertile, it is usually done before either digging or trenching. There are exceptions to the rule, but not generally when the work is done in winter. Supplementary manuring in spring is often practised with great advantage, and the subject will not be forgotten; but at present our remarks will have reference to the work as conducted at the present season of the year.

By the term manuring, we mean the addition of anything to the soil that will improve its staple and increase its productiveness, therefore our observations will not by any means be limited to animal manures—that is, the refuge of horse-stables, cowsheds, and piggeries.

## OVER MANURING.

Some gardens have been so liberally treated with fertilising matter of that kind (and it is the most valuable of all for general purposes) that a further application would be injurious rather than otherwise. We know of many gardens that are disappointing in the returns they give considering the prodigal manner in which they have been enriched. They are, in fact, poisoned with manure.

When land has been heavily manured year after year, a greater quantity having been given than the crops could appropriate, it becomes sour and unhealthy. Soil that is black, unctuous, and buttery when dug is in this state, and far better than a further dressing of decayed stable refuse would be an application of lime.

## LIME AS A CORRECTIVE.

Lime is an important element in plant growth, and is almost invariably absent from soils that have been treated as above described. Nearly all plants and crops need lime, and not a few cannot long exist without it. This mineral is cheap, easily applied, and serves important purposes, namely, supplying crops with one of their natural constituents, purifying the soil by liberating the acids that are sealed up in it, and destroying, or at least checking the increase of grubs and insects.

The proper way to apply lime is to obtain it in lumps, or "shells," as they are often called, place these in small heaps on the land, and cover them with soil dug from around them. The moisture in the soil will cause the lumps to swell and fall, the lime bursting through in the form of powder; then is the time to spread and fork it into the soil, keeping it as near the surface as possible, as it always finds its way downwards.

On soils very rich or heavy, a bushel of lime may be applied to a rod of thirty square yards, a less quantity sufficing for lighter land or gardens that are not made over-rich by frequent applications of manure over a series of years. It is particularly good for fruit-trees.

## SOIL AS MANURE.

When gardens have been dressed with decayed leaves until the earth has become black in colour and light in texture, then a dressing of fresh soil of a heavier character will be of far more service than ordinary manure. In such a case it would be true economy for those who have manure to exchange it for fresh, free, yellowish loam, not the sour refuse excavated in making foundations for buildings. Such exchanges can often be effected to the mutual advantage of both parties who may enter into an arrangement of this nature.

## ASHES AND GRITTY MATTER FOR GARDENS.

In many gardens, if not in the majority, the soil is so strong and heavy, almost approaching clay, that it cannot be easily worked. It is hard when dry, lumpy, and unkindly, and can scarcely be made fine enough for sowing and planting. The remedy is rough digging now, exposing as much as possible of it to the action of the weather, and incorporating with it all the ashes and gritty road-sweepings that can be collected.

Material of this kind possesses little manurial value, but its mechanical action is of great service, and is of more benefit than a dressing of manure. Wood-ashes, in addition to opening the soil, act as a fertiliser, and should never be wasted. Leaf-mould and decayed vegetable matter of any kind, such as cocoa-nut fibre refuse, and even sawdust, may also with advantage be applied to heavy soils, as also may soot, which is one of the best manures that can be used. Ashes should never be applied to light and dry soils, as there they would do more harm than good.

## TRENCHING GROUND.

The object of trenching is to produce an increased depth of soil, and if this is alike good throughout, its producing power is increased in the same proportion. If the earth is fertile to the depth of eighteen inches, it will contain twice the amount of plant-food that is contained in a depth of nine inches.

But it does not follow that in every case where the soil is shallow that its depth should be doubled at once. The deepening of soil must always be gradual, as to bring up several inches of sour subsoil would be to invite failure, for in such soil nothing will grow satisfactorily before the earth is enriched.

In the process of trenching, only about an inch of the subsoil should be brought to the surface, the bottom of the trench being at the same time broken up and left there. If a layer of manure or vegetable matter can be spread on it at the bottom of each trench, this will not be lost, because another year it can be brought up with an increased quantity of the subsoil, which it will have materially improved. That is the safe and true way of deepening shallow soil and increasing the productiveness of a garden.

In the prosecution of the work the soil must first be removed to the width of, say eighteen inches, or two feet, to the depth required, this being removed to the other end of the plot. Then another trench, measured to the exact width of the first, taken out and the soil cast into the excavation, and so on till the whole is turned over, when the earth first removed will be in readiness for filling the last trench. That is excellent winter work, and, well conducted, always profitable.

## DIGGING GROUND.

Though trenching cannot always be done, digging must be when the land is to be cropped with either flowers or vegetables. Always begin at the lowest part of the ground, and finish at the highest; and do not fail to dig as deeply as possible.

If the land is very strong and heavy, approaching clay, throw it up in ridges, and the frost and air will act on it beneficially; in the spring when partially, but not wholly dry, fork it over, and most of the large lumps can be crushed to powder. Light soil is not improved by ridging, but may be dug level at the first operation.

Preparing the soil by turning it over and exposing it to the ameliorating influences of the weather, adding at the same time such manurial ingredients as above suggested, is the very root of successful gardening, and it is by neglecting this work, or doing it imperfectly, that so many fail with the plants and crops they attempt to cultivate; hence attention is directed to the subject at a time when the advice communicated can be turned to account; but never attempt to dig when there is snow on the ground, nor when the surface is crisp with frost, or in a wet, unpleasant, adhesive state.

## WINDOW PLANTS.

Primulas, Cinerarias, Cyclamens, and various kinds of bulbous plants will now be flowering, and to keep them fresh over the longest possible period, the roots must be kept regularly moist and the foliage free from dust.

Water should be given in a tepid state, and always in sufficient quantity to penetrate quite through the soil. Many persons are afraid to give sufficient water to such plants as Primulas lest the moisture should cause the lower parts of the leaf-stalks to decay, hence instead of giving a good soaking occasionally they give light surface sprinklings frequently. It is these light waterings that more than anything else cause the evils that it is sought to avert.

All the best roots of a plant are deep down in the pot, and if these are dry while the surface of the soil is wet, collapse must occur sooner or later. The soil must be moist where the roots are, and it is far better for that at the bottom of a pot to be moist and the surface dry than for the surface to be wet and the lower part practically destitute of moisture. Hyacinths and other bulbs now growing freely need copious supplies of water. The soil should never be permitted to become really dry. Water may be given at any time when it passes freely into the soil. If the pots are full of roots, and the room warm and dry, this will be every day; but in the case of plants in less active growth, and in a cooler position, not nearly so much water will be requisite for their support.

Keep the foliage of smooth-leaved plants clean by the occasional application of a damp sponge, but dust can be better removed from woolly-leaved plants by the careful use of a soft feather brush; removed it must be by some means, or they cannot long remain healthy.

## Do Birds Think?

BY A LADY WHO KEEPS A BIRD HOSPITAL.

"Do birds think? Let me tell you of a little bird I once owned. The little bird was a female mocking-bird who had a nest of young ones about a week old. The baby birds were never healthy, inheriting weakness from their father, who had asthma. Early one morning I was awakened by the mother-bird standing on my pillow pouring into my ear the most mournful notes I ever heard. I knew something was wrong, and arose at once. The mother flew to her nest, then looked to see if I was following, which I was. As soon as I had reached the nest she took hold of one of the baby-bird's wings, pinched it gently with her beak, and watched it eagerly, I think, to see if it moved. Then she took hold of one of the little feet, and pinched it in the same manner, and finding it did not move, she looked up at me in a pleading way, as if she wanted me to try to waken them. I reached my hand out towards the nest. She stood aside, and looked on with as much interest and feeling apparently as any young human mother.

"I examined the lifeless little bodies, and when I withdrew my hand the mother hastened to hover over the little ones, seeming to think that if she could warm them they would awaken. In a few moments she hopped off the nest, looked at her babies, held food close to their mouths, and coaxed and called them, but in vain. She flew all around the room, as if in search of some untried remedy. Several times she perched on my shoulder, and looked so distressed and pitiful I could scarcely keep from crying. I put her in a cage, and hung her in the sunshine, to see if she would become quiet. She took a bath, but still remained nervous and seemed anxious, and by-and-by grew so restless that I had to take her out of the cage and let her go to her nest again.

"She stood quiet a while looking at her dead children. Then she went over all the little bodies—pinching them gently, and watching them closely, to see if they moved. When she saw no signs of life she seemed puzzled. She seemed at last to make up her mind that the little ones were dead. And one by one she lifted them tenderly in her beak and laid them side by side in the middle of the room. She looked at them lovingly a moment, then flew to her empty nest and gazed wonderingly into that. Finally she perched on my shoulder, and looked into my eyes, as if to ask: 'What does all this mean?' What a lesson of love and devotion that little bird taught! She always fed the little ones before taking a mouthful herself, and sometimes she would stand coaxing them to take one more mouthful, and finding they had enough would swallow it herself."

# Odds and Ends.

MR. BARON GRAHAM was one of the judges who sat on the English bench in the early part of this century. He was distinguished for his remarkable politeness, and for having sentenced more unfortunate human beings to death than any other judge who ever presided at the county assizes. He invariably exemplified his peculiar notions of politeness, even in the very act of sentencing poor creatures to death. His manners on such occasions would often have been laughable, but for the deeply-affecting situation in which the unhappy prisoners stood. A very singular instance of the baron's excessive and ill-timed politeness occurred on one occasion, after the close of the trials at a county assize. Nine unhappy men were all appointed to receive sentence of death for burglary, highway robberies, and other offences. It so happened, however, that on entering the names of the unfortunate parties, after being convicted, on his own slip of paper, Baron Graham omitted the name of one prisoner. The nine men were brought up to receive judgment, and the eight whose names were on his paper were severally sentenced to death. They then quitted the bar. The ninth stood in mute astonishment at the circumstance that no sentence was passed on him. The clerk of the court, perceiving the mistake, immediately called aloud to his lordship just as he was opening the door to leave the court, that he had omitted to pass sentence on one unfortunate man. Turning about, and casting a look of surprise at the unhappy prisoner, he hurried back to the seat he had just vacated, and, taking a pinch of snuff—he was one of the most inveterate snuff-takers that ever lived—and, putting on the black cap, he addressed the prisoner in the following strain, making, at the same time, a profusion of bows: "My good man, I really beg your pardon for the mistake; it was entirely a mistake—altogether a mistake, I assure you. The sentence of the court on you is, that you be taken to the place whence you came, thence to the place of execution, and there hanged by the neck until you are dead. And the Lord have mercy on your soul. I do beg your pardon. I'm very sorry for the mistake, I assure you." So saying, he made another bow to the unhappy man, and then quitted the court.

THERE was a lad who, at fourteen, was apprenticed to a soap-boiler. One of his resolutions was to read an hour a day, or at least at that rate, and he timed himself by an old silver watch left him by his uncle. He stayed seven years with his master, and when he was twenty-one he knew as much as the young squire. Now let us see how much time he had to read in seven years, at the rate of one hour each day. It would be two thousand five hundred and fifty-five hours, which, at the rate of eight reading hours per day, would be equal to three hundred and ten days; equal to forty-five weeks; equal to eleven months—nearly a year's reading. That time spent in treasuring up useful knowledge would pile up a very large store. It is worth trying for. Begin now. Do what you can. In after years you will look back upon the task as the most pleasant and profitable you ever performed.

THIS anecdote of old Lord Bathurst will bear telling over again. He used to repeat often, with a smile, that Dr. Cheyne had assured him, fifty years before, that he would not live seven years longer unless he abridged himself of his wine. About two years before his death he invited several of his friends to spend a few cheerful days with him at his seat, near Cirencester, and being one evening very loth to part with them, his son (then Lord Chancellor) objected to their sitting up any longer, adding that health and long life were best secured by regularity. The earl suffered his son to retire, but, as soon as he left the room, exclaimed: "Come, my good friends, since the old gentleman is gone to bed, I think we can venture to crack another bottle."

A PROFESSOR of languages, who was fond of drawing his definitions fine, was one day explaining to his class "that in English check and snub are interchangeable terms, signifying co-extensively fundamental ideas," when one of his pupils interruptingly exclaimed: "I see the point; so, when you want a check for my tuition, I'll tell the governor to give you a snub."

A MAN once took a piece of white cloth to a dyer, to have it dyed black. He was so pleased with the result that after a time he went back to the dyer with a piece of black cloth, and asked to have it dyed white. But the dyer answered: "A piece of cloth is like a man's reputation; it can be dyed black, but it cannot be made white again."

AN Irishman went to see Niagara, and while he gazed upon it, a friend asked him if it was not the most wonderful thing he had ever seen. To which he replied: "Never a bit, man!—never a bit! Sure, it's no wonder at all that the wather should fall down there, for I'd like to know what would hinder it."

WHEN a man's hair stands on end, an ordinary person says his hair stands, but you can't get a doctor to talk in that way. The doctors call it horripilation. This makes the patient's hair stick up worse than ever, but it gives the family confidence in the doctor.

A CONVALESCENT small-pox patient looked in the mirror and exclaimed: "I used to be thought a nice-looking fellow; but what am I good for now?" "I don't know," replied his sympathetic friend, "unless you can be utilised as a thimble."

SINCE it has become generally known that the sciences of cricket and boat-rowing are not taught in German colleges, more English youths are being educated at home than formerly.

WHEN the doctor advised Brown to take care of his health, Brown remarked with a feeble smile that really it was so poor that he didn't think it was worth taking care of.

WHEN a certain bachelor was married the members of the Bachelor Club broke him up by sending him as a wedding-present a copy of "Paradise Lost."

A DANDY in the North had legs so attenuated that the authorities had him arrested because he had no visible means of support.

"Do make yourselves at home, ladies," said a hostess to her visitors one day. "I'm at home myself, and wish you all were."

MAY a man justly consider his wife poetical when she is a verse to him?

CHARLES XII. of Sweden was beleaguered at Stralsund, and it was only his constancy that prevented him from falling into the hands of his enemies. They made great efforts to compel him to surrender, but he stood out till he found an opportunity to escape to Sweden. Meanwhile a large number of bombs were thrown into the city. One day the king sat in a room on the ground floor of a two-storeyed house dictating letters for Sweden to his secretary. The door of an adjoining room stood open. A bomb struck the house, penetrated the two storeys, and fell into this adjoining room, where it burst with a deafening report. A fragment of the bomb flew to the feet of the king, but all this made so little impression upon his majesty that he seemed quite unconscious of what had happened. It was far different with his secretary, who possessed much less strength of mind. He grew pale, his pen dropped from his hand, and he fell back in his chair. The king, who immediately observed that he was not writing, exclaimed: "What is amiss with you? You are not writing." The secretary was in a terrible fright, and could scarcely utter a word. "The bomb, your majesty," he stammered. "What has the bomb to do with the letter you are writing?" quietly answered the king. "Get on, I pray you, with what you are doing."

## BEFORE MARRIAGE AND AFTER.

**Lover:** For one dear word of thine, my sweet,  
I'd pour my treasures at thy feet!  
**Husband:** Talk as you will—I've said before,  
I'll not allow one penny more.

ABOUT two years ago a coastguardman swam with a rope to a stranded vessel, after even the lifeboat had been beaten back. The surf looked bad enough to stupefy a seal, but somehow or other this brave fellow fought his way through. When he got under the lee of the stranded ship, a man in the rigging addressed him in terms not often used in ordinary life. The sailor said: "Brother, have you come to save us?" The coastguardman answered: "Hold your jaw, and lay hold of this rope."

"TELL me something I don't know," squeaked a silly youth who had been chattering like an ape to his companion for several minutes, greatly to the annoyance of others present. "Well, sir," said a dignified old gentleman, "I will tell you something you don't know. You are a jackass, sir!" When the admiring audience had ceased applauding, the youth who had thus suddenly acquired some valuable information was not in sight.

DUMLEY was making an evening call, and the nice little boy of the family had been allowed to remain up a little later than usual. "Mamma," he said, during a lull in the conversation, "can whisky talk?" "Certainly not," "What put that absurd notion into your head?" "Well," he replied, "I heard you say to papa that whisky was talking on Mr. Dumley, and I wanted to know what it said."

"SHOW me the man who struck Pat O'Docherty," shouted a pugnacious little Irishman at an election; "show me the man who struck Pat O'Docherty, and I'll—" "I am the man who struck Pat O'Docherty," said a big, brawny fellow, stepping to the front; "and what have you got to say about it?" "Och, sure," answered the small one, suddenly collapsing, "and didn't you do it well!"

"Now," said a lawyer, taking his client to one side for private consultation, "you may be hanged, but I'll do what I can for you. You must, however, leave everything to me." "Well, that's cool," replied the client; "they told me before I went into the case that I would have to pay a good sum, but when it comes to leaving everything to you, I might as well back out and let the case go by default."

NOT long ago a Scotch board-school inspector asked the members of a class that was under examination: "What is the cause of the saltiness of the ocean?" Flushed with the discovery that had flashed upon her mind, one little girl raised her hand. "You may tell," said the inspector. "Salt fish, sir!" exclaimed the pupil triumphantly.

A REMARKABLE exploit was performed by a Missouri farmer, who gave his neighbour griddle-cakes and biscuits baked in four and a half minutes from the time the wheat was standing in the fields. This included a journey to and from the mill, sixteen rods distant from the wheatfield.

AN old Highland clergyman, who had received several calls to parishes, asked his servant where he should go. His servant said: "Go where there is most sin, sir." The preacher concluded that was good advice, and went where there was most money.

WIFE: "The flour's out." Husband: "So is my money." Wife: "The coal is gone." Husband: "So is my credit." Wife: "Well, we can't starve." Husband: "Can't we? That's good; I was afraid we should."

"KIND words can never die." How bitterly does a man realise that terrible truth when he sees all the kindest words he ever said in his life glaring at him from his published letters in a breach of promise suit.

AN old man who had been badly hurt in a railroad collision, being advised to sue the company for damages, said: "Well, no, not for damages; I've had enough of them; but I'll just sue 'em for repairs."

"COME, don't be timid," said a couple of silly snobs to two mechanics; "sit down and make yourselves our equals." "We should have to blow out our brains to do that," was the reply.

A CELEBRATED organist slipped off his bench recently while playing a Bach fugue as a voluntary. It was suggested that he ought to be expelled from the church as a Bach-slither.

THE difference between a long and short yarn is very well illustrated by the difference of one's feelings in holding a skein for one's grandmother or for one's sweetheart.

AN old gentleman, having been invited by an acquaintance to go out and see his country seat, went, and found it to be a stump in a large meadow.

JAPAN has a weather bureau, but it is wise and discreet, and doesn't predict rain until after the rain has soaked things for a day or two.

THE late Archbishop Whately, describing commonplace preachers, said: "In their sermons they aim at nothing and hit it."

A PLEASANT reflection.—A pretty girl's face in a glass.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### QUESTION.

J. W. wishes to know where he can obtain a recitation called "The Convict's Escape."

### ANSWERS.

E. J. P. (Camberwell).—We are not aware that there are any "boy students (engineers) in the Civil Service." If you wish to enter a boy as student in the Naval Service, write to the secretary of the Department for Engineering Students, Portsmouth Dockyard. It will probably not be easy to get a boy on the books.

F. ALEXANDER.—The position you describe seems an excellent one for growing and ripening tomatoes, and we hope in due time to give such instructions as will enable you to succeed in your object.

FORLORN.—The verses are by L. E. L., and were originally published in one of the annuals, 1827:

I wrote my name upon the sand;  
I thought I wrote it on thine heart.  
I had no touch of fear that words,  
Such words, so graven, could depart.  
The sands, thy heart, alike have lost  
The name I trusted to their care;  
And passing waves, and worldly thoughts,  
Effaced what once was written there.  
Woe, for the false sands! and worse woe,  
That thou art falsest of the twain!  
I yet may write upon the sands,  
But never on thine heart again.

FRENCH PASTRY.—"Flan" really means custard, but the term is given to open fruit-tarts. Gouffé says: "These tarts are prepared in two different ways; the fruit can be baked with the crusts, or it may be cooked separately, and put into the baked crusts when about being served." The following is his recipe for "Apricot Flan Tarts": "Butter a ring-shaped open tart-mould, and put it on a buttered baking-sheet; line the mould with lining-paste, and pinch the edge of the paste with pincers; strew the paste with pounded sugar, and place on it some apricots cut in halves; bake in the oven heated to a light brown paper temperature, and when the tart is done, take it out of the mould, brush the edge of the crust over with some syrup, registering 32° on the saccharometer, and put it in the oven for two minutes; when cold, sprinkle some pounded sugar over the apricots and serve."

INQUIRER H.—1. Slang was not uncommon in the days of the Plantagenets, and "Pigeons of Paul's" had reference to the scholars of Paul's. These boys, in return, called the scholars of St. Anthony's Hospital "Anthony Pigs." 2. "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue," from a speech of Burke's on declining the poll at Bristol.

JOHN L. K.—1. You will find a list of all the newspapers published in London in "Dickens's Dictionary of London." It would be impossible to enumerate them here. 2. According to a recent computation, there are twelve thousand one hundred and seventy-five newspapers and magazines published in the United States. Of these one thousand two hundred and twenty-seven are daily newspapers, and nine thousand nine hundred and fifty-five are weeklies.

J. W.—See answer to "Cupid," No. 141.

OLD COCKNEY.—"The Minories took its name from the Cloister of the Minims, or rather Minorettes, nuns of St. Clare. The Minims were certain reformed Franciscans, founded by St. Francis de Paula in the fifteenth century. They went barefooted, and wore a coarse black woollen stuff, fastened with a woollen girdle, which they never put off day or night. The word is derived from the Latin *minimus* (the least), in allusion to the text: "I am less than the least of all saints" (Eph. iii. 8).

PERPLEXED.—1. The "g" in *Weighia rosea* being derived from the German name *Weigh*, should be pronounced hard to be strictly correct, the name *Weigh* being pronounced "Veigh." The flowering shrub should also be called "Veighia." 2. Yes; in sand, under handglasses. 3. It is not usual to drop the prefix. "Colonel" and "General" are, of course, of higher rank than "Lieutenant-Colonel" and "Major-General." 4. Whether Pilsner-bier be exclusively lager-beer or not is a question for the ale merchant to settle; but lager is the specific name for the mild beer commonly drunk in Germany and the United States, with very slight intoxicating properties. The true analogue to Pilsner-bier would be not Guinness, Bass, etc., but Edinburgh ale, Warwick ale, Dublin stout, London porter, etc. 5. The cement may do for a time, but we think slips of wood nailed outside over the cracks would be more efficacious. 6. Are not the knives you mention those used by the gardener in cutting up the vegetable from the bed? 7. Answer to your former question respecting varieties of pigeons cannot be given on account of the space required for it. You will find most of the information for which you ask in books by Fulton and Tegetmeier. Some of the varieties named by you are so delicate, rare, and expensive, that few persons can afford to buy them.

PUZZLED.—For many centuries Florence was a man's name, and a whole line of counts of Holland bore it as Floris, Florens, or Florence. We believe that the earliest instance on record of the use of Florence as a woman's name is that of Florence, daughter of Hugh de Courtenay of Devon and Margaret Carminio, who lived in the fifteenth century.

THE BRAMBLES IVY.—"Sattaponne" kindly sends the following verses, which we presume are those you require:

Upwards ascendeth, through gates of the west,  
Heav'nward the sighing of pilgrims distressed,  
Upward, where angels in wonderment fall  
Round Him, in Whom is no darkness at all.  
Downward, rejoicing, through gates of the west,  
Earthward the angels fulfil His behest;  
"Onward" they whisper when shadows appeal,  
Trust Him in Whom is no darkness at all.

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# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 143.]

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Coming Into a Fortune.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"You will not mention that—that we are richer than before," said Miss Swindon with some nervous hesitation, fearing that her request was a little peculiar.

"Certainly not, my dear madam, if you do not wish it," replied the London solicitor, who had come down to Bamford to complete the transfer of considerable property to the two elderly maiden ladies, who were well-known in the little town as Miss Swindon and Miss Letitia.

"I do not wish it, nor does my sister. We think it would be much pleasanter to go on just in the old way. We would not wish to take anything upon ourselves because Providence has been so good to us."

"My sister means we would not wish to seem different to our neighbours—to be ostentatious."

"That you could never be," said the solicitor, looking with a kindly smile at the gentle-mannered women; "but I understand; you want to do good by stealth, and remain the unknown benefactors."

The two simple, honest faces were covered with blushes. The London man had read their hearts. He pitied their confusion, and returning to a business manner said:

"I believe everything is settled but the bank into which I am to pay the dividends?"

"The Bank of England?" said Miss Letitia, looking at her sister interrogatively.

"We cannot do better, I think," Miss Swindon replied.

"Hardly," said the solicitor. "And now I must say good-morning."

"Not stay for dinner!" said both sisters in surprise.

"I am very sorry I cannot do justice to your hospitality," he said heartily, noticing the vexation in their faces, "but I am not going straight back to London, and if I miss my train at the junction, I shall be delayed a day, so I am sure you will excuse me."

"Yes, to be sure;" and their faces cleared at once, and they were eager that he should be gone.

They stood at the window and saw him get into the fly that had brought him from the railway-station.

"I trust he will be in time," said Miss Swindon.

"I trust so," echoed Miss Letitia, and the sisters sat down, each in her own particular chair, on either side of the window. Each put her hands in her lap, and sat looking at them and nothing else.

The sisters greatly resembled each other, and the likeness was intensified by the fact of their dress being identical in every particular, even to the little gold brooches that fastened the folds of the net kerchiefs they wore round their necks. Their gowns were of serviceable brown stuff, their aprons of black silk, and they wore mittens of the same pattern. Their faces were round, and of fair complexion, with a healthy ruddiness in the cheeks. Their eyes were grey, and the slightly arched eyebrows and hair were of a soft brown, scarcely touched with silver. It was by the appearance of the chin and the little hollow at the temples only that the observer could tell that they were getting old; yet they were past sixty. Their features were homely, and they would have been decidedly plain but for their sweet expression of kindness and simplicity. They were of middle height, and of a comely stoutness for elderly women.

"I feel dazed," said Miss Letitia, after some minutes' silence; "it seems strange to have so very much money."

"So do I," replied her sister, "yet we have known of it for some time, but I feel sure I never realised it until to-day. It is actually mine, now I have this voucher to show that I have all this in the Three per Cents., and I can understand it."

"That is exactly how I feel," said Miss Letitia with a little sigh.

"It is a great trust," continued Miss Swindon, "and I feel almost borne down with the weight of it. How shall we put it to the best use? It clearly is given to us to put to use for others' benefit, because we had enough without it."

"I feel with you, sister, oppressed. I wish we were as before; we could manage the small charities that we understood."

"Yes," said Miss Swindon, with a little sigh for the past that was so irrevocably gone. "We understood our life then; but courage,

Letitia, we must do our best. Large means have been given to us. I think the knowledge how to use them will be vouchsafed also. I will hope for the good teaching."

"It will come," answered Miss Letitia confidently. "Every impulse I feel to give, I shall look upon as an instruction—a command."

"Even so we may err by giving foolishly," replied her sister sadly, "but we must keep our eyes open and be keen to note trouble and suffering, and prompt to relieve them. And we will be our old humble selves as long as we can."

She put her hand across the table; the younger woman took it and pressed it warmly, saying solemnly:

"We will."

Hannah, the old servant, who had been with them for more than thirty years, came in to lay the table for dinner. She noticed the despondent looks and expressed a hope that they had not heard bad news.

"No; the gentleman had only come on a matter of business," Miss Swindon answered.

And Hannah felt herself injured, because, as she told herself, her long services entitled her to know everything that happened to the ladies, and they were actually keeping secret from her what the strange man had come about.

So the coming into a fortune made three women sad.

After an unusually silent meal the sisters sat down in their accustomed seats by the window. On the table that stood between them were Miss Swindon's rug-work and Miss Letitia's knitting, but neither of them resumed her ordinary occupation. And Miss Swindon, happening to glance at the pins and the wool, said:

"Dear me, I thought it was Sunday, and that we had forgotten to put away our work last night."

"No wonder," assented her sister, "it is such a strange day."

The two sat silent looking out of the window, over the shrubs that were always kept small that their view of the road might be unimpeded, yet seeing nothing, and full of a vague sense of uncertainty and strangeness. Yesterday they were only moderately well-off, now they were rich.

There was great similarity of thought between them. Living so many years together, and each having a sweet kindness of disposition that led her to give pleasure to the other in all things, they had grown to have the same tastes, the same feelings, and the same view on all matters. And now they were both contemplating the change in their lives in the same manner. They thought of themselves almost as if they were two stranger women, and they saw them living for years in happiness and comfort upon an annuity left them by their father; dwelling always in the same little house of red brick, behind the green railings with the low privet hedge inside, and the small bushes of evergreens; and sitting by the window and looking out upon the few passers-by, knowing many of them, and taking warm interest in everything that concerned them; feeling great respect for some, admiration for others, and compassion for all in trouble, and giving help where need was greatest, and kindness everywhere. Two simple, homely, worthy women, neither learned nor wise. Their wealth came to them and they were puffed up with pride and conceit, they began to think themselves great people, to stand aloof from their friends of the town, to claim friendship with the county families; then they got into stately society, and became shy and awkward, and all their kindness turned to envy and bitterness. And this might be their miserable fate.

In her uneasiness at this mental picture Miss Letitia rose and walked up and down the room; then her sister looked up, and at her mild glance, she resealed herself and her thoughts went back to her parents, and she wondered if they were pleased at the good fortune that had come to them, or whether they knew that it was trouble in disguise, and sorrowed for their children.

"Letitia," said Miss Swindon, coming out of her reverie, and causing her sister to rouse from hers with a start, so deep and long had been the silence between them, "I feel as if everything were unreal to-day, as if I were somebody else almost. Let us go out and look about us. The sight of the old streets and familiar faces will set us to rights."

Letitia rose with a look of bewilderment on her simple face.

"Yes," she replied, "the fresh air will clear our heads. Mine is puzzled with thinking and the great news;" and she gave a little sigh as if the great news were an affliction.

"We are too old for much thinking," answered Miss Swindon resignedly; "we must just go about our usual business, it is all we are fit for, and to make a beginning we will go and buy something—"

"And give it away?"

"Yes," replied her sister with a bright smile; "I am going to buy a dress for Hannah—and you?"

"I don't know—a shawl?"

"The very thing. She has been with us thirty-three years, and should have our first gifts."



When the sisters made their purchases, they found it a delightful novelty not to be limited in price, and a sense of their larger means came to them with pleasant significance. They were tempted to buy many things for many persons, but were restrained by their earnest desire to avoid launching out into any expense, and to be sober-minded and temperate even in their generosity.

"Your mother is better, Miss Temple, I hope," said Miss Swindon to a young girl who stopped to greet her in the High Street.

"A little, thank you," she answered, "but she is very weak and depressed. I hope you will call to see her when you are our way."

"We will come over very soon."

"Keep up your heart, Miss Ellen," put in Miss Letitia; "the fall of the leaf is always a bad time for invalids. Your mother will be better when the trees are bare."

"It will be too cold then," said the girl, with a sad little smile, as she left them.

"The weather is never right for her, she is so ailing. And her income dies with her. And then what shall be done with Ellen?"

Miss Swindon spoke as questioning her sister for her special opinion on the subject.

"Then she will be our charge," said Miss Letitia quietly, as if there could be no doubt on the matter.

"I knew you would say so," replied Miss Swindon with a little exultation in her voice; "I always know your mind."

"I should hope so," replied her sister. "I hope it is always the same as yours."

"Look, Letitia, at that handsome young man with Ellen Temple. Do you know him?"

"No," she answered, looking at the blonde face that bent over Ellen's brown one, "but he seems to think much of her."

"Very much," said Miss Swindon dryly; "perhaps he will take her out of our hands and provide for her future himself."

"We must do something," said her sister; "we can make a great wedding-present at any rate."

And the two women continued talking sociably. They were quite themselves again, now that they were discussing some projected benevolence.

When the dress and shawl were given to Hannah, she was greatly pleased and was reconciled to the old ladies at once, and was quite sure that the business the strange gentleman had come upon had not been mentioned to her, because it was so unimportant as to be beneath her notice.

And so the night closed in upon a happy household.

Autumn had passed and winter was come, and, to all appearance, the sisters were just the same as ever. They had not made the slightest change in their mode of life, but had continued to live comfortably as hitherto, but with due regard to economy. The weather was cold and wet and utterly cheerless, and Hannah suffered from rheumatism, so a girl was hired to assist her, and thus the first change in the little household was made. Neighbours and friends said it was a great undertaking to have an additional servant, with provisions so dear, but there was no sign of care on the faces of the sisters, so the matter was allowed to drop and be forgotten.

When the curate called for their subscription to the coal and blanket fund, he pleaded for a little more than usual because the winter promised to be exceptionally dreary and trying, and Miss Swindon, looking at her sister, said:

"I think we can spare ten pounds."

"Yes," assented Miss Letitia, and on the reverend gentleman looking at them with surprise, the old ladies blushed.

"We have something put by," said Miss Swindon, in deprecation of the charge of extravagance to which she feared she was laying herself open, "and the object of the fund is so good."

"I am thankful you are so generous. I wish there were more like you," he replied, and there was nothing but hearty approval in his voice and manner.

That Christmas Day was a happy one in Bamford, for there were joints of meat and a pudding in many a house that had not known such luxuries for years, and there was warm flannel for the aged, and all the little permitted comforts for the poor in the workhouse.

The old ladies wished everyone to find his lot a little brighter for the Christmastide, and they went about seeking out those in want, and making their little gifts to them with the utmost possible secrecy.

It was again autumn, the sisters had been rich for a year. There was no change in them except in their apparel. The feminine love of soft raiment had instinctively led them, now that price need not be considered, to replace each discarded article of dress with one of finer texture, so now their gowns were of cashmere, and their caps of real lace, and they were contemplating replacing their old furs with muffs and tippets of sable.

"Spending comes so easy," said Miss Letitia.

"Yes," replied her sister with a broad smile, "and I do like to see you look so nice."

Though their garments were of richer material they were still of the same modest style and sober hues, and no Quakeresses could have been more quietly dressed than the two old sisters.

During the past year they had had many disappointments, they had found people covetous and ungrateful, they had been deceived and imposed upon, but they forgot these things quickly, and but one thought and one desire remained with them always—the thought of the suffering of the poor, and the desire to do the utmost good with the wealth that had been confided to them, in trust, as they reverently believed, for the benefit of those in distress.

Just at this time the rector came in one day and told them a doleful story of a coachman who had been out of work for months, since the death of a master he had served for twenty years.

"He is an old man now," he said, "and would like to stay in his native place. I wish I could hear of something for him."

"Could we do with a coachman, sister?" asked Miss Letitia, full of anxiety to provide for the man.

"We have no stables," replied her sister.

"Oh, if that is the only hindrance," said the rector, "I have stables and coach-house quite at your service. I shall never be able to afford anything."

The last few words were said with just a twinge of regret.

This involuntary expression on the part of the rector decided the sisters. They noted the white hair, the kind face, and the feeble form of the minister who had devoted all his strength to his flock, and they recognised that the use of a carriage would greatly lessen the fatigue of his arduous duties among his parishioners, and perhaps prolong his valuable life, as well as provide for the unfortunate coachman, so they gave each other the look of accord that both so well understood, and Miss Swindon said, in her usual quiet voice:

"We will gladly accept your offer, Mr. Holroyd. My sister and myself are getting quite old women, and shall be glad of a drive now and then."

"I was very tired last time we went to Mrs. Temple's," said Miss Letitia; "it will be very pleasant not to be obliged to walk so far."

"A little whitewash will soon put stable and coach-house to rights," said the rector pleasantly, "and Saunders will be delighted to hear of employment."

He was a little surprised, but the sisters took setting up a carriage so very quietly that he felt he had no right to be.

Within a fortnight the neatest of little broughams was in the rector's coach-house, the quietest of horses in his stable, and the steadiest of coachmen living in the rooms over them. And the rector was made to understand, with the sweet tact born of respectful sympathy, that, if he did not make use of them as often as he could, the sisters would be greatly grieved.

The first time the sisters used their carriage they drove over to see Mrs. Temple. It was the second week in September, but the air was still as full of sunshine and heat as in brilliant summer weather. Mrs. Temple lay upon a couch near an open window giving upon a garden, gay with flowers, and closed in by great masses of trees whose foliage was gorgeous with brown and gold and crimson; overhead was a dome of clear bright blue. The invalid was gazing with pleasure at the exquisite scene; she had been educated in the love of the beautiful.

She was a tall, slight woman, with lustrous eyes and lovely complexion, with an innate elegance that nothing could obscure. She impressed her surroundings with something of her own character, and the sisters never failed to feel surprise at the airiness and pretty refinement of her apartment.

"Do not move," said Miss Swindon as she entered, followed closely by her sister; "we would not for worlds disturb you; we only called to see if you were a little better."

The lifted head sank back upon the pillows again, and a delicate hand was given to each in turn as she said, "I am not better," with a little scornful smile that seemed to say it were utter foolishness to expect such a thing.

"The weather is so mild," said Miss Letitia, in excuse of their hope.

"That is indeed a comfort to me. I can have my windows open, and feel the fresh air upon my face, and look at the trees, and the flowers, and the sky. I should like to die just as I am, looking at them all."

"You must hope to get better," said Miss Swindon.

"Where is Ellen?" asked her sister, by way of diverting the sick woman's thoughts.

"My daughter is taking a little walk with a friend." Then, turning to Miss Swindon, she said calmly: "I know my fate. Recovery is hopeless. I am almost dead, but I cannot even die. I am held back by anxiety for my child."

"My dear friend," said Miss Swindon in low, eager voice, "do let me assure you of my care for dear Ellen."

"The man who loves her should take her to himself," she said

proudly. "I thank you, but the right is his, and I am held here waiting on the brink of the grave until he does his duty. Was ever woman so cruelly treated?"

She had raised herself from her pillows, and was sitting upright, looking at them with eyes that seemed to burn with indignation. Her haggard face was flushed. A cough came on and shook her attenuated frame, but it did not change the current of her thoughts, and as soon as she could speak she said:

"I am most unfortunate; fate never ceases to buffet me. When what I wish is almost mine, it keeps aloof from me. It is mine, yet not quite mine, and the anguish of this almost possession is intolerable to me."

"Hush!" said Miss Swindon, gently touching her, for the vehemence in her low voice was intense; but she did not heed her.

"This Frank Thornhill is all that I could wish for my daughter's husband, but he does not marry her. He loves her, she loves him, yet he stands aloof. I am almost mad with weariness of waiting for this marriage—this good thing that seems so near me, and yet is so far off. I cannot live, I cannot die; still he is blind to my misery."

"He should marry her," said Miss Letitia decidedly.

A gleam of satisfaction passed over the invalid's face.

"I am glad you think so. He should marry her, but he has promised to wait for his father's consent, and when I speak to Ellen she says she cannot leave me. She need not leave me, but if she were wedded wife I could leave her, and get rest and peace."

Miss Swindon felt a little in awe of the fragile woman who appeared to be kept in this world only by her passionate love for her daughter, so manifest was it that she was ill unto death, but her heart was full of compassion, and she said gently:

"Do you know why his father refuses his consent?"

"Frank evades the question, but I believe it is because Ellen has no fortune. Her beauty and her goodness should be dower enough for any man. I think I will say to him: 'You must marry her or set her free.' Then I should know what to do. I would have said it before but that she loves him."

"Yes, Ellen loves him," said Miss Letitia. "Oh, do let us——"

"I will not," interrupted Mrs. Temple, and she looked at them with proud defiance.

The coughing came on, and when it ceased she lay back on her pillows, looking as if she were already dead. When she revived a little she said gently:

"If we do not meet again, accept my thanks for your kind thoughts of Ellen."

"We shall never cease to love her," said both sisters. They shook hands with the poor invalid, and with eyes full of tears softly left the room, and bidding the maid go in and stay with her mistress until Miss Ellen returned, entered the brougham, and drove nearly home in mournful silence. Then Miss Letitia said:

"They ought to be married."

"Yes," replied her sister; "it must be managed."

After about a quarter of an hour's reverie, Miss Letitia said:

"I will give half."

"Of course," replied Miss Swindon, readily understanding the enigmatical words. "I meant that. We will work together always."

"I knew you would think so," said her sister cheerfully.

"It will require much thought, much calculation," said Miss Swindon. "I do not see my way at all at present."

"Thinking tries my head," said the younger sister. "Much of it confuses me. I like to jump to conclusions, and keep to them."

"I will think for you," said her sister; "only if any thoughts on the subject come into your head tell me of them. They might be useful. I am all in the dark at present."

"And I seem to see it done, finished, now you have taken it in hand, Priscilla," said Miss Letitia with enthusiasm, as she gazed at her sister with eyes full of loving admiration.

"Sanguine girl!" said Miss Swindon, with a little reproving tap on her sister's arm, going back in spirit and manner to nearly forty years ago when her sister had been an impulsive young thing, and she her grave mentor.

"Cilla," cried Miss Letitia, using a pet name that had passed almost out of their memory, "you make me feel quite young again, and bring to my mind the old days, and the old garden, and all the old long ago."

"And Ned," added Miss Swindon. "I wonder if you would have married him if he had not died?"

"We shall never know now," replied Letitia a little sadly. And the two old ladies sat thinking of their young days so long past, yet, curiously enough, seeming to grow nearer every year, until at last the circle of their lives would be complete, and old age and childhood meet.

## CHAPTER II.

NEXT day the sisters called on the rector to get some information about Mr. Thornhill. He said he was not personally acquainted

with the gentleman, but believed him to be a very worthy man. He thought he was not rich, and remembered having heard that at the time of his wife's death some years ago he had put down his carriage and retrenched in every possible way.

The minister was the servant of the sick and the sorrowful, so as the hour for visiting a dying woman approached, he left them, bidding them make themselves at home as long as they liked to stay. Then the sisters had a little whispered conference, and Miss Swindon, seating herself in the rector's chair before his writing-table, took a cheque out of her pocket-book and carefully wrote in five figures, her sister watching her all the time, then both silently watched the figures get quite dry.

Miss Swindon put on her left-hand glove, pushed the paper in her palm, and carefully buttoned her glove over it. Ever since the sisters had been left alone together, there had been a secrecy and air of mystery about them, and when they heard the carriage at the gate, they went out of the house and along the sunlit garden-path with eyes downcast, and faces heavy and anxious, as if they were conspirators overwhelmed by the burden of their plot.

Even the stolid coachman noticed their strange appearance, and felt bewildered. Miss Swindon entered the brougham—Miss Letitia did not follow, but stood at the door, and said, "God bless you," in a strange subdued manner, then bade Simmons drive right through the town, and walked slowly and sadly away.

Miss Swindon sat wishing it was possible that her errand could be done in such absolute secrecy that no one should know that it was done, wishing that wealth could take to itself wings and fly to the spot she would indicate, and then make itself accepted; wishing that leaves would turn to gold, and not go back to leaves when a new day dawned; wishing that a great chest of guineas could be buried and instantly discovered by a certain person—she never doubted that they would be the property of the finder—wishing all kinds of foolish and impossible things, so that the desire of her heart might be fulfilled, and she herself be saved from giving offence, and from possible failure.

She was ashamed that she herself should ascribe so high a power to gold, that in this, the only serious enterprise of her life, she should be relying upon it as a potency that could scarcely fail her. She feared that she had a low estimate of human nature, as she was looking on money as the lever by which she should succeed in moving a man's determination. Yet it was her sole resource, and she must use it with courage.

Thinking was a slow process with her, and a difficult one, but she was a brave-hearted old lady, and never gave up a thing because it was hard to do. So she thought out the problem that was perplexing her to the end, and decided thoroughly what she would say, but was obliged to leave how she should say it to the chance influences of the moment.

When she passed through the lodge-gates of Thornhill Park, and could see nothing on either side of her but far-stretching sward and trees of many forms and gorgeous colouring, she felt the full beauty of the scene, and realised how tenaciously a man would cling to so fair an ancestral domain, for she had all an Englishman's reverence for land. And it seemed to her that a very good sum in the Three per Cents. was as nothing compared with this undulating grass-covered earth dotted with ancient oak and elm trees.

Mr. Thornhill was at home. As she crossed the hall to the library its size and sombreness oppressed her. She felt as if she had strayed from well-known paths into strange regions, and had lost her bearings; but she roused herself to think only of the end in view, and to recall the means she had planned for its attainment.

She had been announced to Mr. Thornhill as a lady who wished to see him, so he expected some farmer's wife or daughter to plead for further time for the payment of rent already long delayed. He was angered at this surmise, for his need for money was growing desperate.

He glanced impatiently at Miss Swindon as she entered, and disconcerted her a little; but he had a good memory for faces, and felt sure he had not seen hers before, so, with a smile of relief, he rose and courteously begged her to be seated.

She sat down. Her face was pale, and there was a frightened look in her gentle eyes as she gazed steadily at him and said, in a voice low and quavering at first, but gaining strength and steadiness as she proceeded:

"I am quite a stranger to you, and I beg you to excuse my troubling you, but there was nothing that I could do but speak to yourself, seeing what object I have in view. And will you promise that what passes between us shall be strictly private—secret?"

"Certainly," he replied blandly, thinking that nothing of serious importance could pass between himself and the curious old person who looked at him with so much entreaty in her homely face.

"I am obliged to you," she said with quiet dignity. And then her nervousness came over her again as she continued: "I love Ellen Temple very much. She is a very sweet girl. My sister and myself think very much of her."

Miss Swindon saw the lowering expression that came over his face at the girl's name. Her heart sank. But she was not to be turned from a course she had resolved upon by any man's looks. Indeed, this silent opposition rather urged her on, and she said with almost undue emphasis:

"We think her a most estimable young lady, and fit to grace any station."

"I do not dispute it; but permit me to remark that the smallest thing wears a different aspect when viewed from a different standpoint."

"Which means that we look at Ellen from a different level," she said softly. "I did hope that we might have started with a mutual agreement as to Ellen's merits."

"I will concede that Miss Temple is the most perfect of woman-kind, if that will help on our interview."

"I want you to feel it," she replied.

"Feelings do not come at command. My time is occupied. I shall be glad to know what has caused me the honour of your visit," he said, with a courtly haughtiness that she admired, although it greatly flurried her. And when she looked at his severe face, deeply lined with thought and anxiety, she feared that he was a stern, impracticable father, whom no arguments could bring to reason.

"I am come," she said simply, "to try to persuade you to consent to your son's marriage with Miss Temple—her mother is dying, I fear, and she cannot be happy without seeing her daughter united to your son."

She noticed a scornful curl of his lips and a brightening of his eyes, as if he were loftily amused at her daring to speak of his family affairs, and she added, with unconscious wisdom:

"My sister and myself are old friends of the widow and her child, and we thought that perhaps we might have it in our power to make some arrangement that would make the alliance more suitable. We are rich, and it would give us great pleasure to give the dear girl a marriage portion."

For an instant a hope flashed up within him, but died at once. These good women would think much of a few hundreds, he reflected, and they would be of no use to him or Frank.

"You are very good," he replied gently, "and I hope that Mrs. Temple and her daughter know what very kind friends they have, and appreciate them accordingly; but I am afraid the young lady could not make the marriage you contemplate, unless she had considerable fortune. We are old people, madam, and have learned to understand that even the fondest couple must have more substantial diet than love and air, and that the cottage of the proverb is a residence of which they would soon grow weary."

"Yes," she answered, "but—" and she was evidently very nervous, as she fidgeted with the button of her glove.

"There are other reasons also into which we need not enter."

"Would this help matters?" she cried, holding the cheque before him. He gazed at it in astonishment; such a sum on one slip of paper he had not seen for many, many years. "Would this do for the portion of a girl your son could marry? or more, even twice as much we would give that the dying woman might have her heart's desire. We would not palter for a little gold when a soul's happiness is at stake." And Miss Swindon's face glowed with kindly generosity.

She had placed the cheque in his hands, he gazed at it in a stupor of abstraction. What great things it would do! With that to the good, there would be little difficulty in raising sufficient to ward off the threatened foreclosure. He felt as if he were in a dream, waiting to see what would happen next. A sigh attracted his attention. He looked from the paper to the old lady's beaming face.

"You look joyful," he said, and it seemed to him that he was speaking incoherently as in a dream.

"I am," she replied; "for I think you will consent."

He rose, walked to the window, and came back and sat down, quite himself again, except that there was a flush in his face, and he looked a younger and kinder man.

Miss Swindon smiled upon him; she was beginning quite to like him; it came natural to her to like those she benefited, and she recognised that she would be doing good to him, as well as to his son, by her gift to Ellen.

"Do you quite understand what you are doing to part with this?" he said, touching the cheque. "It is a large sum to give in your lifetime."

He spoke earnestly and kindly.

"I well understand it," she said quietly. "My sister and myself are both maiden ladies, we have no kindred, and we live simply. So we can indulge our fancies, and can well afford, each of us, to give Ellen Temple that sum, if it will ensure her speedy marriage to your

son. Our only desire is to see happiness in our dying friend's face, and know that she is at peace about her daughter."

"With such a friend as yourself she need have had no fear," he said.

"That is true," she answered; "we promised to take entire charge of Ellen, but she would not hear of it. She was too proud. She said no one should take care of her but her husband. You will let them be married soon?"

"Assuredly, I will not object; but there must be marriage-settlements."

"Do hurry the lawyers; her days are dwindling fast," she said eagerly.

"Have you no man of business? If you have, employ him at once for Miss Temple."

"To be sure. I will write to him to-night."

"I hope he will not persuade you to change your mind."

"He could not do that; besides, he knows that there is enough and to spare."

"Fortunate woman!"

"Yes," she replied gravely, "I am fortunate, most fortunate now that you have agreed to my wishes. I am deeply obliged to you, Mr. Thornhill." Her voice was full of gratitude, and her face of earnest joy, as she put out her hand to him.

He grasped it heartily.

"Your presence has been a blessing to me," he said in solemn tones. "You have saved me and mine from ruin;" and stooping slightly he raised the old hand and kissed it as reverently as if he had been offering homage to his sovereign.

Then he folded up the cheque, and watched her replace it carefully in her glove, saying that it was too valuable to lose. Then he asked the name of his best friend, as he called her, and receiving her card, led her to her carriage, and parted from her with a grateful smile. He went back to his room a changed man.

"Truly," he thought, "that old lady's money will do great good."

Miss Swindon had so many things to think of, that the time passed very swiftly, and she was greatly surprised when the brougham stopped, and she found herself opposite her own garden-gate.

Miss Letitia opened the house-door. A glance at her sister, as she was coming up the garden-path, told her that all was as she wished, and that her sister had been quite successful. She ran down to meet her, the two old faces were full of the most rapturous delight.

"It is all settled just as you said, Letitia. I am to give ten thousand and you ten thousand."

And then she stopped, looking guilty; in her heedless haste to tell her sister the happy news, she had given to the winds her precious secret. She looked down vexed and ashamed of her impetuosity. Miss Letitia looked carefully up and down the road, and all around, then said consolingly:

"I don't believe there is a living creature within sight except Simmons, and he is stone deaf, so it cannot matter."

The two old ladies spent the rest of the day in most interesting conversation, but the letter to the solicitor was not forgotten, and the now useless cheque was burnt. They had still one trouble—would Mrs. Temple hear of their interference in her concerns, and take it in ill part, perhaps go the length of repudiating their friendship altogether?

The second day Frank Thornhill came to thank them, and he brought the information that Mrs. Temple had consented to let Ellen be married in a fortnight.

That evening a note came from that lady, saying that their magnificent generosity overpowered all her scruples, and that she thanked them from her heart, and the old sisters wept with delight at the success of their plans.

Soft and low came the sound of bells to the listening ears of Mrs. Temple. It grew in volume, it rolled and it swelled until the whole world seemed full of the jubilant music.

The ringers pulled with a will, for they knew of the distant listener, and people far away heard the glad melody, and said the bells had never rung so merrily before. Mrs. Temple listened with head lifted from her pillows, and the deep joy in her heart shining in her face.

While the bells were still ringing, the door of her chamber was opened, and bride and bridegroom stood before her couch. She kissed and blessed them. Then she put out her hands towards the sisters, who stood near. She kissed them also, and said that the blessing of the Father of the widow and orphan would abide with them for ever.

Mrs. Temple passed away peacefully a week after her daughter's marriage.

The old sisters live on very happily. They have learned to look upon Frank and Ellen as their own kindred, and their children call them Aunt Swindon and Aunt Letitia.

They are as kindly and as simple as ever, and still do their best to keep secret their generous beneficence.

## The Walk.

OVER the old grey arches,  
Where the rushing river rolled,  
And the willows that sprung where the woodbine clung,  
Flashed back the sunset's gold;  
Up the hill where the tall green ashes  
Stood in majestic rows,  
Up the narrow path that ran beneath,  
We walked to the old red house.

The laugh and the jest rang round us,  
Fast flowed the careless talk;  
The question light, and the answer slight,  
The mirth of the evening walk;  
My hand on your arm lay quietly,  
And never a word we said;  
Dear, do you forget? I remember yet,  
How fast that hushed hour sped.

There was but a glance flashed each from each  
As we paused where the violets grew,  
Half up the hill—I have mine still,  
Though time has dimmed its blue;  
There was but a smile—one sweet swift smile—  
As we parted at the door,  
One long hand-clasp, ah, that strong true grasp,  
Shall I meet it never more?

So far apart our pathways,  
Since that summer eve have been;  
Such joys have been lost, such sweet dreams crossed,  
So much we have done and seen!  
Perhaps we two shall never walk  
Through a sunset hour again;  
But I can recall each step of it all,  
Is the memory joy or pain?

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book III.

#### CHAPTER I. BEYOND THE GOLDEN MEADOWS.

THE loveliness of a spring morning is lending light and colour to the earth—such light, such colour, as only comes in the day's early hours, when Nature trembles into waking, fresh and fair with dewfall and sunlight after the long hushed darkness of the night.

The heavens are of hyacinth and gold, save here and there where pearly clouds fold their white wings like sails slowly furled by invisible hands. The sound of a skylark's song is losing itself in a flood of rapture, rising higher, higher, towards that cold pure splendour to which men's souls look up in their prayers—higher and higher, as though the eager wings were racing the eager voice, and both could never tire of the song and the flight.

A man walking slowly through the green lanes paused in the flood of sunlight, and his eyes followed that far-off speck that seemed making straight for heaven's gates, with its own pean of praise as mandate of admission.

He listened as, in some rare moment of life's hurried, frenzied march, men do listen to a sound, a word, a voice from Nature's heart. As he listened, something of sorrow, regret, unrest, touched those mysterious inner chords of the spirit which had begun to vibrate to the subtle sounds and scents surrounding him. He sighed. At the same moment the sigh was echoed by a peal of silvery childish laughter, and starting involuntarily, he looked over the low hedge, and saw in the shining dewy field beyond, as fair a sight as eyes of man had ever beheld.

The field was starred with a thousand golden bells, and the flood of sunlight poured itself in loving intensity on a slight, almost girlish form standing midway between the glittering light and the glittering carpet. On one shoulder perched a child; another clung to her hand, and lifted a laughing face to follow the direction of the other hand, uplifted to the cloudless vault above, from whence the tiny speck that had uttered the day's first greeting was fluttering earthwards once again.

The watching eyes gazed first curiously, then eagerly, then with a flash of recognition that lit up the whole face.

"Is it possible?" he said below his breath, and something within him leaped like a giant force over a space of intervening years, and urged him to pursue it; and, so guided and so borne along, he sprang over the low hedge and stood face to face with a vision that had haunted him more persistently than he had ever known till now.

Midway in the cowslip meadow they met.

A strange meeting for two people who had last spoken to each

other in a London drawing-room—last seen each other—Well, the strange cold pang in the man's breast brought back that scene distinctly enough, chilling in some degree the rapture that had been all the first sight of the remembered face had brought.

"How could you recollect me?" she said, her face flushed like a June rose, her eyes—those sweet remembered eyes—bright as stars, only solemn and dark, as surely no stars ever were. "Five years ago. Why, it is an age! Even Madge hardly remembered me. Mrs. Dunbar, you know. Have you seen her lately? How is it you are here?"

"What a string of questions! Am I to answer them all? To begin with, I recollected you at once. I—I—well, I have a good memory for faces. As for Mrs. Dunbar, I have not seen her for two years. I resigned, you know, and have been living here with my mother. She is a great invalid, and—"

Then his voice suddenly broke. Meeting those glorious eyes once more his heart throbbed so strangely and wildly that he grew confused, and forgot even of what he was speaking.

"Are those your children?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes," she said, and looked down with all a mother's adoring pride at the ruffled curls and shy face hiding in the folds of her gown.

But Ivor Grant's eyes had gone to the child perched on her shoulder. Such a beautiful solemn little face, with eyes dark and mysterious-looking as her own. Eyes that sent a strange thrill through the man's heart, as they gave back gaze for gaze in that calm wonder of a child's aroused curiosity, that is so bewildering to grown men.

"What a lovely little fellow," he muttered involuntarily. "He is very like you."

She blushed faintly.

"Is that intended for a compliment? I suppose he is like me, for I am tired of hearing the remark. He is my youngest—just three years old to-day. It is in honour of his birthday that I have brought them out to make cowslip-balls. English country-life is so strange to them. Children in India, you know, have a very dreary existence. I made a point of taking them to the hills every season, or they would never have been as robust as they are now."

She talked hurriedly, with a soft embarrassment of manner that spoke of other feelings behind the surprise of this chance meeting.

Ivor noticed that she had never once mentioned her husband.

"Have you been here long?" he asked in that hurried pause.

"Just a month. My father is your rector now. He came here about four years ago, and when my health gave way in India, and I had to come home, I naturally came here. My husband remained behind. He likes the country."

"And you?"

"Detest it!" Then she laughed. "I am afraid I said that vindictively, but it is really true. The life is idle, useless, enervating. The women are spoilt, the men are, as a rule, too careless and self-satisfied. There is nothing wholesome, genial, inspiring about them, and the climate is odious. Oh, if you only knew the delicious feeling of drinking in air like this after the enervating, stifling months I have endured, shut up in bungalows, treating the sun as a deadly enemy instead of what he is here!"

She drew a long breath; she raised her head, with its dusky, wind-stirred curls, to the glistening sky, and looked up at it with eloquent eyes. Ivor Grant watched her. His ears had been drinking her voice, catching more of its music than its sense, perhaps; but always, like some strange vision dawning and floating before him, he saw the lights and shadows of Madge Dunbar's pretty room, and the queenly, graceful figure leaning against that marble pedestal, and watching him with deep soft eyes.

She was not changed, he told himself. Not changed save that her beauty was of more thoughtful and grave a character, and on her face that tender glow of deeper feeling which comes to a woman's face with the dignity and wonder of motherhood.

The silence brought her back to herself. She lifted the child from her shoulder, and set him down by his brother's side. They made such a pretty pair—the dark head and the gold, the bright face and the solemn—that Ivor's eyes rested with renewed admiration upon them.

"You are going to gather cowslips; may I help you?" he said at last.

She laughed a little.

"What an occupation for a gallant guardsman, and the idol of a world of fashion! Suppose any of your London friends heard you?"

"They would think I was very much to be envied," he said, hiding a deeper earnestness under his light words than ever she dreamt of. "Besides, I am no longer a guardsman. I have exchanged town life for country, and infinitely prefer it."

"Is it possible?" she said, and looked at him wonderingly.

In his face she read great changes. It was handsome as ever, more attractive even than she had thought it the night she gave him

that *sobriquet* of "My Lord Conceit." There was less indolence and languor in its expression, but that sadness, which had puzzled many an observer, had developed itself more strikingly. He looked a man in his prime, but a man who had drunk life's cup to satiety, and wearied of its empty hours long ere such weariness should have touched his years. She felt a sort of wonder, and a faint pity for him stirring her heart as she gazed. Her own youth and its memories seemed a far-back dream; that first meeting with him had been only one episode in her past, and five years had swept it far away into those inner chambers of memory, whence issue ghosts that sometimes gladden and sometimes affright us.

But she was young enough still to enjoy life as it was, young enough to be glad at the scents and sounds of spring, young enough to feel the blood flowing gaily through her veins as she trod the golden meadows, young enough to smile at the grave and watchful face above her with

The untired smile of youth, and bid him come and welcome, if he chose, as she set the baby hands to their fragrant task.

His hands and hers assisted. The little voices grew eloquent, the tireless feet were a joy to watch. Ivor Grant paused a moment in which to wonder how it was that he had lived so many years, yet never found children delightful, or life sweet. Looking at the eager faces, listening to the prattling tongues, seeing all the world in one golden glory of earth and sky, drinking in pure fragrant air, steeping himself to the lips in a new and sweet content, so he passed those brief, bright, morning hours, unasking, unquestioning whence came their brightness and delight.

"Oo is very dood," said the solemn-eyed little Jack to him, as the last blossom had been added, and the great velvety mass was pronounced complete. "Has 'oo little boys at home?"

Ivor laughed a trifle unsteadily, catching Beryl's sunny glance.

"No, my dear, I have no little boys."

"And does 'oo gather cowslips for 'ooself?"

Ivor looked puzzled. Beryl hastened to explain.

"Jack thinks you came out to gather cowslips this morning. Are you usually such an early riser?"

"Me dets up veverry morning with mummy," pursued the little fellow, desirous of giving out his limited stock of information, now that he had made friends with the tall stranger.

"He can't dress himself," said Cyril, the eldest of the little lads. "Mother has to dress him. He didn't like the ayah, and we sent her back."

"Come!" cried their mother, swinging the great fragrant ball to and fro, and cutting short their confidences. "Who can catch? 'Tisty, tosty, fair and forty; one, two——' Ah, Cyril has it."

A shout of triumph, as the boy ran off with his treasure, pursued by the toddling feet of Baby Jack, rang over the meadow.

She turned to Ivor, laughing still.

"How children renew one's youth! It does not seem so very long ago that I too was running wild in just such meadows as these, as happy, as free——"

She paused abruptly. Her face grew crimson.

"I sometimes think," she went on hurriedly, "we don't make children's lives as happy as we might. They are so short, and they ought to be so fair—just like a dream of gladness to look back upon. The cares and worries come soon enough."

"You, at least, should have none," said Ivor impulsively.

Her eyes drooped. Over the beautiful face came a shadow, like a cloud on a summer sky.

"Is anyone exempt?" she said, with an effort at her former lightness. "Doesn't Longfellow say:

"Into each life some rain must fall?"

We may be happy if we only get showers from time to time, not one persistent deluge."

The children were far in advance. She began to move forward in order to rejoin them. He walked beside her, scarcely conscious that he was doing so.

"I—I hope that you will come to the Court and bring the little fellows," he said at last. "My mother is too great an invalid to go anywhere, but she will be delighted to see you, I am sure, and so will my uncle."

"You are very kind," she said with a faint hesitation. "Yes, I will come. I should like to see your mother."

"When will you come?" he persisted. "To-morrow?"

"I can hardly tell," she said with that soft, serious smile that at times touched her lips. "There is no immediate hurry, is there?"

"No, only—there is no reason why you should not come; and while the weather is so fine——"

She laughed outright.

"The weather has, of course, everything to do with it. Well, perhaps I will come to-morrow; and now, don't let me take you farther out of your way. It is a long distance back to the Court."

She stood still and gave him her hand as the little lads came dancing up.

He took it reluctantly enough, yet not daring to withstand her wishes.

But long after that graceful figure had passed from sight he stood leaning against the stile where she had bidden him farewell, lost in thought so deep that he forgot the very passage of time, groping his way along a path of possibilities into the maze of a new and startled future, yet never asking himself what had come into his life with so sudden and so sweet a joy, or what dangers and sorrows might lie beyond this range of golden meadows.

#### CHAPTER II. "I DO NOT LIKE 'GRASS WIDOWS.'"

THERE are moments when memory quickens life into a sweet and perfect joy, bringing out from the treasure-house of its past such rich and varied stores, that only to pause and think them over is delight enough.

Ivor Grant's heart exulted in such memories as he went homewards through that fair spring world. He knew nothing of the reason of such feelings. It is very seldom that we pause to investigate the why and wherefore of joy at its outset. Not until the feeling has long passed its borderland of content do we question its origin, and then it is often too late for reason to utter her warning voice against the sophistries of self-deception.

Ivor Grant, walking with the firm, free step of youth and strength, his head bared to the cool breeze, his eyes drinking in the beauties of Nature, marvelled that life hitherto had seemed so monotonous and wearisome a thing. It seemed joy enough now only to live on a day like this; to revel in golden sunshine—in the boundless wealth of health and freedom; to feel this sense of power and mastery swelling in his heart, to meet all sights and sounds with a dreamy pleasure of eye and ear.

He passed between the hedgerows, upon whose banks the foot of Spring had paused, leaving imprints delicate and fanciful as herself, and the tiny blossoms and the tender, pale young shoots had gained a beauty he had never noted before. He plucked some frail white violets, and half smiled as he placed them in his breast. So strange it seemed that he should note or care for the beauty of the timid, modest things. And yet to-day everything had beauty, everything had fragrance, and as he stood on a slight eminence and caught from there the accustomed sight of the Court's grey turrets and vast woods, he thought to himself the old place had never looked so fair.

It was long past the usual breakfast-hour when he reached it, so he took his meal in solitude ere going to pay his morning visit to his mother.

It was true what he had told Beryl Marsden. She was a great invalid and rarely left her own rooms. Yet it puzzled Ivor as it had puzzled her physicians what could be this mysterious complaint that was slowly sapping the springs of her life, leaving her day by day paler, frailer, more worn, yet wringing from her no complaint of pain or murmur of weariness; only she clung to her son, and looked for his presence with yet more passionate absorption than of yore; and he, noting this, yielded to her wistful if unspoken desire, and gave up London life and his profession, and had settled down at the Court.

He had been shocked at the change in her. Outwardly calm and self-reliant as ever, yet, to the keen eyes of love, a deep undercurrent of suffering was apparent. Suffering which denied itself outward expression, which sought no sympathy or alleviation, but all the same was there in its woe and in its mystery, to trouble and perplex him more and more as the months rolled slowly by.

As he entered her room this morning, something in his face—a new brightness, a light of hope, and youth, and joy, long strangers to its natural indolent quiet, struck her keen eyes. The very tone of his voice in greeting was in some way different—more tender, more gentle, yet with an undercurrent of absorption that told her in a moment something had happened.

Being a wise woman, she asked no questions, confident that if anything had to be told she would hear it, a better way of dealing with men—if women would only believe it—than any attempt to force confidence or obtrude curiosity.

And the news came very soon. He had taken the white violets from his coat, and was putting them in a little vase of water.

"There's a breath of spring for you!" he said joyously; "I wish you could go out and enjoy it for yourself. By-the-bye, I met an old friend of mine out this morning, and I've asked her to call on you. I knew her in London years ago, and she married and went out to India"—this spoken very hurriedly, like a lesson learnt by rote, of which he was eager to rid himself. "She's come home on sick leave, or something, with her children. Jolly little chaps! I've asked them all over here to-morrow."

Mrs. Grant raised her eyes in faint astonishment. Certainly



nothing in this story to account for Ivor's unusual excitement ; a grass widow with a family of spoilt, pettish, sickly children, such as all Indian children were. The only strange thing was that Ivor should interest himself about them at all,

"I have no objection to their coming," she said languidly, "but you must do the entertaining, my dear. It is impossible for me to bear the noise of children in my weak state of health. As for the mother—well, women from India are so objectionable."

"She is not," said Ivor quickly. "I think you will like her."

Mrs. Grant made no answer. She was looking at his face, trying to read in it something deeper than his words.

"Is she young?" she asked carelessly.

A slight shade of astonishment crept over Ivor's face.

"Ye-es," he said hesitatingly, "I suppose so. Women's ages are always difficult to guess."

"And her husband is not with her?"

"No, thank goodness! I mean," he added, colouring furiously at the slip, "he prefers India to England—always did."

Mrs. Grant was silent, and silence sounding somewhat ominous to Ivor in his present state of feeling, he launched forth into further explanations, dwelling chiefly, however, on the children—a fact which rather surprised his mother, who, up to the present epoch of his existence, had never discovered that he possessed any particular liking for juvenile torments.

"I am afraid you will find them very troublesome," she said at last. "We have nothing here to amuse them."

"I don't think they want much amusement," said Ivor. "At least, the little chap doesn't. I never saw such a solemn little face in my life, and his eyes—they make one quite afraid; they are so big, and pure, and penetrating. I'll show them the picture-gallery, and there's the old nursery, you know, and cartloads of my broken toys treasured up in its cupboards, and then they can ride the pony. Oh, they'll enjoy themselves, never fear."

"I never saw you so much interested in children before," said his mother somewhat dryly. "These must be quite out of the common."

Ivor was standing by the window, looking out at the bright, sunny landscape. Between an opening in the trees he could catch a glimpse of a dark red-brick building, above which rose the slender spire of the old church. The red-brick building was the rectory. He was wondering how it was he had never noticed it so distinctly as now.

"I know, my dear boy," continued his mother somewhat hurriedly, "that life here must be very dull and monotonous. I often tell you I wish you would run up to London for the season as of old. It would give you some amusement, some distraction, some brighter society than my dull self."

"I won't listen to such heresies," said Ivor laughingly, and he turned from the window and looked with loving eyes at the pale worn beauty of her face. "You dull! The idea! Don't talk nonsense. I've settled down into a country gentleman. My life contents me infinitely better than that old life of dissipation, excitement, unrest. I have pleasant friends and neighbours, plenty of sport, gaiety, books. What in the name of all that's rational should a man want more?"

"A wife, perhaps," said Mrs. Grant, smiling kindly. "But you seem to have no inclination for matrimony."

"No," he said with sudden gravity; "none whatever."

"And yet it would be better for you to marry," continued his mother thoughtfully. "You would be happier—safer."

"Safer," interposed Ivor abruptly, as she paused. "What is it you fear for me, mother mine?"

"Nothing as yet," answered Mrs. Grant slowly. "Only—only—well, Ivor, my dear, I do not like grass widows."

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Snowdon House.

(A SHORT SERIAL STORY.)

### PART VI.

THE doctor sat for an instant with knitted brows, as though the brief announcement from the Red Lion inn was highly unpleasant to him, as indeed it was, and might have sat still longer, but that he was roused by his eye falling on the second, and as yet unopened letter. The sight of this did not appear to soothe him; he evidently recognised the writing, for he uttered an angry exclamation as he opened it, which was repeated more than once while reading it.

This was a much longer communication, containing some enclosures, while its contents clearly puzzled and vexed the doctor. He read it through, and re-read it, exclaiming as he finished:

"What does she mean by this? What has it to do with us? I must say something to silence her."

He had not a great while to indulge in these reflections, having to be at Snowdon House to welcome home his daughter and her husband. Dismissing these communications from his mind, therefore, as far as was in his power, he went over, and was soon in consultation with Ezra to see that all was ready, and then the carriage—the new one, of course, with the ponies—was seen approaching from the railway-station. Then it entered by the lodge-gates, and in another minute the doctor had lifted his daughter from the vehicle, had kissed her, had shaken Wayre by the hand, while he bid them both "Welcome," and wished them a long and happy abode in their married home.

Wayre looked cheerful and fresh, as became a bridegroom; Agatha, too, had improved by the trip, and a troubled, anxious expression of the eye, with which the doctor was only too familiar, had disappeared, or greatly diminished. For an instant she looked with an enquiring glance at her father, as though she saw something in his face that was strange to her. He noted this glance, and assumed a smiling demeanour, talking freely and jestingly, although he was, in reality, extremely anxious to say a few words to her. This, however, was not easily to be accomplished; first there was the luncheon, then they went together over the grounds, to see what minor improvements Dr. Fulham had effected.

Everything was approved of, Agatha especially being pleased with what she saw. Mr. Wayre, who was highly satisfied also, suggested a trifling alteration in one place, and the doctor left to fetch Ezra to join in the consultation.

"This is something new," said Mr. Wayre as Fulham disappeared, "this little wooden shed at the end of the stable. I wonder what it is for?"

So speaking he went towards the place, a newly-painted and evidently newly-erected extension of the stables. He paused for an instant, and ejaculated:

"Ah, that is the weak point. I see where those fellows climb the fence, and will have it altered. I am greatly mistaken if I did not see one of them lurking on the other side but an instant back."

Muttering thus, he went to the door of the little shed, which was secured by a bolt on the outside, Mrs. Wayre watching him with a slight smile, as though amused at his curiosity.

He drew the bolt, audibly wondering the while for what reason the shed had been erected. The fastening, which was stiff with new paint, at last gave way, and Mr. Wayre pulled the door open. As he did so a tremendous brute sprang past him with a fearful snarl—Wayre was half hidden by the door—and to his horror flew directly at his wife.

A piercing shriek from Agatha was scarcely uttered before she was thrown to the ground with a terrible shock, and the brute seized her by the arm, growling angrily the while.

"Good Heaven! It is the new dog!" cried Wayre. "My wife will be killed before my eyes. Help, help!"

He rushed up to the savage beast, and with his light cane slashed it across the head, then tried to seize it.

His strength and his weapon were in vain, but just then—not a quarter of a minute had elapsed since the escape of the hound—just as the doctor and Ezra saw from the lodge what had happened, and hurried forward with shouts, a man dashed past Mr. Wayre, uttering a tremendous oath, and flung himself with such desperate force against the brute as to throw it down quite clear of the lady, but falling heavily himself.

In an instant the gigantic hound turned upon its assailant, and, as the horrified spectators could see, buried its fangs in his shoulder or neck.

The man was armed with a large clasp-knife, with which he struck the dog several times; the reddened hue of the blade and the hand which held it showing with what effect these blows were dealt; while his other arm was actually forced in between the jaws of the beast, in order to loose the choking gripe on his neck.

Those who stood round could see, but at first they could not help. Not only had the doctor and Ezra come up, but a couple of men at work in the grounds were attracted by the shouts; one of these was armed with a pitchfork, the other with a spade, but not a blow could be struck, so incessant were the turnings and changes of the man and the brute.

The women-servants had come also, and lifted Mrs. Wayre from the ground; she had not quite fainted, although she was helpless and unable to stand. She refused to be carried into the house, but watched the struggle with agonising interest.

At last—it was all comprised in a very small space of time—one of the men saw a chance for a blow, and buried the prongs of his weapon in the body of the hound. With a desperate yelp of rage and pain, the creature turned on this new assailant, and on the instant the first man, who lay gasping beneath him, and whose

features were utterly undistinguishable from the blood and clay besmearing them, seized the dog in turn by its throat, gripping it as only despair can gripe, and again and again struck with his weapon behind the shoulder. These last blows were fatal; the animal staggered unsteadily a pace or two, fell, and all was over.

The men helped the stranger up. The doctor had recognised him at first, and would have done so had he been thrice as much disfigured as he really was.

Dr. Fulham was not a kindly man, or a just one, and his first wish on recognising the stranger who had saved his daughter, was that the struggle might be fatal to him.

It was clear that this ungrateful wish would be nearly if not completely gratified.

"Bring him into the house!" cried Wayre. "Luckily, my good fellows, here is a doctor on the spot. Jenny, go first; get out the brandy and plenty of linen-bandages; tear up sheets or shirts, or anything. Steady, my boys—steady! He is very faint. That's right, Agatha! Keep the smelling-salts to his nose. You are a made man from this time, my brave fellow, so keep up your spirits!"

With encouraging remarks such as these, the man was assisted into the house and laid on a couch, while the doctor prepared to examine his hurts.

He had first turned to his daughter, but she, although pale as death, and trembling so that she could not stand, refused his help.

"I am not seriously hurt," she said, as well as she could speak; "the few wounds I have Mrs. Crake can dress, but see to him, father; for, if my judgment may be trusted, your greatest skill will hardly save him."

Thus adjured, the doctor turned to the stranger—no stranger to him—and, as we have shown the doctor's mind in its harshest and most unamiable phases, it is only fair to say that now he did all that skill and experience could suggest to aid the wounded man.

With the help of his assistants the stranger's face was bathed and cleaned, his neck and shoulders, where most of the injuries had been inflicted, laid bare, and the wounds—which were frightful in their extent and number—dressed; the housekeeper's room at Snowdon House supplying most of the appliances required.

By the aid of a little brandy and other stimulants, the man, who had never been entirely insensible, revived, moved his head slightly, and spoke.

"Now then, men!" exclaimed Dr. Fulham, addressing the two assistants, "go and get yourselves a good meal in the kitchen; Mrs. Crake will see that you have the strong ale, and Mr. Wayre will see that your wages for this day's work are liberal."

The men's eyes glistened at the various provisions of this speech, so agreeably suggestive to their minds, and with rude bows turned to leave the room.

"Stay!" continued the doctor; "Mr. Ezra, you will please go with them first, and show them where to drag the carcass of the hound. Mrs. Crake, you will be good enough to see that the men have plenty to eat and drink of the best—but not too much. Jenny, we shall not want you any longer; you have been a good girl, and shall have a new dress for Christmas."

As he spoke thus he held the door of the room open in his hand, so that Ezra and his wife could hardly linger, although, to judge by their looks, they fain would have done so. There was no help for it, however; they went, the doctor closed the door, and, unperceived, turned the key in the lock so as to prevent its being furtively pushed ajar, then returned to the group.

"Would it not have been as well to keep Mrs. Crake?" said Wayre in a low voice; "we may want some assistance with this poor fellow, who seems recovering himself a bit."

"No," replied the doctor in the same tone; "I can do all that is necessary, and the fewer we have around him when he begins to talk the better."

Wayre assented, presuming that the doctor knew better than himself, and certainly entirely misunderstanding the reason for this precaution.

Mrs. Wayre, whose arm had been dressed by the housekeeper—if Mrs. Crake were entitled to that appellation—went to the man, lifted his head gently in the direction in which he seemed struggling to move it, and then adjusted his pillow so as to enable him to lie comfortably. The man's face changed in expression while she did this, showing that he had completely regained consciousness, and his eyes followed her every movement with a fascinated, almost a terrified look. Wayre noticed this, and to break the spell exclaimed:

"Come, my lad, you are all right now. I shall not forget your bravery, make sure of that; while I have breath to draw, you shall have a friend."

"You mean that, do you?" was the odd reply of the stranger; he spoke feebly and huskily as yet, but the tones were, for all that,

horribly familiar to the doctor, who strove to nerve himself for what he feared was coming; "you mean that, come what may?"

"Why, of course I do," returned Mr. Wayre with a smile; he thought the poor fellow was hardly himself as yet; "I shall never forget your bravery, I tell you, for it saved my wife from death. That is ten times more than if you had saved my own life."

"Is this your wife, then?" exclaimed the man, rising with an unexpected effort to a sitting posture; "is this Dr. Fulham's daughter?"

"Yes, that is my wife," replied Wayre, "and as you have just guessed, Dr. Fulham's daughter. This is Dr. Fulham, who has so cleverly bound up your hurts."

Mrs. Wayre looked on, somewhat puzzled by the stranger's manner, but with a smile too; Dr. Fulham's face was hidden as he bent over his instrument-case.

"Oh, I know him," exclaimed the man, "and I know you, as you will see. But I never thought to find this to be Dr. Fulham's daughter."

"Don't talk any more just now, there's a good fellow," said the doctor; "you will do yourself harm. I am the more anxious about him," continued Fulham, turning to Mr. Wayre, "because I know something about him, and because it was by me that the dog was locked in the new shed; of course I could not foresee what would happen."

"No, of course you could not, doctor," said the man with a broken yet bitter laugh; "you would not have done anything of the kind if you could have guessed what would happen—we know that. Never mind the doctor's fears, Mr. Wayre, but look in my face and tell me if you ever saw me before. I ought to be ashamed to look you in the face, and I have been; but my time is running short now; I want you to know me and forgive me."

"No," returned Mr. Wayre after a short pause, during which he had scanned the face of the speaker closely; "no, I do not think I ever saw you before."

The man looked at him with a curious smile, which seemed more nearly allied to tears than to laughter, and indeed his eyes were moistened.

"I—I am sorry for that," he said; "I was in hope that although many a long day had passed since you looked on my face—an ill-boding face to you, I own—and though you thought I was dead, you might have recalled my features."

"Thought you were dead!" exclaimed Wayre, and a half-alarmed expression stole over his face; "why should I have thought you were dead?"

"Because——" the man gasped, and then turned so ghastly pale as to seem on the point of fainting.

The doctor forced a small quantity of brandy between his lips, and said in a low tone:

"Do not excite yourself. I will tell him who you are."

"No, you will not!" exclaimed the man, rallying with a great effort; "I don't trust you enough, doctor. You have deceived me again, or I should be known. If I did not feel that I have met my death this morning," he continued, addressing Wayre, "I might not have the courage to say what I do now. I am your worthless outcast son, Saul Wayre; a convict, a bad man in every way, but yet with enough of good in him to be glad he was killed in serving you."

"Saul Wayre! You my son Saul, who has been dead so many years!" cried Wayre; "your eyes and your voice are like his—but it is impossible. I would give the world to prove what you say to be the truth; but I know he is dead."

"Give me a little more brandy, doctor," said the man; "I can't afford to sink just yet. Send for Ezra, father, he knows enough to put me in prison for life, and would do it; but he can tell you I did not die when you suppose, and I can defy his malice now."

"I can perhaps save some trouble, and shorten this painful scene," interposed Dr. Fulham, "if I say that this poor fellow made the same statement to me a short time back, and that I have ascertained by enquiries from Ezra Crake himself the fact of your son's existence for years after you believed him dead. Ezra did not know the motive for my enquiries; it would not have been safe to trust him. I should have spoken to you in your son's behalf this evening, if this unfortunate event had not occurred. He is in need of assistance."

While the doctor was speaking, Wayre had been earnestly gazing at the stranger, and either he recalled the once familiar features to his memory, or what he heard convinced him, for with the tears starting from his eyes, he placed one arm round the neck of the man, and clasped the uninjured hand in his own—one hand was swathed in bandages.

"My boy!" he said. "I know you now. I recognise you. I have dealt hardly with you, Saul; a selfish and unkind parent have I indeed been; but I entreat your pardon now, and for the remainder of my life will do all in my power to atone for the past."

"Do not speak of asking pardon from such a wretch as I have been," returned Saul with a faint smile; "what I have suffered, I have brought on myself; but you will not let my wife and children want?"

"They shall be near and dear to me always," replied Wayre; "and so shall you, Saul. Do not speak so despondingly, you will soon rally from this weakness, and we shall have many days of peace and happiness together."

"It is kind of you to say so, and the hearing it repays me for everything," said his son with another faint smile; "but I tell you I know I am a dead man."

"You shall not talk any more now," said Wayre; "we will send for your wife—she shall nurse you, and she shall be as a sister to my wife—the woman whom you saved from a horrible death this day."

Agatha came forward with a friendly smile, and said a few words expressive of her gratitude to him, and her desire to see and know his wife, who should be, indeed, as a sister.

"No, she will not—she cannot!" exclaimed the man. "It is not out of spite to you I speak, for I like your look—nor out of ill-will to the doctor, although I distrust him; but I must say it. I tell you, father, I saw this young woman married, about half a year back, in Saltmere Church, Cheshire, to a man named Alfred Dane, a clerk at some factory in the country, I don't know where. Don't believe me, but search the register. Look! she does not deny it!"

Agatha did not deny it, indeed; for with one bitter moan, she clasped her hands before her eyes, and fell helplessly into a chair.

Wayre himself clutched at the sofa by which he stood, and appeared as though about to fall, while Dr. Fulham, who was as astounded as his friend, half drew a letter from his pocket; but thrust it back.

"Agatha, my wife—Agatha!" at last gasped out Wayre, "what does this story mean? It is false! it is a delusion, I am sure; but say so, deny it, and I am satisfied!"

"Ask no questions for an instant!" exclaimed the doctor; "they have both fainted, and unless we obtain help, you will have a more serious business on hand than ever."

He threw open the door as he spoke, and his shouts brought all those who had at first been there. The two labourers and Jenny were sent back.

"You, Ezra, and your wife, are old enough to keep silence, if required," said the doctor hurriedly; "especially you, Ezra."

"If he dares to breathe a word, I will shoot him with my own hands!" cried Wayre.

Ezra looked amazed at this extraordinary beginning, as well he might.

"Now then, Sukey," continued Fulham, "help Mrs. Wayre upstairs. She has been taken ill, and has fainted."

"I am only too conscious of all that has passed," suddenly interrupted Agatha; "I will hear the rest."

"Silence, Agatha, if you are not mad!" exclaimed the doctor fiercely. "I can settle all this difficulty without you."

"You shall not," returned his daughter. "I owe to Mr. Wayre, to my generous husband, to him who has trusted me—I owe to him the truth."

"If the truth be what I have just heard," said Wayre huskily, "I do not dread any evil there may be in store; I shall have felt the worst."

Saul had now slightly recovered, and, in defiance of the doctor, insisted upon speaking.

"It must all come out, then!" exclaimed the latter; "this is your master's son, Ezra, Mr. Saul Wayre, who was supposed to be dead. You will not recognise him, I dare say, because—"

"But I do!" cried Ezra with a start of surprise; "I will swear to him anywhere. That is Saul Wayre."

"I am sorry to be obliged to give you such pain, father," began Saul; "but it is right for me to tell you what I know."

"It is only a just punishment for my conduct," said Agatha. "No, father, I must not be silent now. What has been said of me is true"—Wayre groaned, and buried his face in his hands; he was seated now near his son—"I can only ask forgiveness on the plea that I meant to do my duty by Mr. Wayre; that his constant kindness had won more than my goodwill, and that I had parted for ever from Alfred Dane."

"Forgiveness!" echoed Wayre, looking up; "you have that, and my constant love, Agatha, whatever you may have done. Yes, though you have wrecked my life, I forgive, but can never forget you. Yes, it was cruel—it was cruel to— But I will never reproach you."

"Stop!" exclaimed Fulham, as Mr. Wayre rose from his seat, while Ezra and his wife prepared to assist the injured man from the room; "hear me for one minute. Agatha may have married this man, I did not know it; but she seems to admit it—yet, even if she did, she was a free agent on the day she married you, Luke Wayre, and you must not judge her too harshly."

"Prove what you say," returned Wayre, "and you will see whether I am a harsh judge or not."

"She was a free agent, I say," continued the doctor; "for this man, Alfred Dane, died in Canada before her union with you, so at the worst she only concealed her previous marriage. I do not speak without proofs—there they are." The doctor threw upon the table a letter and several papers; Agatha's astonishment at his words and actions being, perhaps, greater than that of the others. "There," continued Fulham, "is the letter from an unfriendly person taunting my daughter with her supposed liking for an unworthy suitor—as this Alfred Dane appears to have been—urging the claims of another person, and telling her that all hope of her ever again seeing the first-named has vanished, for that he was dead, and enclosing the certificate, which a comrade who was with him had sent home."

"We must get this—your Mr. Saul—to lie down," said Ezra, "or he will be fainting again. Then if the doctor knows where his friends are, we will fetch some of them."

A glance at the wounded man showed that Ezra was right, so with the aid of Sukey and Mr. Wayre, Saul was removed into one of the bedrooms.

Fulham and his daughter were left together while these were absent; Agatha sat with her face averted, and silent, until the doctor said:

"Directly Ezra Crake comes down he shall fetch this poor fellow's wife. I know where she lives. I will not say anything to reproach or trouble you now, Agatha, but will try to make use of the means so wonderfully put into my hands. I have no right to find fault, as I know my own conduct—"

He was interrupted here by the entrance of Ezra, to whom, in a few words, the doctor communicated his wishes, and added that for his own sake Ezra had better not bear malice against Mr. Saul at present. In reply to this, Mr. Crake shook his head gravely, and said he wasn't the sort of man to upset a dyin' fellow-cretur, even if he had done him any wrong, and then casting a wondering and enquiring look at Mrs. Wayre, but not daring to utter the questions which rose to his lips, Ezra went his way.

Scarcely had he gone, when a loud knock was heard at the front door of the house.

"I will see to this," exclaimed Fulham; "we can have no triflers here to-day."

He was at the door almost as quickly as Jenny, but the visitor was a person of whom the doctor could not easily dispose, for it was Mr. Darley, the confidential solicitor of Mr. Wayre.

"What is this I hear in the neighbourhood?" cried that gentleman. "Mrs. Wayre torn to pieces by a wild beast, and two if not three persons killed in her rescue? What wild beast was it? Who is killed?"

"Please to come in, Mr. Darley," said Fulham, a sudden idea inspiring him; "although you have heard an absurd exaggeration, matters are serious enough to make your presence welcome."

With his curiosity in no respect diminished by this unexpected speech, Mr. Darley followed the doctor into the presence of Mrs. Wayre. In her presence, also, Dr. Fulham told the whole story of her marriage as he had just heard it, without a shade of reservation; the situation was too threatening to allow of his paltering with it.

The lawyer listened with a grave face, and at the conclusion Agatha broke out into a passionate declaration, in which she owned her fault, submitted herself entirely to the will of Mr. Wayre, and entreated the lawyer to believe her assurance that she had meant to make a good and true wife, and that she had parted from Dane for ever.

"Upon my word this is a strange story—two strange stories, indeed; but I will only think of your daughter's at present, Dr. Fulham. She is still Mrs. Wayre, you know, if her first husband died when you say; at any rate it would be difficult—I think impossible—to set aside her marriage, even though performed in a wrong name. I am glad I came in; I will go up now and speak to Mr. Wayre. Hallo! here comes Ezra, with, I suppose, Mrs. Saul, who has so unexpectedly turned up."

The lawyer was right, Ezra had just driven up in a fly with Mrs. Saul, who was at once taken to the room where lay her husband in so precarious a state.

Great as the sensation which the struggle with the savage hound and its results was certain to create in a provincial town, it was nothing compared to the strained excitement, the eager expectancy, which was felt in reference to the other transactions which were but partly revealed, and about which curiosity was so unsatisfied. That some wonderful changes had taken place at Snowdon House, everyone was certain; that several strangers were there, was known also.

It was known, also, that Mrs. Wayre was staying with her father in Bridgeley, because she had been nearly torn to pieces by the dog, some averred, while others knew it was because her husband had been so dreadfully injured in trying to save her. It was certain that not only Dr. Z—, of Bridgeley, but a great surgeon from

London, was in attendance at Snowdon House, while Mr. Wayre was never seen by any of the many eyes which watched for him.

At last, and this was ere many days were over, a hearse, with mourning-carriages, drove into the grounds at Snowdon House, and then the news flew instantly all through Bridgeley that Mr. Wayre's only son was the man who had killed the great dog; that he had lost his own life in saving his father's wife; that he had been absent and supposed dead for many years; that it was his funeral procession which was now passing to the cemetery, and that his wife and children had been taken into favour by Mr. Wayre.

Ezra was perhaps responsible for the circulation of this really correct version of the facts. He had faithfully kept counsel until speaking could do no harm. Be this as it may, Saul Wayre's troubled career was ended, and he was on this day buried in Bridgeley Cemetery. No one outside ever knew—save, perhaps, Mr. Darley—all that had taken place at Snowdon House since the terrible day of which we have spoken so fully.

All that has to be told is that a carriage, containing Mr. Wayre and his lawyer, drove up to Dr. Fulham's door as those gentlemen returned from the funeral ceremony, but only the first-named alighted, Mr. Darley awaiting his return in the vehicle.

Mr. Wayre exchanged a few words with the servant who admitted him, and then went straight to the room where, alone and dejected, Agatha was seated.

She started up as he entered, clasped her hands upon her heart, and half uttered an ejaculation.

"Agatha—my wife!" exclaimed Wayre. "I have heard all. I have learnt the whole history of your unfortunate engagement. Trusty messengers have been into Cheshire on my behalf, and I know—as I have always felt—that you were to be pitied, not to be blamed. I hope I have not shown myself harsh or unkind in my dealing with this unfortunate affair, but if I have, I ask you to forgive me, to join me again, to be once more my wife."

"Is it possible!" gasped Agatha. "Can it be true that you will still forgive me—will blot out all the past, and receive again—"

"As I hope to be forgiven myself," said Wayre as Agatha paused. "My own trespasses are neither so light nor few that I dare sit in judgment upon others. My life will be lonely, void, and blank unless you return to me, Agatha. Shall it be so?"

She strove to say something, but a wild burst of hysterical sobbing interrupted her speech, and had not Wayre sprung forward and caught her in his arms, she must have fallen.

Snowdon House was almost immediately announced as being "To Let," while Mr. Wayre disappeared at once from Bridgeley, as did Mrs. Wayre, and then Dr. Fulham. A large forfeit was paid to Dr. Z—, whose business was not sold, after all, but Dr. Fulham established himself, as was afterwards known, in a practice in an out-of-the-way suburb of London.

Ezra Crake and his wife remained in charge of Snowdon House until a tenant was found for it, and then they took a cottage in a village a few miles from Bridgeley, but Ezra's taciturn, sullen temperament was not one from which much information could be hoped, and nothing was ever learnt from him.

Therefore it is possible that nothing more would ever have been heard in Bridgeley of Mr. and Mrs. Wayre but that a family from the town went, by some rare chance, to spend a holiday in the South of Europe, and brought from there the news that that lady and gentleman were residing there. This was so long after the events already detailed that he was described as being almost white-haired and somewhat feeble, while his wife had become a middle-aged matron, apparently devoted to her husband, who, on his part, was never happy but in her company. They had three children, the eldest of whom, a girl, had just left school to live at home; the others, two boys, were also at home for their holidays when the Bridgeley people were in the vicinity.

At another town, a dozen miles or so along the coast, there dwelt—so the excursionists found—another family, also named Wayre, a widow lady and her two children. These lived a very quiet and retired life, but yet interchanged frequent visits with the family at the larger town.

The excursionists had not much opportunity of learning details by personal intimacy with Mr. or Mrs. Wayre, who, indeed, appeared to be somewhat difficult of approach by their own country-people, but they gave it as their opinion, from all they could learn, that "these other persons" were the wife and children of Saul Wayre, who was killed at Snowdon House. It was then recollected in Bridgeley that a good deal had been said about this person's widow and family, and that a great deal of mystery existed about them. So the good folks of the town decided that the great deal which had been said was true, after all, and that these really were the widow and children referred to.

And in believing thus the good folks were right.

(Concluded.—Commenced in No. 138.)

## A Lover's Questions.

Why do I love you, sweet? I cannot tell;  
Yet you may rest assured I love you well.  
Is it because of your sweet smiling face?  
Your charming figure, with its constant grace?  
Your winsome ways?—I'm sure I can't say whether  
'Tis one of these, or all of them together.

Why do you love me, sweet? I have no grace,  
Of charm of figure I possess no trace;  
I've never heard my features merit praise,  
I own a total lack of winning ways.  
What are those hidden virtues you discover  
In your most constant, yet unworthy lover?

## A Terrible Journey.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

JACK HALLIDAY, one of the best fellows in the world, had invited three or four of us from the Temple to spend a portion of the Long Vacation with him on the delightful river W—, near the best portion of which, piscatorially considered, our host had rented a cottage for the summer.

"Hail calm acclivity, salubrious spot!" one of us exclaimed, as we drove up from the station (a distance of three miles) in the landlord's comfortable little dog-cart, and espied the cottage, deep embowered in the trees; adding less poetically, however: "I say, old man, what a find!"

"Yes," replied Halliday, "but, for Heaven's sake, keep it dark! I don't want (if you must quote Browning, I'll cap your line) 'tourists to find the coign of vantage out and vulgarise things comfortably smooth.' The place was once a roadside inn, but I suppose the licensed victualler's trade was not found to prosper when once the railways began to assert themselves. Since then it has been taken by two former servants of the Duke of Dash (there's his place over yonder). Roe and his wife are capital people; he knows all the best 'holes' in the river, and she's as good a cook as you'll find in the county."

By this time we had arrived at the front-door. I will not weary my readers by a detailed description of the nook—the like of which has been seen by all of us at one time or other during our travels. Suffice it to let me ask you to 'figure to yourself,' as a Frenchman would say, a house which left the prevailing impression on the mind of Virginia-creeper, wisteria, and sweet-scented jessamine, of old oaken beams crossing the brickwork in sections and bi-sections—a style of architecture called, if I mistake not, Ballusk—of gable-ends and diamond panes, high wainscotings, curious settles, cunningly carved withal, and bits of stained glass bearing fragments of the cognizances of the noble family who lived at the "big house" when The Feathers was yet a flourishing concern. It was, indeed, a "find."

"Now, boys, what do you think of doing?" cried our host, after our traps had been deposited in our various rooms. "What I propose, if no one has any objection, is this: play lawn-tennis (there's not half a bad ground here, and it's rather bright for fishing); have a sort of late dinner, or early supper, or whatever you like to call it, at nine, and wind up with a chat, a smoke, and a rubber at whist, not unassisted by some prime Glenlivet, which—along with one or two other good things—I have taken the precaution to bring with me. To-morrow we can try the river, and in the afternoon we'll go over the duke's place; there's to be a harvest-home, and a balloon-ascent, and all sorts of things, so you'll be able to observe the manners and customs of the natives to your hearts' content. Do my plans suit you?"

"Capitally." "Nothing I should like better." "Suit me down to the ground," we answered variously.

"Come along, then;" and Halliday led us through the kitchen-garden to what had once been the bowling-green, but was now the lawn-tennis ground. There we chose sides, and played sett after sett, till we were fain to pause and drink claret-cup until such time as we had recovered breath to play again. This programme we adhered to with little variation till the sun no longer lent us the light of his beams, and "so to supper."

How we did eat, to be sure! How the trout of Jack's own catching disappeared! How the mutton-cutlets, set round with mashed potatoes, vanished; and the rabbit-pie of the landlord's shooting—the rabbit I mean, not the pie—took to itself wings, and was pursued down our throats by Manzanilla and seltzer, and later by Chambertin, and Larose.

But all mundane pleasures—dining being the least soonest exhausted—have their end. After a talk, in which the words "Red-spinner" and "May-fly," were not unfrequently heard, a hand at

whist, and a "wee nippie" of the justly vaunted Glenlivat, candles were sought, and a move made for bed.

I cannot tell why, but somehow I found it impossible to compose myself to sleep that night. Was it the strange bed, over-fatigue, the heavy dinner-supper, or all three combined? Whatever the cause, the effect was certain. Try as I would I could not sleep. So, thoroughly entering into King Henry's feelings on a similar occasion, and anathematising the dull god in no measured terms, I resolved to get up and solace myself with a pipe. The oak chair in which I ensconced myself I found to be ingeniously but uncomfortably carved; the room felt close; the moon was shining smilingly outside; why not go for a stroll? No sooner was the idea conceived than acted on. Putting on a thick tweed coat and trousers, I noiselessly descended the stairs, and in a very short time found myself in the open. How cool—how delightfully cool the air felt after that stuffy but picturesque old bed-chamber! Where should I go? Through the kitchen-garden, past the lawn-tennis ground, and out by the postern. This was fastened by but a single bolt, and the next moment I was in the roadway. One path is as good as another where no definite object is in view, so taking the first that came handy I soon perceived that I was walking towards the big gates of Leafden, the Duke of Dash's—pointed out to us only a few hours ago by Halliday. Presently I came face to face with the massive iron-work. At the side stood a smaller gate, which, rather to my surprise, yielded to a turn of the handle, and—no other obstacle impeding—I strolled deliberately into the ducal domain.

Sauntering along the broad, elm-lined avenue, I involuntarily struck to the right, passed down a path shaded with yew-trees, and suddenly found myself on a large open space of three or four acres square.

In the centre of this plateau lay an object which I could not clearly define. It resembled a pear of colossal proportions, standing nearly upright on its stem, while from the stem itself ran what looked like a huge snake. Determined to find out for myself the true nature of these extraordinary appearances, I boldly stepped into the arena. Hardly had I done so when I heard a voice proceeding from the other side of the pear.

"Take care!" said the voice. "Don't come too near that side; the balloon may alue round."

The pear then was a balloon, and the snake of my imagination the piping conveying the gas from, probably, the duke's private gas-works. How stupid of me not to have guessed! Of course, this was the balloon which was destined to ascend the following day for the edification of the country yokels. This was doubtless the reason the smaller gate was open—to allow the professional aeronaut to enter and make final arrangements undisturbed by the rustics, who would by daylight crowd every portion of the grounds.

Again the voice spoke:

"I'm glad you've come, though; the men who promised to be here at twelve have of course left me in the lurch, and I've had to do most of the filling myself."

I had by this time walked round to the spot whence these words proceeded, and saw before me a man of rather below than above the middle height, but thick-set, with broad shoulders, and a bright eye.

"I'm not the professional aeronaut," my unknown friend went on to inform me; "I'm only a 'scientific gent' as M. Dupin's assistants love to call me. Truth to tell I'm an astronomer. I've been anxious for some time past to make night observations from a balloon, but unfortunately have not the means to hire one. The duke, who has more than once befriended me, has been good enough to allow me the use of M. Dupin's, promising at the same time to defray all expense in case of injury to the aerostat."

"But shall you be back in time for the fête to-morrow?" I asked.

"Doubtless."

He said this with a queer expression I could not then translate.

What bitter cause I had later on to understand his full meaning!

"Can I help you in any way?" I asked politely.

"You are very kind; if you act under my directions you will be rendering me a service. See, the balloon is nearly inflated; in another ten minutes I shall be ready to start. Hang that lamp to the hoop above the car; it will be out of reach of the gas there; coil that rope neatly—see that the grapnel is firmly attached. Place those bags of ballast at the bottom of the car—I'll see to the instruments myself. Now, please, help me to detach the piping and prevent any further escape at this end of the tube, and all will be ready. By the way, should you like to accompany me?"

Now to ascend in a balloon was one of my pet ambitions. I had read more than one work on aerostatics, and longed to experience for myself the sensations and adventures which I had as yet only enjoyed at second-hand in the writings of Glaisher, Flammarion, and De Fonvielle. But to trust myself with a man whom I had never seen before, who might, for aught I knew, be the veriest tyro in

aerial navigation, was quite another thing. It was, therefore, with some degree of doubt I asked:

"Have you ever been in a balloon before, sir?"

"Ever been in a balloon before!" he replied, repeating my words in a tone almost of pity. "Considering I have owned a machine myself, and used to make frequent ascents years ago, when I was better off than I am now, you need have no fear of my capabilities as balloon navigator, if that's what you're thinking of."

Certainly the cool and workmanlike manner in which he was preparing for the start went no little way towards reassuring me.

"I should like to go, but—"

"And I should like to have you as a companion. Come!"

"You will make but a short ascent?" I queried, "for I am staying with friends, and I should not like to embarrass them by my absence."

"Oh, make your mind easy on that point also; we shall not be up long."

Again that queer expression. What did it mean? Nothing, no doubt—only my fancy. I had a great mind to risk it. I would.

"Well, have you made up your mind?" he asked for the last time.

"I have."

"You will go?"

"Yes."

It is a fine, clear night, though somewhat dark, for a bank of clouds has by this time obscured the moon's rays. All is now ready, and I am directed to quickly jump into the car, while my new friend, without a moment's delay, follows my example. The cords holding us to mother-earth have been detached from their fastenings; for my consent to accompany the astronomer has altered the condition of things; my extra weight, added to that of the bags of ballast with which the car is plentifully supplied, holds us to the ground without any further attachment being needed. It is now only necessary to throw out nearly as many pounds of ballast as correspond with my weight, and the balloon will then be almost of the same weight as its own volume of air. With careful exactitude my companion begins to throw out the desired quantity of ballast. Presently a muttered "We're off!" breaks the silence. The balloon is in motion.

Very slowly and majestically we rise, without a plunge or a bound.

But, as many of my readers are no doubt aware, the sensation of ascending is not that of motion of the aerostat itself. The enormous gas-filled bag seems, for the first few moments, to remain perfectly stationary, while the planet which we inhabit appears slowly to be sinking down, down, till the trees look like shrubs; the rivers, brooks; the houses, little cots. Yet another short space, and the shrubs are spots; the brooks, threads of silk; the cots, dolls'-houses.

When next I venture to look over the edge of the car I no longer see the earth, for we have passed into a stratum of cloud. My companion throws out a few handfuls of ballast to compensate for the depression consequent on the difference of temperature caused by passage through the cumuli, and in a few moments the scene again changes.

We are now in the presence of the pale-faced moon. Perfect—almost unearthly—stillness prevails. I have a feeling that we two souls are alone in a place I was never in before. I am conscious of my utter littleness, for I know that I am an inhabitant of the world of space—space transcending imagination; never, never-ending space!

After we had sailed about twenty minutes, as I should guess, I began to grow reconciled to the novelty of the situation. Hitherto I had occasionally felt a little sick as a current of air caused the balloon to oscillate and drive us before it at what I should compute a speed of between ten and sixteen miles an hour. But now the machine seemed to slacken its pace and at last become almost stationary. I positively enjoyed the situation.

Up to this not a word had been exchanged between my companion and myself. He had been busying himself in various ways; now throwing out handfuls of ballast, now seeing to the lamp, now glancing at the barometer to ascertain the different altitudes. At last, however, he sat down opposite to me and broke the oppressive silence thus:

"Never been up in a balloon before, I suppose?"

"Never."

"Queer place, isn't it?"

"Yes; but I rather like the sensation of aerial sailing. At what altitude are we now?"

Detaching the lamp, and placing it at the farther end of a board which he had laid across a portion of the car for the use of his instruments, but still far out of danger from the gas, my companion read the glass.



"Barometer reads 20·3 less, that means we are 10,560 feet above the earth's plane."

To me it sounded a fearful height. Another pause.

"Are you a man of many ambitions?" suddenly asked the scientist.

"Well, not very many," I replied. "One of them has certainly been gratified by this balloon excursion."

"Ah," sighed the other, "I have only one."

"You are lucky. May I ask what it is?"

"To reach the planet Neptune."

"And why not?" I answered, laughing at his joke. "It's only a matter of a billion miles or so."

"You know something of astronomy?" enquired my friend eagerly.

"I fear I have only a smattering of the science."

"I have made it the study of a lifetime, sir. Neptune—as perhaps you know—is the farthest visible planet, and is distant from the earth, roughly speaking, 2,950,000,000 miles; though it is not always quite so far by a few million."

"We won't quarrel about a few millions!" I remarked jocularly.

"Very well, then," continued the astronomer, scarcely heeding my interruption, "supposing this aerostat were travelling at the rate of forty miles an hour, we should reach Neptune in one hundred and thirty-one years."

"So soon as that!" I replied, smiling.

"The distance is nothing, as you say, compared to that of some of the 'fixed stars,' whose light, travelling at the rate of 192,000 miles a second—that's speed, if you like—has only reached us now; or, to put it more plainly, in the form of the familiar illustration, supposing their light began to travel at the time when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, it would but have reached us now."

"They must be very far off," I rejoined prosaically; for indeed I was not following my companion's calculations very closely.

"They are," he replied with conviction. "Now, our great difficulty in reaching Neptune would be the fact that on the planet we have just left we are allotted a span of but seventy years of life, while to reach the star in question, we should require one hundred and thirty-one. This puzzled me a good deal at first. But I have overcome the obstacle."

"How?" I queried, beginning to enjoy my witty friend's remarks—evidently a keen and practised humourist, for he did not seem to be conscious of the fun he was creating. An invaluable man for a dull dinner-party, I thought.

"Thus. Before ever we had exhausted our ten lustrums, we should be in the attraction of planets in which the span of life is far greater than that granted us in our own; consequently we should be governed by the condition under which life exists in those worlds. In effect, we should be like naturalised citizens of planets, whose laws—What are you laughing at?" he suddenly demanded.

"At you. You are one of the most entertaining fellows I ever met."

"I am not used to be laughed at, sir."

"Then you must have lived among Scotchmen all your life."

"You are an impertinent fellow."

"Why so, pray?"

"For laughing at me, sir."

"I thought by so doing I was paying the greatest compliment to your amusing calculations."

"Amusing calculations!" repeated the other, aghast.

"Come, don't look so serious. I presume you don't mean to say you were in earnest while elaborating to me your astounding schemes?"

"In earnest!" almost shouted the man opposite. "What in Heaven's name is your meaning? Do you suppose I have spent years upon years of my life in the working out of my great scheme to be told I have been joking? Are you mad, or do you suppose—"

For a moment my heart seemed to refuse to beat—I could not draw my breath. Open-mouthed I gazed at the other as he stood over me, for he had risen during the last few words. His eyes met mine. One look was enough.

They were those of a madman.

The horror engendered by my situation was such that I seemed unable to grasp it in an instant. One by one each fresh horror rose before me, and stood spectre-like confronting me.

I was in a balloon, of the navigation of which I knew nothing.

I was hundreds—nay, thousands of feet above the earth.

Shout as I would no living being could hear me, save one—my companion, a madman!

What should I do? There could be but one course to pursue—pacify him and humour him to the top of his bent.

Still I stared, afraid to move, for the man's hand was slowly making for a knife at his side, and I was fearful lest the least stir on my part should be construed into a movement of attack. My head

was thrown back, and thus I sat on the narrow seat of the car, my eye steadily fixed on his. I know not for how long—it may have been but a few seconds, it may have been an hour. I had lost count of time. Some means of pacifying him must be had recourse to. This caused me to recover from my stupor, and my hitherto benumbed thoughts began now to flow rapidly and freely. I drew a long breath—and smiled—absolutely smiled. When a man knows "his time" has come, he is calm. I had no hope of reaching earth alive, though I meant to try. I smiled, and slowly spoke—in the moment I had devoted to thought I had considered what to say.

"I—I fancy we have misunderstood each other, sir. When I laughed, I foolishly believed I was meant to do so. I did so in my deplorable ignorance, in the same spirit in which the House of Commons laughed when Stephenson broke to them the intelligence that his traction-engine would travel ten miles an hour. I did not deem it possible to reach the planet Neptune, so I laughed. 'Tis the way in which new theories are received. Will you forgive me?"

"If you apologise," he muttered, still with his hand on his knife.

"I do indeed, sir, most humbly."

"Well, I suppose you knew no better. Let us be friends."

Eagerly seizing my late opponent's outstretched hand, I shook it warmly, and to my intense relief observed him resume his seat. For the present I was safe.

He continued:

"My name, sir, is Professor Grantly. You may have heard of me in the world of science." I bowed. "Yes, sir, the astronomers were jealous of me, pretended I was mad, and had me confined in an asylum; but I escaped last night, and intend to be even with them one day."

Again he handled his knife as if it were an old friend.

Then Grantly's story of the duke having lent him the balloon was evidently not true. He had doubtless come upon it by an accident, probably while the assistants were at supper in the duke's hospitable servants'-hall, and had determined to utilise it at once.

"I have indeed heard much of you, sir," I replied in my most conciliatory tone, "and shall esteem it an honour if you will further enlighten me on an astronomical system which, I understand, you have made entirely your own."

This ruse would give me time to think over, as rapidly as possible, the best means of ultimately saving myself. I was still in imminent peril, for were it my companion's fancy to try and reach the far-distant planet, he would allow the balloon to rise till we arrived at such an altitude that numbness, stupor, and death would soon ensue. I pretended to be listening to the poor fellow's flights of imagination, which, now that he considered he had met with a congenial spirit, were poured forth with abundance of fantastic force, in which fact and fancy were mixed together in inextricable confusion. But all the time, "How can I escape?" was the refrain of my thoughts. "How can I escape?" became an inward cry, as monotonous as was the "I can't get out" of Sterne's imprisoned starling. At last I fancied I had solved the difficulty, and cautiously felt my way.

"Yes," I said when he paused once for breath, "I believe I have grasped your scheme. Your plan for existing when deprived of the atmosphere surrounding our earth is more than ingenious—it is masterly."

"You see the correctness of my calculations?"

"I do."

"You will travel with me, then?"

"It will be my privilege."

"You will not tire of my companionship in a journey that will extend probably over one hundred and thirty-one years?"

"In your society," I replied, "I shall ever experience both pleasure and intellectual profit."

"Dear friend," the poor fellow murmured, and took both my hands in his and pressed them.

Now was my time.

"But—" I began, and my voice shook so that I could not proceed, for I knew how much hung on the manner in which my words would be received.

"But?" he repeated dubiously.

"I don't think you will object to my 'but' in this instance. Before accompanying you to Neptune I should like first to return to earth."

"Eh?"

"I happen to be in possession of an extremely powerful five-foot astronomical glass."

His eyes sparkled. The bait was taking.

"Where is it?" he asked.

"At my house, very near the spot where I first had the pleasure of meeting you. Now, if you will do me the favour to descend I shall be but a very short time fetching the glass and collecting a few necessities for so long a journey. We then can mount into the air again as soon as you please."

I had spoken, what would be his reply?

"See, I myself own a most powerful telescope. I doubt if your instrument is superior to mine."

So saying Grantly handed me a roll of foolscap-paper pasted at the edges to keep it cylindrical in form. I was irresistibly reminded of the maniac in the Bedlam picture of the "Rake's Progress." I could have smiled had the situation not been so truly tragic. Gravely I looked through the roll of paper, and returned it to him.

"No," said I decisively, "your glass is less powerful than mine. I can barely descry with it the continents and oceans on Mars, while with the aid of mine both are clearly defined."

"You have this telescope at home near where we ascended?"

"I have."

He wavers—he is sorely tempted. Have I won?

My hope flickered for a moment. With the next it died.

"I fear we shall have to dispense with your instrument for the present. We shall be losing time if we descend."

He spoke as firmly and decisively as I had done a moment ago.

"But out of a hundred and thirty years, what is one hour?" I pleaded.

It was vain, for, even before I had finished speaking, the madman had seized a sand-bag, a large portion of the contents of which he threw over the side, and from an almost stationary attitude we began to mount higher, higher, into space.

Gentle means had failed. Could I not compel him to let me descend? Every second was precious. I began my newly-conceived scheme at once.

"Professor Grantly, I intend to descend. I am growing faint. The excessive altitude to which we are rising is beginning to tell on me."

"I regret your faintness," he responded, "but I cannot do as you wish."

"You refuse to allow me?"

"I do!"

"Then, by Jove, I'll make you!" I exclaimed, foolishly losing all self-restraint.

"What!"

He uttered this one word only, but shall I ever forget the significance he threw into those four letters? His meaning was as plain as if he had said:

"You mean mischief, do you? I have had tussles with my keepers before now; I'm not afraid of one with you."

Grantly's ejaculation was the last word spoken. What took place afterwards was in complete silence, save for the scuffling caused by the encounter itself and the heavy breathing of the combatants.

We were both of about the same height, though Grantly's shoulders were broader than mine. Against this I put the fact that I was his junior by six or seven years, and, besides, was a man of more active habits than one who had been used to the scant exercise afforded to the inmates of an asylum. Yet to compensate for lack of exercise, the man was possessed of the super-strength that comes to the insane in moments of paroxysm. Added to this, he was armed, and I was not. All told, I feared the odds lay with him.

I made these rapid calculations while we glared at each other during the few seconds before that terrible fight began.

I think Grantly was confused as to what to do first, whilst I had a fairly-settled plan of attack. My idea was, first, to get the knife out of his hands by any means possible—to stun him would be best; next, tie both hands and feet with the rope to which the grapnel was attached, and then make for the valve-line—in front of which he sat.

I was certain the knife was the only weapon the maniac had about him, or he would have shown signs of the possession of some other. A revolver, for instance, he would at once have used as the easiest method of dispatching me. For that the man meant to kill me admitted of no doubt.

I said my antagonist seemed confused and uncertain what to do, and I believe I was right in my surmise; his first move being evidently the result of a momentary mad impulse. Suddenly, with the rapidity of thought, and the fury of a wild beast, he bounded from his seat, and let fly at me with the knife. Instinctively I threw my head on one side—I had not time otherwise to parry the blow; the point descended, striking me with great force on the shoulder, piercing the thick shooting-coat I wore, and penetrating the flesh to the bone. The blow was meant for my head. Fortunately I was too quick for him.

A strange thing now happened.

As the madman flew from his seat to strike, a portion of his coat swung round, came in contact with the lamp lying at the farther end of the instrument-table where it had remained since Grantly had last read the barometer, and was dashed to the ground.

To my other perils was now added the dread of a conflagration.

If the ignited paraffin once came in contact with the gas from the balloon—but the result would not bear even contemplation.

To extinguish the flames must now be my first consideration. Fortunately they were not large, for there appeared to be but little oil in the lamp, which no doubt belonged to the balloon-assistants, and was never intended for the purposes of an ascent. The wound I had received was not of so serious a nature as might have been anticipated; the thickness of my coat had stood me in good stead. Luckily no bones were broken. My two hands, therefore, now flew to Grantly's wrist ere he had time to strike again, and lifted the knife he still held, bodily out of the wound. I felt the blood flow as I did so, then exerting the brute strength that was rising in me to the utmost, I flung myself on him with such fury that had his head come in contact with anything but the rope supporting the car, it must have been stove in. I fell on top of the man, still keeping tight hold of the wrist that held the knife. I soon recovered myself, however, and began trampling on the flames. It was a difficult task to extinguish them, for the little pointed tongues were quickly lapping wherever the oil had run. In another moment the car would be on fire! Rapidly—breathlessly, I trampled, and with each tread a tongue became silent. The fire was getting under. Again I exerted my efforts to the utmost, and this time they were crowned with success. In a few moments I had trampled out the last flame. The fire was out.

But we were now in total darkness, save for the fitful gleams of the moon.

The peril of fire over, I returned to the work of forcing the professor to drop the knife. I knew the best method of accomplishing this was to bend his wrist at such an angle to the arm that the sinews were rendered powerless to retain a hold. Bearing this in mind, with my right hand I seized the madman's across the knuckles, while with my left I secured a firm grip of his arm a little above the wrist. None of this time, however, must it be supposed that Grantly's left was idle, for blow after blow fell on my face, body—anywhere he could see an opening to strike, while with his teeth he bit at me like a dog. His blows and bites only served to madden me, and for the moment I felt strong as the insane.

Holding the arm and hand in the manner I have described, I now managed to make a lever of my knee, and pressed the arm upon it till the wrist broke! The knife fell to the ground. Even now, in the anguish he must have been enduring, my antagonist did not utter a sound.

The exertions I had undergone were beginning to tell their tale. I felt the blood from my wound slowly trickle down my arm, and I knew that each moment I was growing less capable of sustained conflict. Would he even now get the better of me? The knife lay harmless at our feet, yet I dared not stoop to pick it up; for the maniac, swift as thought, had jumped on to the seat to gain the advantage of a higher position, and, no doubt expecting that I would stoop for the weapon, had raised his heel, ready to drive it into my skull the instant I made the movement.

I saw his move, and at once was up beside him on the seat. Thank Heaven! the ropes were strong, or they must have gone with the extra strain. As it was, the balloon lurched so heavily that, for a moment, we were both in danger of being precipitated into space. Steadying ourselves, however, we maintained our stand.

The time had come to bring the battle to a close. The decisive blow must be struck by one or other of us. For my part I had determined what to do if I had but the strength left to carry out my plan. Nothing else would serve. I must throw the man over the edge of the car!

Whether Grantly divined my purpose I cannot tell, but, with as little premeditation as when he made his first onslaught, his left hand—the right was, of course, disabled—flew to my throat. His grasp was like a vice, he was pressing his knuckles savagely into my windpipe. I struggled for air—I was choking.

For the second time a trick I had been taught in my athletic days came to my assistance. Interlacing the fingers of one hand with those of the other, I lifted this bar of flesh high above my head, and brought both hands down simultaneously with such force upon my enemy's outstretched arm, that the limb fell helpless to his side. The victory was mine.

Not an instant, not a half-second was to be lost. I must put the man altogether *hors de combat*. I summoned up all my remaining strength, and with my left I dealt him a crushing blow between the eyes. Again the ropes saved him, and half-stunned he sank to the ground. With no more delay than it takes to recount, I dragged the prostrate form to the side. A last supreme effort and I hurled the man over the edge.

After that I found myself lying in a heap, inert, exhausted, at the bottom of the car.

But my dangers even now were far from over. Suddenly occurred a contingency which in the hot excitement of

the fight I had never once calculated on. The balloon, I fancy, had been very slowly sinking during the combat, for no ballast had lately been expended. The moment, however, the machine was relieved of Grantly's weight, I became conscious that the balloon with a furious bound was tearing upwards at incredible speed, rolling and plunging as it rushed through the air. I had not the strength to reach up to, much less pull, the valve-line. Instantaneously the atmosphere grows more rarefied, I experience a dryness of throat, a numbness is overcoming me. I try to move my limbs, I cannot, I am losing consciousness, I—

No, I will not die!

By sheer force of will I raise myself sufficiently to crawl along the bottom of the car till I am close to the valve-line. I stretch out my hands towards it, but my fingers barely touch the cord. My hands are too nerveless to hold it. Can nothing be done?

Yes, one last resource is left me.

I strain my neck towards the rope and seize it with my teeth. Thus I hang to it with my whole weight. Oh, Heavens! it moves—the valve opens!

The upward flight is arrested.

So rapid, however, has been the ascent, that the resistance of air at first prevents the gas escaping through the top; it is forced, therefore, through the lower aperture, nearly blinding me in its egress. But the loss of gas soon causes the aerostat to stand still. Now it hovers in mid-air—now begins the descent. At first slowly, then faster and faster. I am reviving as we near the earth. If I ascended rapidly but a few moments back I am now in imminent danger from the increased velocity in the opposite direction. I shall be dashed to pieces unless I ease the machine of some of its weight. Without a moment's hesitation I fling overboard the improvised instrument-table, together with all that stands upon it. This has the desired effect, and we slacken speed; still even now we are descending too rapidly to be safe. We are but two hundred feet off the earth, which has the appearance of heaving upwards to meet us. By a gleam of the moon I can see directly under me a sheet of water. I hear a splash—the balloon scuds over the surface—a second after I experience a shock, then a blow, and—I remember nothing more.

Naturally, it was some time before I recovered from the mental and physical shock which I had sustained during that "Terrible Journey."

But that a lunatic, answering in all respects to the professor, had on that evening escaped from a neighbouring asylum after hearing of the proposed balloon ascent, and had been no more seen, and for the marks of the struggle which still remained upon me, I should scarcely have believed in the reality of my adventure, but have cried:

Oh, I have passed a miserable night,  
So full of fearful dreams—of ugly sights,  
That as I am a Christian, faithful man,  
I would not spend another such a night  
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days.

## The Editor's Note Book.

HE would be a bold man, who, without some more accurate knowledge of the country and its people than is possessed by most of us, should venture authoritatively to say that the policy of our Government, in forcing Egypt to retire from the Soudan, is likely to be beneficial or otherwise to the Khedive and his subjects. But it must not be forgotten that great sums of money and many lives have been expended in the attempt to put down the Soudan slave trade, and that all this will have been wasted if the country is to be abandoned altogether to the tender mercies of the local chiefs.

To those, however, who look upon a British Protectorate over Egypt, to put it in the mildest way, as being desirable, Mr. Gladstone's order to the Khedive to withdraw from the Soudan will be very welcome. Even the Premier's proverbially "open mind" must see in time that we cannot order a foreign Government about in this manner, unless we are prepared eventually to take all its responsibilities upon our own shoulders. The worst of it all is that our Governments, of whichever party, are too fond of trying to please everybody, and consequently hesitate and doubt until some unexpected disaster forces their hands.

It is quite time that somebody should tell us what we are in Egypt for, what we propose to do there, and how the business, whatever it may be, is to be carried out.

MEANWHILE, the ingenious Mr. Labouchere thinks that the majority of Englishmen "would be delighted to learn that our relations with Egypt are those which exist between us and Nova Zembla." The majority of Englishmen, I believe, perfectly recognise

the fact that our road to India, China, and Australia is through Egypt, and that consequently we have interests in Egypt which we have not in Nova Zembla, and which must be protected.

ACCORDING to Mr. Henry George, all the difficulties and complex problems which are the result of an advanced state of civilisation are capable of solution in a very easy manner. As Mr. Labouchere, who presided at the meeting of the Land Reform Union which was held last week in St. James's Hall, tersely put it, this gentleman's panacea is simplicity itself. All he demands is that the State should re-enter upon its rights to the soil of the entire kingdom, and that the landlords should be expropriated without compensation.

WHY landlords should be served in this way any more than railway shareholders or fundholders, or any other capitalists, does not quite appear, any more than why a man who has just bought land with the savings of a life of industry should be turned out and ruined because his neighbour has inherited his property from a long line of ancestors. That great landlords contribute an inadequate amount to the public revenue in the shape of taxation may be admitted, though even then it may fairly be urged on the other side that rents are regulated in proportion, and that, if landlords had to pay more, they would demand more.

By some mysterious process of reasoning Mr. George has persuaded himself that, if the State became the universal landlord, it would be possible to pension all our widows, to dower all our daughters, to give to every man over a certain age enough to live upon for the rest of his life, and to abolish poverty and its miseries altogether and for ever. In plain truth Mr. George's arguments differ in no way from those of many Socialists and Communists who have preceded him, and his gospel is not—as Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Michael Davitt, and the rest of the other people who support him affect to believe—either new or original.

THE Nihilists are busy again in Russia, and the horrible descriptions in the papers of the sufferings of such of their body as are perishing miserably in the prisons of the Czar are more likely to urge them to fresh acts of vengeance than to frighten them into submission. The murder of Colonel Soudeikin has been followed by the issue of a number of warnings to other prominent officials, and there will, it may be feared, be some terrible work by-and-by.

MEANWHILE, the Czar and his ministers make no sign, the promised reforms seem to be as far off as ever, and things are "kept dark" as much as possible. Sitting on the safety-valve may be exciting, but is sure to lead to disastrous results in the long run.

It is natural enough that gentlemen like Mr. Samuel Laing, the Chairman of the Brighton Railway Company, should object to the Railway Commissioners, and should be desirous of getting rid of a tribunal, the object of which is to protect the public against those offences of omission and commission of which Railway Companies are so constantly guilty. But it is not likely that either Government, Parliament, or public will be deluded by any of the arguments which Mr. Laing and his friends bring forward.

ONE point which stands out very prominently from amid the confusion and dust of the correspondence which has followed Mr. Laing's letter to the *Times*, is the extraordinary superiority of the arrangements of the railways north of the Thames to those whose traffic is with the south. The Brighton, so far as the actual Brighton service is concerned, is the best of the latter, but the managers of the North Western, the Midland, and the Great Northern seem to look upon their duties to the public from quite a different point of view to that which obtains on the other side of London.

THE Corporation of the City of London have given notice of a Bill which is to be brought into Parliament next session, and which has for its object the regulation of the supply of water to the metropolis. Besides regulating the dividends and financial arrangements of the Companies—which certainly require some very severe overhauling—the Bill seeks to give every consumer the right to require the Water Company to supply him with water by meter.

THIS is a most important point, in that it is impossible to see why the consumer should have to pay an arbitrary price for water any more than for gas, and that, under the present system, consumers and Companies alike lose severely by reason of the unavoidable waste. If everybody paid for the water he used and no more, there would be no waste at all; and if there were, the loss would fall on the careless consumers, and not on those who were more careful. The system on which water is at present supplied to London is perhaps the most illogical and expensive which perverted ingenuity could have devised.

MR. FRANCIS GALTON wants everybody to keep the history of his family posted up, with a view of enabling "parents to appreciate the various hereditary influences converging upon their children," and offers five hundred pounds in prizes for the best family records which may be sent him before the fifteenth of May. How the information

is ever to be utilised I do not quite see, but the preparation of the records will no doubt amuse a good many of the elderly aunts who are great authorities in the histories of their families, and cannot do anybody any harm.

WHATEVER of exaggeration there may be in the letter to the *Times*, which complained of the insufficient, and in many cases absolutely disgusting, sleeping accommodation provided for the footmen in some of our fashionable districts, there can be no doubt that there is too much actual truth in it. Servants are habitually put to sleep in places which no sanitary surveyor would license, and it seems to be forgotten that fever, if it once breaks out in a house, cannot be confined to the servants' quarters, but will inevitably find its way even into the very best bedrooms. There is often a great deal more dangerous overcrowding in a well-to-do house full of children and servants than there is in any common lodging-house.

SOME of the papers the other day contained a thrilling description of the pranks of a mad engine-driver in charge of a train from Brest to Paris. Next day the story was flatly contradicted, and described as a hoax. The day after that again the *Daily Telegraph* made it the text of a sensational leader. What are we to believe?

THE catalogue of the exhibition of works of the old masters, now being held in the rooms of the Royal Academy, affords an amusing commentary on Lord Coleridge's astonishing doctrine that the authorship of works of art is a matter of fact, and not of opinion. The painters of several pictures are described as "unknown," but, if Lord Coleridge and those members of the Academy who agreed so unreservedly with Sir Frederick Leighton's positive dicta on the Belt trial are right, surely there can be no difficulty in assigning them to their proper authors.

MR. HENRY IRVING'S success in Chicago appears to have been enormous and complete. Whether they are less critical or more impressionable out West than in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia may be open to argument, but there is no doubt that the impression which Mr. Irving has produced in Chicago is far greater than that which his acting has made anywhere else in the States. I shall be very curious to see the result of his return visits to the northern cities, but, from what I hear, I anticipate a most brilliant close to the tour.

I HEAR excellent accounts of the pantomimes this year, and their success is, in almost every case, phenomenal. Drury Lane, in particular, is crammed twice every day. "Claudian" also has resulted in a financial success which is quite on a par with its artistic triumph, and, indeed, theatrical business all round is remarkably good. Some friends of mine applied for stalls at five theatres, one day last week, and could not be accommodated at any one of them.

THE illnesses of Mr. Frederick Clay and Sir Arthur Sullivan immediately after the production of their new operas have been made the text of a good deal of talk about coincidences, but there is, after all, not much coincidence in the matter. Both gentlemen have been for some time in indifferent health, and both have been considerably overworked. It is not at all astonishing that the result should have been in each case much the same. Sir Arthur is rapidly mending, I am glad to say, but Mr. Clay's illness is of a more serious character, and his progress towards recovery is, unhappily, very slow. C. D.

## Club Gambling in the Last Century.

["SOCIETY" being a good deal exercised just now about certain club-gambling scandals, the following description of the state of things which obtained in the bad old times towards the close of the last century may be re-printed with advantage.]

The Cocoa-Tree Club in St. James's Street had its origin in a Tory chocolate-house of Queen Anne's days, and assumed the higher form of a club in 1746. Members of Parliament and persons high in life belonged to this club, which, it used to be said, exercised a very important influence on the course of politics. In those days, Members of Parliament were not always above taking a bribe, and many of the Cocoa-Tree gentlemen were only too easily induced to accept bank-notes for two or three hundred pounds each, when the Ministry, hard pushed, were obliged to resort to such a device to obtain support; and the Peace of Fontainebleau is alleged to have cost the Government in this way twenty-five thousand pounds.

Gambling also went on to a fearful extent at the Cocoa-Tree. Horace Walpole relates, in 1780, that a Mr. O'Birne, an Irishman, won a hundred thousand pounds from a young Mr. Harvey. "You can never pay me," said O'Birne. "I can," replied the young fellow; "my estate will sell for the amount." "No," said the Irishman, "I will take ten thousand, and we will throw for the odd ninety." They did, and Harvey won. At most of the fashionable clubs of the last century gaming was carried on in the most reckless manner. In the club-book of Almack's there is this note: "Mr. Flynn, having won only twelve thousand guineas during the last two months, retired in disgust, March, 21st, 1772." To lose twenty thousand pounds in one

evening was not unusual. Generally, ten thousand pounds in specie lay on the table. A curious account is given of the way these desperate gamblers used to equip themselves for the sport. They took off their embroidered coats, put on frieze garments, protected their lace ruffles with pieces of leather, shaded their eyes with broad-brimmed straw hats adorned with flowers and ribbons, and wore masks "to conceal their emotions!" That suicide was not an unfrequent result of such high play can hardly be wondered at. Lord Mountford, a member of White's, where the gambling was fearful, got so terribly involved, that he determined to ask for a Government appointment, and failing that, to take his own life. He did fail, and after asking several persons what was the easiest mode of dying, invited some friends to dinner on New Year's Day, having supped the evening before at White's, where he played at whist until one o'clock in the morning. A fellow-member drinking to him a happy new year, "he clapped his hand strangely to his eyes." In the morning he sent for a lawyer and three witnesses, made his will with great deliberation, and then asked the lawyer if it would stand good though he were to shoot himself. The answer being yes, he said, "Pray stay while I step into the next room," and then, retiring, shot himself dead. According to Walpole, three brothers, members of White's, contracted a gambling debt of seventy thousand pounds, while Lord Foley's two sons had to borrow money to such an enormous extent, that the interest alone amounted to eighteen thousand pounds a year. The same vivacious chronicler of the manners of his times gives an almost incredible account of Fox's love of play and dissipation. In the debate on the Thirty-nine Articles, on February 6th, 1772, he spoke very indifferently, which, Walpole says, was not surprising under the circumstances. "He had sat up playing hazard at Almack's from Tuesday evening, the 4th, till five in the afternoon of the following day. An hour before he had won back twelve thousand pounds that he had lost, but by dinner-time, which was at five o'clock, when play ended, he had lost twelve thousand pounds. On the Thursday he spoke in the above debate; went to dinner at past eleven at night; from thence to White's, where he drank till seven the next morning; thence to Almack's, where he won six thousand pounds; and, between three and four in the afternoon, he set out for Newmarket. His brother Stephen lost eleven thousand pounds two nights after, and Charles ten thousand pounds more on the 13th; so that, in three nights, the three brothers, the eldest not twenty-five, lost thirty-two thousand pounds." Captain Gronow relates that, about this time, Lord Robert Spencer and General Fitzpatrick were allowed to keep a faro-bank at Brookes's, and that the former bagged, as his share of the proceeds, one hundred thousand pounds; after which he never again gambled. George Harley Drummond, the banker, only played once in his life, when he lost twenty thousand pounds to Brummell, and was obliged to retire from the firm. In the first half of the eighteenth century, ladies of title kept gambling-houses. An entry in the Journals of the House of Lords, dated the 29th of April, 1745, shows that Ladies Mornington and Cassilis claimed privilege of peerage in resisting certain peace-officers in doing their duty, "in suppressing the public gaming-houses kept by the said ladies"; but the claim was not allowed.

Betting also was indulged in at the clubs with as much frantic zest as play. Anything served as an excuse, and sometimes the occasion of the bets were so shocking that men of the least decency would have shrunk from associating them with any form of amusement. A man dropped down at the door of White's, and was carried into the house; immediately the betting harpies were staking large sums on the question whether he was dead or not; and when it was proposed to bleed him, those who had taken odds that life was extinct, protested against such a course, on the ground that it would affect the fairness of the bet. Bad as this was, there was a worse case still, for which Walpole is again the authority. If true—though one would fain believe it an invention—it is sufficient to leave a stain of murder on the very name of White's. A youth betted fifteen hundred pounds that a man could live twelve hours under water. He accordingly hired some poor wretch, probably in a most desperate plight, and sank him in a ship. Both ship and man disappeared, and were never heard of more. Walpole adds that these miscreants actually proposed to make the experiment a second time. It is a singular fact that Lord Mountford, whose suicide we have just related, betted Sir John Bland that Beau Nash would outlive Colley Cibber, and that both the persons, the subjects of the bet, survived the bettors, and that Bland, as well as Mountford, died by his own act.—*All the Year Round*.

## Fashions.

CINDERELLA parties are now so universal that more attention is given to simple evening dress than ever before; and one or two manufacturers have turned their attention to this special branch of trade. "The Lancashire Witches Dress Fabric Manufacturing Company," in its very name suggests materials for fancy dresses—printed sateens, zephyrs, indigo and Turkey-red stripes, serges, costume-cloth, and cashmeres, all cheap and pretty. Good inventive powers to design the styles necessary are alone demanded in addition. There is quite a mania abroad for what ladies call scientific dressmaking. Some of these home masterpieces, which we have been permitted to inspect, seem to have run very unscientifically out of shape afterwards, owing

to the wretched linings employed by ultra-economists. The Lancashire Witches linings are worth mentioning to these benighted beings who, in nautical language, "lose their ship for a ha'porth of tar." Many evening-dresses are made with short trains to fasten on to walking-skirts, and one sees a great number of these demi-toilettes at Cinderellas. Theoretically, all these loose trains are lined with silk, but practically the cost is prohibitive, and the Lancashire Witches sateen, which is light and close, without any stiffening, answers exceedingly well for the purpose. As there is economy in taking a quantity of any manufactured goods, the broché sateens, which are so pretty, will come in for next summer's wear.

COLOURED velveteens are in greater demand than ever for young people, and the beautiful shades of garnet, ruby, and geranium light up by candle-light brilliantly. Some pretty children's frocks of ordinary white flannel, trimmed with bows of bright ribbon, have brought about friendly relations in many nurseries, where the morning after a party was made penitential by the discovery of spots upon the best dresses. Now the flannel goes to the laundress, and there is a reign of peace and good-will. For parties of a more pretentious character than children's or calico balls, those for grown-up people showed tulle and very thin gauze as the most popular materials, but these are for those whose youthful feet require no rest, and who need not sit down. A wallflower cannot afford to indulge in such perishable fabrics.

THE waterfall back to tulle skirts is still popular, but with modifications. It brings us back to the days of the Second Empire in France when crinoline was in vogue. The Empress Eugénie wore neither steel nor horsehair to support her dress, but had thirty skirts of white tulle, one worn over the other, giving a beautiful cloudy effect. The waterfall backs of this season consist of a succession of tulle skirts, the lowest one the longest, and each one shorter, until the last is only about twelve inches long.

THE fronts of the dresses are also covered with tulle, dotted all over with chenille spots, artificial leaves, berries, little rosebuds, or glass beads. Large white globular beads, known as "dewdrops," are, very naturally, the horror of the dressmaker, because of the time demanded for sewing them on. As the thread cannot be taken from one dewdrop to the other, each bead is fastened separately by passing the needle and thread through it and the foundation, and tying the thread in secure knots. Chenille spots are really made of plush, cut out and gummed on. Leaves are attached in the same manner. To prevent the gum daubing the dress, each leaf must be washed over the back with gum and left to dry. It is thus made adhesive, like a postage-stamp, and affixed accordingly. To put tinsel upon a fairy's or other dress for a fancy-ball the same method is employed.

FOR evening dress the silk-embroidered ornaments are much used. They are now quite familiar to every one, being machine-made embroidery, cut out, and ready to be applied to the surface intended. These are sometimes seen upon the tulle waterfalls, and, it is almost needless to add, upon the fronts likewise of the skirts, as well as upon the bodices. A square-cut bodice has a puffing of tulle laid round as trimming, with a chain of embroidered flowers nestling in the tulle all round the square, or the pointed corsage.

OSTRICH-FEATHERS are no longer only within reach of the very wealthy since ostrich-farming has been taken up and carried out successfully by our Australian colonists. The very long and very costly feathers are still only to be had from the birds in a wild state. From those in captivity the shorter ones are obtained, and these are by no means expensive. Plumes of three short feathers are worn looping up evening-dresses; and since high shoulders came into fashion plumes can be placed at the top of the arm. Brides' dresses have for a long time required some novelty, some change from flowers only, and white ostrich plumes have been eagerly appropriated by the dressmakers.

BROCADE in every material, especially in silks, satins, and velvets, is as much a favourite as ever. The first price seems a little startling of a rich material, but by being used very plain a few yards go a long way in a dress. The plain tunic front when of brocade soon grew shabby from the strain upon it. To avoid this the front is made of straight breadths and half pleated, which is a new improvement on the old plain skirt. Take the centre breadth and make a broad box-quill in front, the centre being about twelve inches wide, and folding in only sufficient at the two sides of the pleat to conceal the seam which joins the next breadth. Leave a space plain of about six inches, and at each side arrange a second box-pleat half the width of that in front. This will bring the front almost to the back where the draperies meet it, so that the rest may be left plain. This triple box-pleated skirt is a tunic which is merely hemmed round the bottom, and falls over the under-skirt, round which the frilling or pleating which edges the skirt is sewed. The pleats are fastened to the waist-band at the top, and kept in place with a tape sewed at the back about half-way down, flowing loose the rest of the way. The effect of the skirt when finished is that of one large quill in front, and a small one at each side.

THE only novelty in dress-bodices is the panier-vest. A full vest commences at the throat, being gathered in at the centre of the bodice.

Instead of being gathered in and ending at the waist, it falls loosely down upon the skirt, the ends being turned under, and looped up to right or left side. Some of the panier-vests fall farther still, and are incorporated with the skirt draperies down at the knee. Fur vests are one of the most comfortable introductions of the winter, brown otter, seal, and squirrel being used, none of which are expensive furs, and but little is required for the front of a dress-bodice. That shoulder-capes will be worn for some time longer there is little doubt. Since the furriers found it possible to make the circular capes more closely fitting to the figure by having the sleeves quite a distinct feature, and inserting them high and slightly on the shoulder, the question seems to have settled itself. All kinds of substantial materials are also used, plush, velvet, brocade, and seal and astrachan cloths.

LADIES who delight in knitting and crochet, and at this season work up large quantities of wool, fleecy, double berlin, fingering, and the lighter kinds, have begun to make shoulder-capes for invalids and elderly people to wear in the house. People who are sensitive to cold often breakfast in their bedrooms because the sitting-rooms warm but slowly in this season. A crochet shoulder-cape has none of the *deshabillé* appearance characteristic of the shawl, and is equally easily laid aside when the occasion for its use has passed. For breakfasting in bed a shoulder-cape is delightful, but the mere circular does not maintain its position, the inserted sleeve being quite essential to comfort in wearing.

SMALL capes of fur which are not quite so large as a visite, have had the name of "Lesbos" given them. When made of seal they are elegant but costly muffles. The shape is that of a shawl, with points behind and before. At the waist behind it is drawn in with a thick seal cord, attached to the back, brought to the sides, and on to the front, fastening with the cord tied, the ends being finished with handsome pendants, balls of sealskin. A fringe of seal-tails, each one as thick as a leech, borders the Lesbos all round. The visite is comfortable, but not by any means graceful. It is a short dolman, reaching a little below the waist, large open sleeves falling over the arm and hand, lined with handsome plush or satin. Visites are made in sealskin, sable, otter, martin, skunk, astrachan, and bear-skin. Pale-brown bear, known as golden bear, is the revival of the old fur of which our grandmothers had gigantic muffins and very long round boas. Instead of boas, long flat ends are worn on a great many shoulder-capes, and are known as "stoles," the term being borrowed from ecclesiastical vestments to which they bear the very most distant resemblance, if it can be said that there is any. As it is rather unbecoming to some figures to have the cape cut straight across in front, showing the dress-bodice, the stole ends are a good compromise, and very suitable for matrons.

As we have already passed through the most severe months of the winter, those in which damp is most likely to be experienced, many of our fur capes, jackets, and trimmings are showing atmospheric influences, and, especially with bear-skin, the long hairs are becoming matted in bunches. The remedy is in having the fur combed frequently with a metal comb in front of the fire. The lady's-maid who knows her business will never allow her mistress's fur to have this matted appearance; but it is in the power of every lady to make her fur last twice as long in good condition by regular combing. A comb costs a few pence.

WHITE fichus seem to have become an absolute necessity for evening wear, but the vest form is the most useful, as it completely covers the front of a bodice. Lace drawn at the throat, and again at the waist. Soft silk, both white and coloured, is employed for these full vests, and the edge frilled round with cream lace, a double tucker of the same being added to the neck of the dress.

## Sold!

A WELL-KNOWN San Francisco citizen now prowling, not to say growling, through Europe, writes the following touching experience:

I had been for about half an hour, sitting on the deck of one of the miserable little "packets" that ply between Dover and Calais, and exasperating my fellow-passengers by refusing to join in the carnival of sea-sickness going on around me, when a ruddy-faced, white-whiskered, bluff-looking individual who had been eyeing me for some time, stepped up and said:

"Beg pardon, I'm sure, but are you really the American?"

"The American!" I replied; "there are several, I believe."

"Oh, of course, to be sure. I meant the one on board. I saw 'George B. Blank, San Francisco, California, U.S.,' painted on some of the baggage, and I picked you out right away as the owner." And the stranger inspected me from head to foot with as vivid a curiosity as if I'd been a wild man of the woods.

"Well," I finally exclaimed, "I am an American. What can I do for you?"

"Why—er—nothing—that is—no offence, I hope, and you are a Californian, too?" he said, rubbing his hands as though he had indeed met a *rara avis*. "Ever scalped by the Indians?"

"I think not," I replied.



"You've scalped some of them, though, haven't you?" persisted my inquisitor.

Concluding that inasmuch as I was in for being made a side-show of, I might as well indulge in some of the circus poster sort of thing, I looked my questioner calmly in the eyes, and replied:

"Some twenty-six or seven, I forget which; I have the tally nicked in the handle of my other scalping-knife; I carry only one bowie in this country. So seldom one runs across any fun over here, you know."

"Killed many white men?" asked the stranger, who appeared to be actually quivering with excitement and curiosity.

"Only eight or ten," I replied carelessly. "You see, in California there is a sort of close season now for shooting white men. 'Tain't like the good old man-for-breakfast times. A fellow is only allowed to gun around promiscuous-like four months in the year. So it's hard work to keep one's hand in, don't you see."

"Well, I declare," said the apparently stupefied man with the chop-whiskers; "how about Chinamen?"

"Oh, we kill Chinamen all the year round—when they are fat," I explained. "But then there is lately some sort of an ordinance making it a misdemeanour to shoot a pigtail unless he is on the shady side of the street, or gets in your way. Folks are getting too particular over there, for a fact."

"Ever been divorced?" finally said the stranger, whose eyes were now sticking out like pegs on a hat-rack.

"Nine times, I think," I said. "In fact, I intended to have been again when I passed Chicago on my way over, but the train only stopped eleven minutes, and there wasn't time enough to rush it through—takes twenty-two minutes, you know."

I thought this had knocked him out, but after a few minutes' bewildered cogitation he returned to the charge once more.

"Is it really true that all Americans wear chest-protectors, and eat nothing but pie?"

"Well, you see, the fact is that Americans are, as you know, such a frightfully busy people that they haven't time to sit down and eat a square meal, like you English. They must have something portable—something they can carry about with them and nibble on the sly. I tell you, sir, it looks like business when you see forty or fifty men all hanging on a strap of a street-car with one hand and eating pie with the other."

"I should rather think so," murmured the stranger.

"As for the chest-protectors," I continued, "they are really nothing more than pockets suspended round the neck, and large enough to carry a whole pie, which it keeps warm at the same time. A good hot mince-pie stowed away in this manner not only imparts a gentle and grateful warmth to the entire system, but keeps a whole day's rations always within reach of the wearer. Grand idea, isn't it?"

"Well, I'm blessed!" said my paralysed interrogator, gazing at my childlike and ingenuous face with profound awe. "Would—er—would you oblige me with one of your cards?" he said. "I want to show it to my family, or they'll never believe a word of this—never. Thanks—here's mine."

As I stepped, chuckling, into my own compartment, I glanced at the card of the stranger. It read: "Julius K. Judkins, San Francisco, California."

I have spent about eight hours a day looking for that man ever since.

## An Old-Fashioned Oracle.

WE have recently come across a most quaint and curious old book, bearing as its date of publication, the year 1754. In its yellow time-stained pages we find the queerest mixture possible of moral maxims, and bills of fare, dissertations on the benefits of learning, instructions in the arts of writing and "arithmetick," models of familiar letters, and (most interesting of all to the housewifely mind) elaborate instructions as to marketing, and many very curious old recipes for the making of certain dishes, whose very names take our thoughts back to the days of our great-grandmothers.

The title is not as short as it might be, but we give it in full, as it explains in a measure the motive and contents of the whole book. With queer long s's, a superabundance of capitals, and a pretty admixture of crimson lettering, the title runs thus: "Madam Johnson's Present: Or the best Instructions for Young Women, in Useful and Universal Knowledge, with a Summary of the late Marriage Act, and Instructions how to marry pursuant thereto."

On the same page are given eight several heads, specifying the various divisions of the book, and beneath them again, comes this naive little notice: "The Compiler, Madam Johnson, in order to make this Book come as cheap as Possible to the Purchasers, has out of her Benevolence fixed the Price at 1s. 6d., bound, though it contains double the Quantity that is usually sold for that Sum."

Even allowing that one shilling and sixpence meant a great deal more in 1754 than in 1884, we must yet admit that the amount of miscellaneous information contained in "Madam Johnson's Present" is wonderfully cheap at the price.

After disposing of the then new Marriage Act, which had been passed in March, 1754, Madam Johnson gives a most curious "Estimate of the Expenses of a Family, in the Middling Station of Life." As

we read it, in this extravagant age, we cannot but compare it mentally with what must be the real expenses, in the present day, of a middle-class family, and we are struck by many odd items, such as "Cloaths of all kinds for the Master of the Family, £16; cloaths for the Wife (who cannot wear much, nor very fine laces), £16." Farther on we are told, "the Maid's Wages may be £4 10s." What would our modern cooks and housemaids, or even more modest general servants, say to that?

With regard to the return of hospitalities, Madam Johnson has evidently a frugal mind, for she only allows £4 a year, for "Entertainments in Return for such favours from Friends and Relations." In those days, when the Second George was king, no gentleman could shave himself, even in "the middling station," so, perhaps, it is not wonderful to find 7s. 6d. allowed for shaving, per quarter; but we fail to see why "Cleaning Shoes" should cost 10s. a year, unless the maid, with her wages of £4 10s., should consider herself too superior for such menial work.

"The Bills of Fare for all Times of the Year, and also for Extraordinary Occasions," read rather strangely to our modern notions; in fact, the names of some of the dishes would convey no impression whatever to the mind of a nineteenth century cook. We quote, with the spelling of a hundred and thirty years ago, a bill of fare, which is given "for a Gentleman's House, about Candlemas." It is divided into four courses, after this fashion: "First Course: Pottage with a Hen, a Chatham Pudding, a Fricassee of Chicks, a Leg of Mutton with Sallad. (Garnish your dishes with Barberries.) Second Course: A Chine of Mutton, a Chine of Veal, a Lark Pye, Two Pullets, one garnished with slices of Orange. Third Course: A Dish of Woodcocks, a couple of Rabbits, a Dish of Asparagus, Westphalia Hams. Fourth Course: Two Orange Tarts, one with Herbs, a Bacon Tart, an Apple Tart, a dish of Bon Chriten (bon chrétien?) Pears, a Dish of Pippins, a Dish of Pear-manes." Large indeed must have been the appetites of that gentleman's household, "about Candlemas."

The "Dissertation on the Benefits of Learning" is not so entirely out of date as are the bills of fare, but there is one comic little passage, in which Madam Johnson informs her readers that "The letter 'K,' at the end of a word, always requires the letter 'C' before it, as in Arithmetick, Logick, Rhetorick, but in adjectives ending in 'k,' such as tragic, comic, dramatick, it is now customary to throw the 'K' out, and write them tragic, comic, dramatic."

There are many hints which a housekeeper of the present day might do well to heed, in the "Instructions for the Judicious Choice of all Kinds of Provisions," but there is one piece of advice to which the modern buttermilk might possibly object. "Don't trust wholly to your Taste," says Madam Johnson, "when you go to buy Butter, but try in the Middle, and then you can't well be imposed on, if your Smell and Taste be both good."

Next follows "The Compleat Cook-Maid," in which there are some recipes which read as if they ought to taste deliciously, notably the cakes of all kinds, the biscuits, creams, and "divers sorts of jellies"; but there are certain other recipes, whereof the very names are exceedingly uninviting, and among the latter are "Hog's puddings with almonds" and the same delicacies, "with Currants," and a "cake-soup of veal-glue, to be portable in boxes."

One very odd concoction is solemnly entitled "A Gravy that is not expensive," and as we find among the chief ingredients, water, small beer, onions, pepper and salt, grated lemon-peel, walnut or mushroom liquor, butter, and flour, it may be safely predicted that this gravy will not only be cheap, but also nasty.

In the "Tarts of Divers Kinds," when two recipes are given, we are induced to try the second method rather than the first, by such an alluring heading as "To make these Tarts still in a more agreeable way," and it is curious to find in all the recipes where wine is used frequent mention of such drinks as Sack and Rhenish.

The recipes for creams of various sorts are very interesting, although the way of testing the heat, suggested by Madam Johnson, might offend some fastidious persons. Speaking of her Lemon Cream, she says: "When any scum arises, clear it off, and when 'tis as hot as you can just bear to put your fingers in it, pour it out into little glasses."

Cheesecakes are given in great variety, including those known as almond, saffron, "mackaroon," and lemon cheesecakes, but after these, we come to some dishes which are now quite obsolete, namely, "wigs" (which seem to have been very rich buns), "syllabubs," and "flummeries." Three separate recipes are given for the syllabubs, and three for the flummuries.

For the amusement of those of our readers who may chance to be at all curious as to the cookery of the last century, we subjoin verbatim two of these recipes.

"To Make Whipt Syllabubs.—Grate the peel of two lemons into a quart of the thickest and best cream you can get; add thereto half a pint of sack, and the juice of two Seville oranges, and half a pound of the best loaf-sugar. Pour your ingredients into a broad pan, or deep dish, and whisk them very well. Have in readiness by you, some red wine or sack, that has been sweetened to your palate, and put what quantity (more or less) as you think convenient, into your little glasses, then, as the froth rises from your whipping the other ingredients, take it off with a spoon, and put it gradually into your glasses till they are as full as they can well hold. Take notice. These syllabubs will not keep long, and therefore, make but little more than what you propose shall be eaten in a few days."

"To Make French Flummery.—Beat half an ounce of isinglass, very fine, and stir it into a quart of the thickest cream you can get; let it boil for about a quarter of an hour over a gentle fire, but take care to keep it stirring all the time. When you take it off the fire sweeten it with double-refined sugar to your taste, and add to it an equal quantity of rose and orange-flower water; a spoonful of each will be sufficient. Then strain it off, and pour it into basins or cups, or what you please; as soon as 'tis cold, turn it out on plates. This makes a very handsome side-dish. You may add wine, cream, or cyder to it, when you eat it, as you please, and sweeten it with loaf sugar to your palate. When you serve it up to table, lay baked pears all round your dish. Flummery thus made not only looks pretty, but eats very agreeably."

With an odd sort of ready-reckoner, entitled "Tables, ready cast-up," and a "serious exhortation to maid-servants in regard to the regulation of their conduct, with short prayers and hymns for their devotional exercise every day," Madam Johnson brings her book to an end, and we come back to our own times, from this glimpse of old-fashioned ways, keenly sensible of the contrast between an English-woman's notions in 1754, and our modern ideas of cookery and house-keeping.

## Household Gardening.

WHENEVER the weather is mild, and the ground moderately dry, the planting of fruit and ornamental trees of all kinds, also Roses, with evergreens and deciduous shrubs, should be proceeded with, and if the work be done well they will be almost certain to flourish, provided the soil and position are favourable for their development.

Many persons who do not possess kitchen-gardens—that is, a plot of ground for the cultivation of the culinary products of the soil—regret that they have no means for growing fruit-trees, as a lawn and shrubbery borders occupy the whole space attached to their residences.

This is undoubtedly the case in thousands of instances, and especially in the environs of cities and towns, where, practically, all the ground is in front of the villas, or if at the back it is too limited to be turned to profitable account, hence it is preferred to have it attractive in appearance.

Very frequently the oblong enclosures attached to town and suburban residences are devoted chiefly to a lawn as the central portion, with or without flower-beds, the border all round, more or less wide, being occupied by shrubs and trees of an ornamental character, while we often find a row of standard Roses planted at intervals in the lawn near to and parallel with the walk that surrounds it. An arrangement of this kind where everything flourishes satisfactorily is usually very enjoyable.

### FRUIT TREES ORNAMENTAL.

We wish to show, in the interests of those who covet a few fruit-trees and yet have no suitable place, as they think, for growing them, that they may regard not a few of them as ornamental trees, and hence plant them with evergreens and other shrubs for beautifying their borders. A few trees, which by their compact form, attractive flowers, and handsome fruit, are adapted to the purpose in question, may be usefully noted at this the right time for planting.

### QUINCES.

A few weeks ago the various purposes to which this fruit is devoted, and several methods of preparing it, were published in this Journal. Since the appearance of that excellent article some persons will almost certainly be impressed with a desire to possess a Quince-tree, but scarcely know where to plant it. Let them plant one as an ornament wherever they have room for a tree of moderate growth.

Some persons there are, no doubt, who are not acquainted with the character and appearance of a Quince-tree, and a brief description of this tree will, therefore, not be unacceptable.

The Quince is closely allied to the Pear, to which it has some resemblance, in the form of the fruits especially, yet is abundantly distinct by their deep yellow or orange colour. The tree is also much dwarfer than the Pear, being of a bush-like habit, with slender branches more or less pendent. It is, in fact, rather a graceful tree, and decidedly ornamental.

The leaves are rounder than those of the Pear, and of a darker green above, but nearly white below. Thus, when moved by the wind, the sudden, almost dancing, alternations of colour have a singular effect.

The blossoms of the Quince are very bold and beautiful; they are larger than those of the Pear, and, being also later, have what those of the Pear have not—an ample setting of foliage, rendering the trees highly attractive.

The fruits are large, some of them nearly round, others pear-shaped, and when almost bearing down the branches in the autumn, have a very striking appearance. They have a strong peculiar odour—too powerful, indeed, to be agreeable to the majority of persons, yet by some enjoyed.

The Quince is not an indigenous tree, but is a native of the South of Europe; yet, according to Pliny, it found its way there from the island of Crete, and eventually became naturalised. It is, however, quite hardy in this country, but the fruit does not ripen well in cold

northerly districts. It is extensively grown in the South of France, and the peasants prepare a marmalade from the fruit called *colignac*. In fact, the term "marmalade" is derived from the Portuguese name of the fruit—*marmelo*. The botanical name of the tree is *Cydonia vulgaris*.

Quince-trees grow well near towns, and are especially well adapted for moist soils; indeed, like willows, they appear quite at home by the sides of streams or watercourses; therefore, if there is a damp position in an orchard or shrubbery, where other trees do not grow satisfactorily, it may be well to try a Quince, which in all probability will flourish.

The best variety to plant, and that usually prepared in nurseries, is the Portuguese. Those who already possess a tree, and desire to raise more, may do so by inserting cuttings of the young wood in the open garden in autumn, making them eight inches long, and planting, in a slanting direction, six inches deep, and in twelve months they will be rooted. Young Quince-trees thus raised are largely used as foster-parents for Pears, which are grafted on them, and thus earlier-bearing trees and finer fruit are produced than on stocks that are raised from the kernels of Pears. Viewed in this respect, the Quince is a tree of considerable importance and very substantial value. Grown for its appearance and its own fruit alone, one or two trees will suffice for most gardens.

### THE MEDLAR.

Like the Quince this is an ornamental tree, and quite worthy of a place in the shrubbery border. It is a compact moderate-sized tree, with large and rather rough leaves, more or less downy, and produces its conspicuous flowers freely towards midsummer.

The fruit is round or oblate, dark-green in colour, and varies in size from one to two inches in diameter. It, however, very rarely ripens on the tree, but has to be stored until incipient decay sets in. This is known as bletting. It has a texture and flavour peculiarly its own, and is much relished by many persons. The Medlar is regularly used as a dessert-fruit in the families of the affluent, and any person may have a supply who has room for a tree, for it will grow almost anywhere in moderately fertile soil. There are two varieties in cultivation, that known as the Dutch being the larger and more extensively grown, but the smaller Nottinghamshire Medlar is perhaps of better quality. Those who have room for two trees may plant one of each; if only space for one, perhaps the first-named will give the greatest satisfaction.

### THE LOQUAT.

This, the Japanese Medlar, is far less common than the preceding, and can only be grown against walls in the southern counties of England, or under glass. It has very handsome dark-green ribbed foliage, much larger than that of the Laurel, and produces clusters of fruit like small apricot-coloured Tomatoes, but quite round and smooth. It has a rich vinous flavour, totally unlike that of any other fruit.

It is just a century since this tree, *Eriobotrya japonica*, was introduced from Japan to Paris; from thence it was sent to Kew, and was eventually distributed in gardens. Trained to a south wall or building it has a very distinguished appearance, and is always cherished by those who possess it, not for its fruit, which is not often produced there, but because of the comparative rarity of the plant and its bold fine evergreen foliage. Those who have a very warm position and desire something that is not common to train against a wall, may plant the Japanese Medlar or Loquat, procuring a small plant in a pot, and planting it towards the end of May. The other trees above referred to may be planted at any time before March, but the sooner they are placed in the ground the better.

We have some other ornamental fruit-trees to notice, but the small space at present at our command must be devoted to more tender plants.

### GERANIUMS IN ROOMS AND CELLARS.

Thousands of the popular bedding plants which had made flower-beds bright last summer were taken up in November, placed in pots and boxes, and stored in dark or light places as room could be found for them. Some of these plants were cut quite down, leaving nothing but a few stumpy stems, while others were only lightly pruned, but had all the large leaves removed.

Such plants, if wintered safely and well managed, answer admirably for planting in beds and window-boxes another year.

If the soil in which the roots were placed has been kept moderately moist, fresh young shoots will now be springing from the stems. These will be white on those plants that have been kept in a dark place, and must be gradually removed to the light, so that the shoots will steadily assume a green colour; if left in the dark after they are an inch long, many of them will decay.

A few of the plants may have died, or portions of them. The former it is, of course, no use keeping longer, while the decayed portions of the latter should be at once cut off with a very sharp knife, dressing the wounds with a little powdered charcoal, or, tailing this, fresh lime; the plants may also, if the soil be dry, have a good watering, not wetting the stems, but thoroughly moistening the soil, as young roots will now be issuing from the old ones, and these must be kept fresh for the support of the growths. The leaves will then soon unfold and healthy plants be produced. The temperature of a dwelling-room or ordinary greenhouse will be quite sufficient for them, but care must be taken to prevent injury by sudden frosts reaching them through the glass.

# Odds and Ends.

THE early patroness of Burns, Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop, had an old housekeeper, a sort of privileged person, who had certain aristocratic notions of the family dignity, that made her utterly astonished at the attentions that were paid by her mistress to a man in such low worldly estate as the rustic poet. In order to overcome her prejudice and surprise, her mistress persuaded her to peruse a MS. copy of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," which the poet had just then written. When Mrs. Dunlop enquired her opinion of the poem, she replied, with a quaint indifference: "Aweel, madam, that's vera weel." "Is that all you have to say in its favour?" asked the mistress. "Deed, madam," she returned, "the like o' you quality may see a vast in't; but I was aye used to the like o' all that the poet has written about in my ain father's house, and atweel I dinna ken how he could have described it only other gait." When Burns heard of the old woman's criticism, he remarked that it was one of the highest compliments he had ever received.

PRINCE KRAPOTKINE, while staying in Geneva, observed that wherever he went he was followed by a spy. His mind was soon made up as to his course of action, and upon the first opportunity that presented itself he walked up to this man and dealt him a whack on the side of the head that almost felled him. "Here, my friend," the Nihilist prince went on, putting a louis into his hand, "if you make any outcry this is the maximum amount that I shall be fined. You may as well have the money as the public treasury. Take it, and whenever you want a louis, come to me!"

A CLERGYMAN at Cambridge preached a sermon, which one of his audience commended. "Yes," said the gentleman to whom it was commended, "it was a good sermon, but he stole it." This was told to the preacher. He resented it, and asked the gentleman to retract what he had said. "I am not," replied the aggressor, "very apt to retract my words, but in this instance I will. I said you had stolen the sermon. I find I was wrong, for, on returning home and referring to the book whence I thought it was taken, I found it there."

THE story has been related of Hon. Hannibal Hamlin, that once, in his active political days, he attended a party caucus at which there was only one man present beside himself. He promptly elected the other man chairman, had himself appointed secretary, and then transacted all the business in hand; and when he made out the credentials of the delegates chosen, he wrote in them that the delegates were elected at a "large and respectable caucus"—"because," he explained to the chairman, "you are large, and I am respectable."

A SUBSCRIBER writes to an editor: "I have a horse that has lately suffered from periodical fits of dizziness. Please answer through your valuable paper, and let me know what I should do with him. I'm afraid he'll get worse if something is not done soon." The editor replies: "Our advice, based on a careful perusal of 'Every Man His Own Horse Doctor,' would be to take him some time when he is not dizzy and sell him to a stranger."

A STORY that is good enough to be true is going the rounds about Mark Twain and Sergeant Ballantine. Mark failed to answer a letter of the sergeant's, and after waiting a reasonable time, the latter was so exasperated at not receiving an answer, that he sent Twain a sheet of paper and a postage-stamp as a gentle reminder. Mr. Clemens wrote back on a post-card: "Paper and stamp received. Please send envelope."

AN ignorant but well-meaning individual, who for want of a better man had been appointed a magistrate in a rural district, declared on taking office that he should always endeavour to deal out justice without fear or favour. "In short," he said, in conclusion, "I will take care while I am on this bench to act neither partially nor impartially."

WHEN Judge Hale, who had been a fierce swashbuckler in his youth, sat in judgment upon one of his former boon-companions, he took advantage of the retirement of the jury to ask the culprit in the dock sundry questions touching their old associates. "They are all hanged, my lord," answered the knave, "except you and me."

A PATIENT called on a well-known physician. "What is your complaint?" asked the doctor. "I don't know exactly, but I don't feel well; the fact is, doctor, I work like an ox, I eat like a dog, and I sleep like a dormouse, and yet I am always ailing." Doctor, dryly: "If I were you, I would see a veterinary surgeon."

A GENTLEMAN in Brooklyn, celebrating the birth of a daughter on the day of the opening of the bridge, proposed to call her Victoria, in honour of the Queen's birthday, whereupon a friend suggested that a more appropriate name would be Bridget.

A LITTLE boy asked his mother to talk to him and say something funny. "How can I?" she exclaimed. "Don't you see I am busy baking these pies?" "Well, you might say, 'Charlie, won't you have a pie?'" That would be funny for you.

ONE of the difficulties of life—talking to a deaf person in an omnibus. One of the pleasures of life—taking off new boots and putting on old slippers. One of the rarities of life—a woman thoroughly satisfied with her daughter-in-law.

A MALICIOUS old bachelor says that there is a musical society in the next villa to his residence, which is thirty years old, and that "several young ladies have belonged to it ever since its commencement."

"THOSE birds flying over yonder are aquatic birds, I suppose?" asked the young man in the seal-brown suit of the captain of the steamer. "No, they ain't," was the scornful reply. "Them's ducks!"

"MY wife's sister in Ireland is dead, and she's wearing mourning, and she thought it'd be more appropriate like to use black tea for awhile now," wrote a sympathetic brother-in-law to his mother.

OLD Mrs. Pinaphor hopes that no more lives will be sacrificed in the hunt for the north pole until some persons go out there and ascertain whether such a pole really exists.

A MAN having bought a thousand cigars, was asked what he was carrying. "Tickets to a course of lectures to be given by my wife," he replied.

IN the "Life of James Nasmyth," the great engineer, there is a story which he heard from his father. A master tailor, in a country town, employed a number of workmen. They had been to see some tragic drama performed in a booth at the fair. While there, a very slow, doleful, but striking air was played, which so took the tailors' fancy that for some time after they might be heard slowly whistling or humming the mournful ditty, the movement of their needles keeping time with it. The result was that the clothes which should have been sent home on Saturday did not come until Wednesday, and young gentlemen who had intended to rouse the envy of their sex, and the admiration of the ladies, were compelled to postpone their triumphs. The music had done it; and so the master tailor, being something of a philosopher, sent his men to the play again, having previously arranged with the musicians that they should only hear quick, merry music. The result was that a lively tune took the place of the mournful air, and the tailors' needles moved with their former rapidity.

A CRITICAL observer makes this sensible remark: "A woman's glove is to her what a vest is to a man." Precisely when a man is agitated or perplexed he at once attacks his vest button, thus giving occasion for certain very expressive slang phrases. A woman's vest does not admit of this sort of "pulling down," but her glove is always a source of inspiration and a refuge from any embarrassment. She smooths on the fingers, rearranges the button, drags out the wrinkles, looks critically at the fit, and does a dozen little things with her gloves, that betray or allay nervousness and sustain the truth of the above quotation.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, in speaking after Lord Hartington with regard to our foreign relations, made an admirable joke in the opening of his speech. He said that the great cataract of invective to which the Government had been exposed, and to which Lord Hartington had referred, reminded him of the criticism passed by a Yankee publican on Niagara, who, after attentively regarding for some time the mighty rush of waters, said it would be all very fine if it were not "for the poverty of the material."

MR. PEET, a rather diffident man, was unable to prevent himself being introduced one evening to a fascinating young lady, who, misunderstanding his name, constantly addressed him as Mr. Peters, much to the gentleman's distress. Finally summoning up courage, he bashfully, but earnestly remonstrated. "Oh, don't call me Peters—call me Peet." "Ah, but I don't know you well enough, Mr. Peters," said the young lady, blushing, as she playfully withdrew behind her fan.

ONE of the first recollections of Mary Somerville, the celebrated astronomer and mathematician, was of an evening when, as her little brother lay on the floor he suddenly jumped up, crying, "Oh, mamma! there's the moon running away," while every one hastened to the door to behold the fiery course of the celebrated meteor of 1783. The event may possibly have had something to do with the shaping of her career.

WINDOWS with sashes that draw up and come down are called guillotine windows by the French. Any man who has ever had one of these windows come down on his thumb will appreciate the happiness of the French name. But a man who has scalped himself by drawing in his head too suddenly against a descending frame will want the name changed to scalping-knife.

A COUNTRY paper contains the following curious instance of mis-punctuation: "Lord Palmerston then entered on his head, a white hat upon his feet, large and well-polished boots upon his brow, a dark cloud in his hand, his faithful walking-stick in his eye, a menacing glare saying nothing."

"I SEE you are taking an umbrella to school this morning," said a gentleman to a little girl on her way to school one rainy and windy morning. "Oh no, sir," sweetly responded she, as she clung to the handle and went scudding past; "it is taking me."

AN attorney, about to furnish a bill of costs, was requested by his client, a baker, "to make it as light as possible." "Ah!" replied the attorney, "that's what you may say to your foreman, but it's not the way I make my bread."

THE Japanese premier, Prince Kung, addressed General Grant in English, so-called. Trying to compliment him by assuring him he was born to command, he said: "Sire! Brave General! You vos made to order."

AUNT ESTHER was trying to persuade little Eddy to retire at sunset, using as an argument that the little chickens went to roost at that time. "Yes," said Eddy, "but then, aunty, the old hen always goes with them."

"Is it possible that you don't know the names of your best friends?" enquired a gentleman of a young lady. "Certainly," she replied; "I don't even know what my own may be a year hence."

THE published report of a benevolent society says: "Notwithstanding the large amount paid for medicine and medical attendance, very few deaths occurred during the year."

A QUACK doctor says in his advertisement: "I can bring living witnesses to prove the efficacy of my pills, which is more than anyone in my line can do."

CLERK of the Court: "Owen Doherty! Are you Owen Doherty?" Prisoner, with a merry twinkle in his eyes, "Yes, begorra, I'm owin' everybody."

A FORTUNE awaits the man who will invent a penholder that you can't stick into the mucilage-bottle, and a mucilage brush that won't go into the inkstand.

WAITER (bawling to the cook): "One roast goose and one potato." Old Gentleman: "No, no! not so much goose and more potatoes."

MESMERISM consists of subjecting the mind of one person to the control of another. The less mind a man has, the easier he is mesmerised.

AN Irishman was heard to say that he would have been a man of considerable property if his father had never entered the family.

"No, sir," said the passenger to the ship's doctor, "I'm not sea-sick, but I'm disgusted with the motion of the vessel."

"I NEVER contract bad habits," said Robinson to his wife. "No, dear, you generally expand them," was the reply.

THE merchant who sells for cash belongs to the no-bill-ity.

All applications for Advertisements to be addressed to Mr. Joseph Smith, 24,  
Great New Street, E.C.



"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 144.]

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[VOL. VI.]

## Audine.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

WHEN John Buckle was landlord of The George inn, in the village of X—, on the high-road between Canterbury and Sandwich, the old house did a roaring trade, not so much on account of its accommodation or excellent fare, which were probably not superior to what was offered by the rival establishment, The Bell, opposite, as for the personal qualities of John himself.

He was a type of a fast disappearing race of English bonifaces, big, burly, cheery, fond of sport, fond of good living, and, best of all, fond of his fellow-men. Guests at The George were sure of a hearty, unaffected welcome, of moderate charges, and of sound liquor, and many a traveller preferred to put up under its roof to going farther with the chance of faring worse.

But when poor old John died, and the new landlord took possession, the fortunes of the place seemed to a great extent to be wafted over the way. He was a surly, ill-tempered fellow named Martin Lock; one of those men who, much as self-interest and circumstances demand it, find it impossible to keep a civil tongue in their heads, who are distrustful and suspicious of everybody and everything, who seem to derive satisfaction from the knowledge that every man's hand is against them, and who most assiduously cultivate the science of successfully maintaining their own hands against everyone else's.

He was a stranger to X—, which in itself was a fact sufficient to nullify a large amount of whatever personal excellence he might have possessed—at least, it was so at the time of our story, some twenty years back, when our rustic population, in spite of the changes which were being rapidly wrought around it, still preserved its fondness for and its prejudice in favour of old names and old familiar institutions.

And he was not only a stranger to X—, but he was a mysterious stranger. None of the carriers or travellers knew him, his dialect was not of the country, and from the deep bronze colour of his evil face he was popularly and vaguely supposed to have come from "over the seas." At this period, the first madness of the Californian gold-fever was on the wane; the mother-country was crowded with big bearded fellows, who had gone out a few years previously as penniless outcasts and adventurers, and who had returned wealthy men.

So Martin Lock, who, as might be supposed, was pretty generally talked about, was put down as a retired gold-digger, although it was a mere surmise on the part of the more intelligent of the population, as he never opened his mouth about himself nor threw out a hint as to his antecedents.

That he was wealthy was beyond a doubt, and the fact of his being wealthy made it appear all the more mysterious that he should have chosen to settle down as an innkeeper in a retired Kentish village, instead of building himself a villa and cutting a dash with a well-dressed wife in a carriage and pair, as did such diggers who possessed the knack of sticking to their hard-earned gains.

So the custom of The George went over to The Bell at a rate which would have alarmed most landlords and brought down the thunder of their brewers on their heads, but which did not seem to affect Lock in the smallest degree. One fact alone prevented it from disappearing altogether.

To a small degree your rustic public-house frequenter, to a greater your carrier, and to the highest your bagman, have an eye to the circumstances surrounding the attention paid them. Hodge's beer tastes all the sweeter if it is drawn for him by a decent-looking girl or a smiling hostess, and he appreciates the distinction conferred to an extent greater than his boorish manner and animal appearance would warrant us in believing; the carrier, upon whose long, dreary daily or bi-weekly journeys the only sun that shines is the smile of the waitress at his favourite inn, looks forward to it as an event in his day; whilst the bagmen—well, all that need be said of them is, that they are terrible rogues amongst pretty faces.

Well, there was a very pretty girl at The George. She was not exactly a barmaid, nor was she a servant, yet her duties partook of the nature of both. Who she was remained as much a mystery as the identity of Lock. She had come with him to X—, and seemed to be the only human being who could make the slightest headway with him, although many a modern bar-lady would have

tossed her head and have been out of the house long before at the way in which he occasionally treated her. Her name was Audine, and, had she been a plain-looking lass, she would have been probably known as Audine; but as she was bright-eyed and dark-haired, with a complexion like the peach, and a matchless figure, she was generally known and addressed as Miss Audine. Moreover, there was an air about her which savoured of something above the ordinary country ale-house barmaid, and this was noted by the rustics, who are keen observers of character and manners. She was quiet, rather reserved, and although she had a better right to flaunt her feathers, and put on frills, than any other girl on the road, there was not a trace of boldness or coquetry about her. She called Martin Lock uncle, and as his niece was accepted by X—.

Reserved and quiet as was Audine, it could not be expected that she should be suffered to flourish like a beautiful flower in the full sight of everyone, without causing a general desire to marry her. Half the young fellows in X— and the country round were openly in love with her, and the other half consumed their passion in secret. She received all sorts of mysterious missives and messages scrawled in every style of hieroglyphics the rustic fist could perpetrate, which epistles, when intercepted by her uncle, as they were frequently, were indignantly torn up and thrown into the fire; sheep's eyes were cast at her from all parts as she sat in The George pew on a Sunday, and upon one occasion when in coming from church she happened to drop her prayer-book, there was a most unseemly struggle amongst her admirers for the honour of picking it up. Even the bagmen, fresh with all the chaff and small-talk of the great metropolis, could make no impression upon her; she was always polite and smiling, and, without encouraging them in the least, she sent them away charmed, puzzled, and miserable.

One young fellow in the hardware line, not daring to propose to her straight off, had an interview with Martin Lock in his private parlour. Lock's answer was abrupt and decisive:

"Look here, I guess she's going to marry well, or she don't marry at all. She's a right to marry a gentleman, and she's got to. That's so."

A year passed, and yet Audine remained unmarried. Martin Lock, failing in his endeavour to find his ideal of a husband for Audine, looked about for a substitute. He pitched upon Ben Tyrrell, a farmer of about thirty-five years of age, who, although not such a stranger at X— as he was himself, was not a native of the soil, but hailed from Chilham or Chartham, or one of the villages the other side of Canterbury. Ben Tyrrell had long wooed Audine, and was a fine respectable fellow, such as any country wench would have jumped at for a husband. He was well educated, had seen something of the world outside the British Isles, and although he was said to have been a Jack-of-all-trades in his past life, he'd settled down and was now a prosperous farmer with as good a future before him as any English farmer could hope to have.

So it was arranged between the two men that Audine was to be Mrs. Tyrrell. Audine herself had no voice in the matter, and amongst the crowd of her admirers had failed to distinguish Ben, but she was a minor, and was in such duty bound to respect and obey her uncle's will, that Martin never questioned her adhesion to any proposal he might make. This new aspect of matters was soon made plain to the people of X—.

The landlord of The George did what he had never been known to do before—asked Ben frequently in to tea and supper, was a constant guest at the farm, drove out with him during closed hours on Sundays—Audine accompanying him in every case—and at times even assumed an appearance of joviality and good-humour—stern joviality and grim good-humour, it is true, but still an air very different to that which sat upon him ordinarily.

Yet Audine showed no signs of change in manner. People met her alone with the young farmer on early spring evenings, but they noted that she seemed listless and preoccupied, whilst he did all the talking.

She greeted him and spoke to him just as she greeted and spoke to other folk. People began by calling him a fool for not bringing matters to a definite conclusion, and ended by describing her as a haughty, overbearing girl, who did not know what was good for her.

Martin Lock saw all this too, and had words with her frequently upon the subject of her indifference. Then he told her, without any mincing of matters, that he had destined Ben Tyrrell to be her husband, and that she had better submit with the best grace possible.

He was utterly confounded when she gave him as answer that she did not love Ben Tyrrell, and that she would not marry any man she did not love.

Such extraordinary obstinacy on the part of a humble country damsel appeared inexplicable both to Martin Lock and to the inhabitants of X— generally, who were ignorant of the real state of affairs, which may be briefly summed up in the explanation that Audine's heart was already given away.



Audine, upon whose shoulders fell the principal burden of domestic work at The George, and the entire burden when Martin Lock was drunk, which was about three times a week, had business to attend to which took her out of doors, as well as business which kept her indoors.

Amongst other little duties was that which necessitated a daily journey to and from the farm which her uncle rented, for the purpose of bringing in fresh dairy-produce. The way to this farm was a pleasant one across the fields, and Audine looked forward to this daily walk as the brightest part of her day.

One typical April morning—a morning of sunshine and tears, of light and darkness—she was crossing the fields, her basket filled with butter, and eggs, and fresh greenstuff on her arm, unconsciously singing the old West Country rhymes about the cuckoo, beginning :

In the month of April  
He opens his bill,

when there came up behind her a heavy black cloud, which, just as she had reached the most open and exposed part of her journey, sent down its contents in a pitiless shower. Audine was but lightly clad, and, with the thinnest of shoes on her feet, and a heavy basket on her arm, was fairly caught.

She started to run. Misfortunes never come singly, for she caught her foot in a root, fell, and sent the basket with its contents flying several paces ahead of her. To pick herself up was an easy and immediate matter, bruised and mud-stained as she was, but to collect and replace the eggs, and butter, and salad was more difficult, especially as the rain was coming down in sheets. So she did what most other little maidens would have done under similar circumstances, put her knuckles in her eyes and had a good cry, more from terror as to the reception she would meet with upon her arrival at the inn, than from grief at the catastrophe.

In this she was interrupted by the voice of a stranger :

"What a chapter of accidents ! I saw you going along, and I would have bet anybody what they liked that you wouldn't get across the field before the rain. Let me help you."

She looked up and saw a young man, light-suited, brown-faced, and bearded. She was about to decline all assistance, but his coat was off in a minute, and before she could recover her surprise and speak a word, was fastened around her shoulders. Such remnants of her load as were not irretrievably broken or disfigured he had replaced in the basket, which he slung over one arm, whilst he offered her the other.

Had any other young man in X—offered her his arm, a polite but firm refusal would have been the result, but in this case Audine—the impenetrable, cold, emotionless Audine—took it with a blush and a smile. Had she been asked why she took it she could not have answered. A judge of woman's nature would have said that the honest grey eyes, the open face, and perhaps, most of all, the low decisive tone of voice in which the few words were spoken had something to do with it.

Anyhow, here was a scene for her uncle or Ben Tyrrell to have witnessed—Audine tripping across wet fields, arm-in-arm with a stranger in his shirt-sleeves, she wearing that stranger's coat !

"Well," said her cavalier after they had proceeded some steps, "it doesn't look like an ordinary April shower. I vote we pull up under those trees there until it's over. In spite of the coat, you're getting awfully wet, and as for your feet—why," and he looked down at the little pair of shoes plashing through the dripping grass, "I don't think it's much good my offering you my boots, they'd be so big that you'd take in water at both ends."

At which Audine laughed as she had never laughed at anything said by a man before.

So he led her to a clump of trees, wherein, despite the rain, red-breasts, throats, blackbirds, and nightingales were singing their little souls out as they only can in April.

There was a silence for a few minutes as they stood beneath the trees. At length the young man said :

"I say, you don't mind telling me who you are, do you ? It seems so odd for us two to be standing here together and not to know anything about each other. I might be an ogre for all that you know."

"I don't think you're that," said Audine. "The ogres I've read about don't lend coats to wet girls. Besides, you don't look like one."

The accent and the voice in which this was said contrasted strangely with the dress of the speaker, which was rough and almost primitive, so her interlocutor looked at her.

She continued :

"My name's Audine."

"Audine ! What a pretty and strange name ! It isn't an English name. And what comes after Audine ?"

"Lock. I live at The George."

"At The George ! That's just my luck—I'm at The Bell. I was

told to go there because people said that the landlord of The George was so rough and uncivil."

"He's my uncle," said Audine, looking with her dark eyes into the young man's face.

"Is he ? By Jove ! I'm awfully sorry for what I've said, then. I'm always putting my foot in it. But, of course, I didn't know it. Do you forgive me ?"

"Of course I do, sir," said Audine, blushing.

"Oh, don't call me 'sir,' I hate it, for I'm only a vagabond."

"A vagabond !" exclaimed Audine, looking at him with surprise, and, from her knowledge of vagabonds, doubtless thinking him a very superior one.

"Yes, I'm a vagabond. I'm an artist, and I'm stopping at The Bell ; but I shall, of course, change my quarters."

"And come to The George ?" said Audine, with more impulse than she could command.

"Yes ; then I'm going to Sandwich, and then I shall loaf about until my time's up, and I must return to the mill."

"To the mill ! But I thought you said you were an artist, sir ?"

"So I am, madam. Here's my book. Wingham, old Sessions House ; Charing Palace, church, old house ; Leeds Castle, Maidstone, Ightham, the Mote House, and so on. Some day they'll appear in colours, and perhaps will be sold, and perhaps not."

"But where's the mill you were speaking of, sir ?" asked Audine.

"Oh, the mill ! Poor innocent little rustic maiden ! The mill means where I work, and returning to the mill means returning to work."

"But artists don't work, do they ? I thought they did nothing but go about and paint trees and beautiful ladies, and wear long hair and smoke pipes."

"Artists don't work ! Don't they ? And as you've told me your name, I'll tell you mine—Cray, Roland Cray. But—but you must call me Roland, and—and I must call you Audine."

There was none of the impudence of the bar-swaggerer in the way this was said ; and if Audine looked as she had never looked before, it was because she felt as she never had felt before.

"And now the rain's stopped," he continued, "although so far as I'm concerned I wish it would go on all day."

"But I must get back," said Audine, "for I'm very late, and uncle never takes excuses."

"Very well, I'll go with you," said Roland.

"I—I think perhaps you'd better not," stammered Audine ; "people talk so here—that is, if you don't mind."

"Well, suppose they do, Audine," said the young man ; "better to talk of us than of half their petty gossip and scandal."

"Yes ; but they would make this gossip and scandal. I know them, perhaps, better than you do," said Audine.

"So they would, by Jove !" said Roland reflectively. "And I won't go. But I say, Audine, I shall change to The George."

"I think you had better not," she replied ; "I don't think you'd like it."

"Well, anyhow, I shall see you again, sha'n't I ?" said the young man. "Do you pass here regularly ?"

"Yes."

"At this time ?"

"Yes."

"And you won't mind if I do ?"

"No."

"All right then."

And for the first time in her life Audine bowed in response to the lifting of a gentleman's hat.

"There's something about her," said Roland Cray to himself, as he watched Audine's active form cross the stile and take the road to the village, "that fetches me. She doesn't look a bit like the girls hereabouts. By Jove ! if she were dressed up wouldn't she take the shine out of a lot of the ladies who come to the mother's house at Stratford Place ! Let's see. It was ten minutes to eight when I met her. It's now ten minutes past. And twenty minutes has done what twenty years haven't been able to do. I suppose I'm making an ass of myself. I can't hope to marry her, at least not with the consent of the mother, who'd as soon I'd marry a Turk as a barmaid. Heigho !"

And he strode back across the fields, murmuring the music of the name Audine.

Every day they met, every day Roland Cray's expedition to Sandwich was put off, every day the links which bound him to Audine were strengthened. Audine, who had been crushed under the sway of a tyrannical relation almost all her life, expanded in the sunshine of a man's genuine admiration and love, and came out in all her true nature. And just as she was the first woman who had ever made a genuine impression upon the young artist's heart, so was he the only man in whose person and character she could see

anything like an ideal—for, rustic maiden as she was, she had formed an ideal, not from gossip or books, but from simple reflection about what ought to constitute a good man.

Meanwhile, it was not likely that these daily meetings could pass unnoticed in X—. Ben Tyrrell saw them together more than once, Martin Lock knew of it, took the trouble to find out who and what Mr. Cray was, and was satisfied. Ben Tyrrell raged, and resolved to bring matters to a conclusion one way or the other, without any further delay.

So one afternoon, when the bar was more than usually deserted, he said to Audine :

"Miss Audine, I think you are acting very cruelly and unjustly towards me."

"How?" asked Audine in surprise.

"You know that I love you, far above any one else in the world, and you know who I am and what I am, and what you'd be if you—if you were my wife," replied Ben. "And I do take it mainly to heart when I see you a goin' about with that young stranger there at The Bell. Mebbe he's a gentleman, I don't say he ain't, but I ain't knocked about the world for the best part o' thirty years without knowin' something about gentlemen and their goings-on, specially with young girls."

"I don't understand you, Mr. Tyrrell," said Audine, rather frightened at the earnestness with which her suitor spoke. "I—I really don't know what you mean."

"In course you don't, or you wouldn't be a doin' what you are," said Ben. "You think he loves you, don't you?"

"I know he does," replied Audine quietly.

"You think it's nat'ral like for a young gentleman to go and fall in love and ruin himself for life in ten days?"

"Ruin himself for life! What do you mean, Mr. Tyrrell?"

"What do I mean, Miss Audine? This is what I mean. That young chap's got rich friends, and he lives in a big house up in Lunnun, and he knows all sorts o' fine folk, and do you think he's a goin' to cut himself away from all that just to marry a country bar lass? For, Miss Audine, I love and I respect you, but that's all you are."

"A gentleman wouldn't look me in the face and tell me one thing if he meant another," said Audine.

"No, a gentleman wouldn't, Miss Audine, but mebbe you've heard on the wolf in sheep's clothing?" said Ben; "and nine out o' ten of these gentlemen are nowt but wolves in sheep's clothes. He says he loves you, and means what he says—for a bit; then when the fun gets a bit stale he'll be off."

"He won't!" exclaimed Audine, roused from her usual calm by Ben's words. "Ro—I mean Mr. Cray, is a gentleman, I know he is, and I love him."

"And you don't care a pin for me—that's it, ain't it?" said Ben, half sadly, half savagely. "'Cos I've got corduroys, and he's got tweeds; 'cos I smoke two inches o' clay, and he smokes paper cigars; 'cos I ain't got the gift o' the gab, and he can talk by the yard; 'cos I ain't handsome, and he is. Curse him! that's what done it!"

"No, it is not, Mr. Tyrrell," said Audine; "if he was ever so ugly I should love him all the same."

Ben made no reply, but stood doggedly striking a knot in the floor with his stick.

"I think you'd better take me, Miss Audine," he said presently, "or else—"

"Are you threatening anything, Mr. Tyrrell?" asked Audine.

"No, no, not yet," he answered.

"What do you mean—not yet?" she said.

"Not unless I am obliged—"

"But do you think I should accept you even if you were obliged?"

"I know you would."

"Then I would not, Mr. Tyrrell, for I am engaged."

Ben looked up, gave a low whistle, and went out.

That evening he came to the inn, and, acting upon his privilege, walked behind the bar to Martin Lock's little sanctum. Martin was smoking before the fire, a glass of toddy at his elbow, and nodded coldly as Ben entered.

"Come to talk about Audine," said Ben.

"Talk away," said Martin.

"Can't make no impression upon her," said Ben.

"Ain't surprised at it," said Martin.

"Ain't surprised at it!" repeated Ben. "You ain't surprised at me not bein' able to make no impression on her? Why, you don't mean to say you—"

A horrible suspicion crossed his mind that Audine's uncle had gone over to the stranger.

"Well, I've got to marry her," said Ben.

"So you have. Many folks has got to do things they don't do," said Martin immovably.

"But I must," said Ben, his temper rising.

"Must's a queer word, Ben Tyrrell," said Martin, looking at him for the first time.

"Yes, and it's a ugly word for some folk," said Ben musingly.

The eyes of the two men met. There was the faintest possible appearance of uneasiness in those of the landlord.

"What do you mean?" he said at length.

"What I say," replied Ben: "Audine's got to be my wife, and you've got to help me."

"She's engaged to the young artist."

"Don't care—she's as good as engaged to me by you."

"That's a lie."

"It isn't. Look here! are you going to help me to get her?"

"No, I ain't. Get her yourself."

A strange expression came across the face of Ben Tyrrell—an expression which was only there when he was thoroughly put out and roused.

He rose quietly, took up his hat and stick, and said :

"I give you till to-morrow morning, John Wildie."

The pipe fell from the landlord's mouth, his face turned deadly pale, his teeth chattered; for a moment he seemed paralysed, then he jumped up and hastened to the door. Ben Tyrrell had gone.

"John Wildie!" he hissed to himself. "How did he know that name!"

## CHAPTER II.

"How did he know that name?" Martin Lock continued to repeat to himself as he slammed the door of his sanctum, poured himself out a stiff glass of spirits, and threw himself into a chair.

"I don't know him; I never set eyes on him before, that I can remember. Is it likely he knows—?"

His train of thought was interrupted by the entrance of Audine. She sat down at the little table and opened her workbox.

"Never mind that, lass," said Martin in an unusually dulcet tone; "I want to talk with you."

Audine shut the workbox, and drew her chair nearer to that of her uncle.

"You're engaged to Mr. Cray, aren't you?" he began.

"Yes, uncle," replied Audine.

"Yes," continued Lock reflectively, and then, looking up suddenly he said: "You must break it off."

"Break it off, uncle!" exclaimed Audine; "I cannot—see, here is the betrothal-ring."

"Take it off and throw it in the fire," said Martin coldly. "Look here, where would you have been without me?—what would you have been?—either dead, or worse than dead, I guess. Very well, then, in return for what I've done for you, I ask you—nay, I command you, to marry Ben Tyrrell."

Audine was silent, but her lips were quivering. Martin continued:

"He's a good fellow, and he'll make you a good husband. He's well off, and I'm well off. Between the two you'll be able to live like a lady."

Still Audine was silent, but a tear trickled down her cheek. Martin went on:

"It's of the greatest importance to me that you should marry him. Do you know what ruin and disgrace mean? In course you don't. Well, ruin means being turned out of house and home; disgrace means—well, never mind exactly what it means, but in my case it means the very worst that can happen to a man."

"Uncle!" sobbed Audine.

"Yes," resumed her uncle, "and all that'll happen, you can bet your bottom dollar on't, if you don't chuck away that ring and say you'll marry Ben Tyrrell."

"I can't, uncle—I can't," said Audine in a scarcely audible voice. "I do not love, and I never could love Mr. Tyrrell. Would you have me swear in the church that I would love and honour him, and all the time be telling a lie? Uncle, I love you, and I would do anything for you—anything but that. Let me go away, so that nobody need know anything about me. Then you could not come to ruin and disgrace."

"I can only get out of it by your marrying Ben Tyrrell," said Martin; "if you go away, whether to marry or not, I'm bound to be ruined and disgraced. Audine, you must marry Ben Tyrrell."

"Uncle, I will not," said Audine, and left the room.

"Curse you, you shall!" muttered Martin,

He half maddened himself with drink that night, and saw Audine no more.

The next morning Audine started on her walk to the farm as usual. She was surprised to find Roland waiting for her at the stile, his knapsack on his back, and his stout walking-stick in his hand.

"You are not going away, Roland?" she said in a faltering voice.

"Only to Sandwich, sweetheart," he replied. "I've been putting off my visit there for so long, thanks to you, you little puss, that unless I make up my mind at once and start, I shall never get there."

"But you are coming back?" said Audine, as she linked her two hands over his arm.

"Of course I am," replied Roland, laughing. "Why, you are surely not learning to be distrustful already? I shall be back to-morrow, or the day after at the latest."

"To-morrow! the day after!" sighed Audine; "that seems like never, and I have so much to tell you. I am so unhappy."

"Unhappy, dearest!—why?" said Roland. "Tell me everything, as you ought to, for we are betrothed, Audine, and there should be no secrets between us."

So Audine told him all that had taken place upon the preceding day between her and Ben Tyrrell, and between her and Martin Lock.

When she had finished, Roland said:

"Never you mind, darling, they're only telling you all this to frighten you. At least the man Tyrrell is, but I thought your uncle was in our favour."

"So he was, until last night," said Audine, "and then he was quite different. I don't know why it is, but I feel as if something was going to happen—something dreadful, I mean, and much more now that you are going away. You know, Roland, I have nobody but you to care for me, or to advise me, or protect me."

"Oh, send all these little fears out of your pretty head," said Roland. "Just think a moment. How can your uncle be ruined and disgraced by your not marrying Tyrrell?"

"I don't know, Roland," replied Audine. "I'm only a country girl, and I can't understand men's business."

"Well then, depend upon it it's nothing but a plot of theirs," said Roland. "Your uncle's beginning to fight shy of your acquaintance with me. He probably thinks I'm doing what too many fellows do—carry on with a girl, and then when they've amused themselves enough, throw her over and break her heart. But I'm not that sort, Audine, and you don't think I am, do you?"

"No, Roland," answered Audine. "You are the only man I ever loved or ever could love, and I would take your word against the oath of the world."

"That's right," said Roland, kissing her; "and now that you believe me in general things so far, believe in me in this particular thing, and don't think about it any more. When I come back I'll have a talk with Mr. Lock, and if I don't bring him round to our cause I should be a bigger fool than I think I am. And now here you are at the farm-gate, and I strike right away over there, so good-bye, my darling; if I don't come back to-morrow you shall have a letter."

With one long embrace he left her, and she watched him growing smaller and smaller in the distance, as his swinging stride carried him in the direction of Sandwich. Then her heart sank, and she felt utterly desolate.

When she reached the inn, her uncle and Ben Tyrrell were in close conversation in the bar-parlour. They looked significantly at her, she thought, and ceased talking. Then her uncle, turning to her with the nearest approach to a winning smile that he could assume, said:

"Audine, Ben and I reckon we'll have an afternoon's pleasuring in the fine weather, so after dinner you can look spry and have the house shut up; and we'll take the yellow gig and go to Richborough. A little fresh air won't do you no harm, and as you ain't ne'er seen the old place, I guess you'll like to go with us."

If it was only for the sake of being anywhere near Roland, and for the chance of seeing him, Audine would have jumped with joy at the prospect, and so readily assented. Richborough she knew was near Sandwich, and Roland would be pretty sure to tramp over to the old Roman fortress for a bit to sketch.

The very politeness and urbanity of Martin Lock would have aroused suspicions in the mind of a girl better versed in the ways of the world in general, and of men in particular, but to guileless Audine it was an omen full of joy and happiness. They had yielded to her, and had planned this trip on purpose to give her the pleasure of being near Roland.

Yet how could they have known that he was in Sandwich? Audine was not much in the habit of putting any two and two together except in the matter of giving change to customers, or she would have thought of this.

Roland Cray was sitting that evening in the commercial-room of the Cinque Ports Arms at Sandwich. His feet were on the fender, his pipe was in his mouth, and although ostensibly he was engaged in perusing the *Kentish Mercury* of the week before last, his thoughts were in the meadows with Audine.

Making all allowance for her innocence and simplicity, the more

he thought over what she had said to him, the more he became suspicious that, after all, there might be some serious cause for her fears. If Ben Tyrrell had actually threatened Martin Lock with ruin and disgrace, he must know something about him which neither Audine nor the rest of the world knew, and this something must be important, or the landlord of The George would not have veered round so suddenly in his attitude towards himself and Audine. Roland knew, too, that there was a mystery about Martin's Lock's past life; but the world, after all, is a very small one, he thought, and very few mysteries remain unsolved until the end of time. He rather regretted that he had left the girl in such a state of mind and under such circumstances, and, although the evening was far advanced, had half made up his mind to start immediately back to X—, when a visitor entered the room.

"Hullo, Liscombe!" exclaimed Roland, as he rose to meet a young man of about his own age. "Why, who would have thought of meeting you at such an out-of-the-way corner of the earth?"

"Well," said his visitor, "I might say the same of you, old fellow."

"No; I'm an artist, and it's part of an artist's business to be out of the way, just as it's all a lawyer's business to be in the way as much as possible," returned Roland, laughing.

"I'm here on business," said Liscombe.

"So am I," said Roland; "and now, as we haven't met since our Swiss walk, make yourself comfortable, and we'll have a talk about old times. It's quite a godsend to meet with an acquaintance. You see I'm reduced to read the week before last's *Mercury*, but it's quite as amusing as half the twaddle which is sent up with our toast and eggs in London."

So the two young men drew their chairs together round the fire—for, although April, it was an English April—and were soon running over old ground again, re-telling old stories, laughing at old jokes, with all the enjoyment of long-separated friends.

"You haven't been idle, I see, Cray," said Liscombe as he turned over the pages of Roland's sketch-book. "I suppose swell London will be going into raptures over some of these 'bits' when they are duly invested with their garb of paint, and deck the walls of Burlington House. That's a pretty bit—'Old Grammar-School, from the Meadows.' Sandwich is awfully like the old Dutch towns on the shores of the Zuyder Zee. But I see you haven't confined your efforts to still nature. What's this? 'Study for Amaryllis.' Pretty face, by Jove! And again, 'Amaryllis in Sunshine'; and yet again, 'Amaryllis in Cloud.' Is this a pictorial Amaryllis, or is there such a one knocking about here? If so, she must be a solitary exception to the general rule of East Kent beauty."

And looking up he saw that Roland was blushing.

"Oh, you wicked old rascal," he said; "you're here on business, are you? I see it all. Artless rustia beauty, cherry lips, black eyes, raven tresses, and all that. Enter to her, susceptible young Londoner, wooing study in the fields, sun going down behind the old tower, etc., etc. By Jove! Cray, I believe my chaff is true."

"So it is," said Roland, "perfectly true. She is a pretty girl, I can tell you, and she's every bit as good as she is pretty."

"And are you really and seriously smitten, or is it just a passing fancy which will fade as soon as she's out of sight?" asked Liscombe.

"I'm betrothed to her, old fellow," said Roland gravely.

"Betrothed!" exclaimed his friend. "And what will mamma at Stratford Place say, and your sisters, and cousins, and aunts, with crests, and pedigrees, and swell carriages?"

"Don't know," replied Roland; "haven't told them."

"But who is she?" asked Liscombe, "if it isn't a rude question."

"Well, old fellow," replied Roland, "I know you, or I wouldn't tell you, and I can depend upon you for keeping it dark. She's the niece of an innkeeper at X—, about ten miles from here; but, mind you, she's no more like an ordinary rustic bar wench, much less a London buffet lady, than I am to Hercules."

"Bad simile," said Liscombe; "for in making things square at home you'll have a labour as great as any of those undertaken by that muscular pagan. And is her name really Amaryllis?"

"Is it likely?" said Roland. "Rustic folk don't christen their babies Amaryllis, or Chloe, or Phyllis, nowadays; no, but her name's just as uncommon. I'll bet you a new hat you don't guess it."

"Done," said Liscombe; "my business brings me in connection with as curious a name as I ever heard. What do you say to Audine?"

Had a bombshell exploded in the room, Roland could scarcely have been more surprised.

"Yes, yes," he said, "that's it; how by all that's wonderful did you know it?"

"Guessed it—that's a new hat for me," said Liscombe; "but I say, old fellow, joking apart, this is a much more extraordinary business than you think it is. I've astonished you by fixing straight

off on the name of your lady-love, but as you've confided your business to me, I'll confide mine to you, and if that doesn't astonish you still more, I'll forego the new hat. But it's dry work talking, and as you haven't had the decency to ask me what I'll take, I'll ask you—what's it to be?"

"Beer," said Roland; "I never drink anything but beer, especially when I'm on the tramp in country districts where the spirits are poison and the wine certain disease."

So two tankards of beer were brought—tankards of famous Sandwich ale, than which there is no better drink in England; the young men re-lit their pipes, and Liscombe began:

"About twenty years ago a rich middle-aged man named Charlton went out to 'Frisco, gold-prospecting on behalf of an English company of which he was a director; when at 'Frisco he fell in love with an American girl, and married her. By the union there was a child, but in giving birth to it the mother died. Charlton went on to the gold districts, taking the child with him. He got as far as Red Gulch Camp, Calaveras County, and then he disappeared, and nothing has been heard either of him or his child since. The name of that child was Audine."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Roland; "then perhaps——"

"Wait a bit," said Liscombe. "Well, Charlton, as I have said, was very rich, and hadn't a relation in the world but this child, Audine, and by his will, which had been deposited with my father's firm, as his solicitors, all his property was left, in a codicil sent home from 'Frisco, to this child. But nobody knew what had become of her. All enquiries both at home and in California failed to bring any information; we advertised in the papers, and had no replies. Meanwhile the property—all invested money—was kicking about without an owner. By the merest chance in the world, one of our clerks, whose friends live somewhere down Canterbury way, heard that there was a very pretty girl at one of the inns on the Sandwich road, named Audine, that she passed as the niece of a man named Martin Lock, and that no one knew who he was, or where he had come from, although it was said that he had been a miner. Well, of course, this wasn't much of a clue, but I was sent to find out all I could, as a lot of 'next-of-kin' claims were being sent in for the property of old Charlton, and here I am."

"Well," said Roland, "it's a most extraordinary affair, and it is still more extraordinary that you should have tumbled across the man of all men best qualified to help you in the person of an old chum. Look here, what time is it? Half-past eight. I've already had half a mind to walk back to X—to-night, I vote we do so, and clinch the matter, if there is a matter, at once. It's a fine night, and I'm a little anxious about something."

"Very well," said Liscombe, "I'm your man."

So in a few minutes the young men were on the high-road going towards X. It was a beautiful night; the moon shone brightly and lighted up the road in front of them as though it were snow covered; trees and bushes stood out carved into a black relief of fantastic and picturesque shapes against the deep-blue sky; there was but little breeze, the countryside was silent and desolate, and the voices of the two friends rang out clear and distinct in the still air. There was a touch of romance about their errand and the surrounding scene which gave the pedestrians a zest for their expedition, so they stepped smartly out and fully intended to cover the ten miles between Sandwich and X—in two hours and a half, bringing them to the inn just about closing time.

They had proceeded perhaps a couple of miles when they heard the sound of wheels rapidly approaching, and the clatter of hoofs moving at a furious pace, from the direction of Sandwich. Turning round they beheld yet some way behind them the black outline of a gig with figures in it, swaying violently to and fro, and as it drew nearer, the loud shrieks of a woman were distinctly heard.

The young men had scarcely time to consider what to do when the vehicle came tearing along towards them.

"By Jove! it's Audine!" cried Roland.

The horse, startled at the sudden appearance of two figures in the middle of the moonlit road, made a violent swerve to one side, there was a hideous crash, as the gig was hurled over on to the hedge, a momentary appearance of black figures in mid-air, then the horse, with the shafts clattering behind him, thundered down the road, past the two young men, who were rushing towards the overturned gig—and silence, broken only by occasional moans.

It was but the work of a few minutes for Roland and Liscombe to extricate from the shattered remains of the gig the senseless, bleeding figure of Audine; in a furrow some feet off lay the body of a man. Roland went to it, and recognised Ben Tyrrell. He was quite unconscious, although living.

"There's been some villainy here," said Roland, as they lifted Audine to an improvised couch made from the cushions and rug of the gig; "the poor girl had a foreboding of something wrong when I left her this morning, but I laughed at it."

Whilst Roland remained with the sufferers, Liscombe ran back to

Sandwich for help. Whilst he was gone Tyrrell recovered. His first words were, after he had sat up and gazed about him as a man in a dream:

"Where's that villain?"

"What villain?" asked Roland.

"Martin Lock, alias John Wildie," replied Tyrrell. "He was with us five minutes back. I hope his neck isn't broken, for it will cheat the hangman of a job. And poor Audine! Ah, she's there! that's right, I'm main glad of that. It's you, is it, Mr. Cray; well, I've got something to tell you when I'm able. Haven't got a drop o' brandy, have you? I'm pretty bad, I am, but if I was half as bad as that villain who calls himself the poor girl's uncle, I should wish my own neck broken. Is he anywhere about? Do have a look for him, Mr. Cray—we're all right here—as it's very important as how Martin Lock—no, no, I mean John Wildie—should be got."

Tyrrell was in too helpless a state to attempt an escape, so Roland searched the neighbourhood of the accident for Martin Lock, but without success.

Meanwhile Liscombe had arrived with a trap from Sandwich; Tyrrell and Audine were placed in it, and they went back at a gentle pace to the Cinque Ports Arms.

A doctor who was called said that in Audine's case no bones were broken, but that she was severely contused, and, as she was wandering in her speech, might be suffering from slight concussion of the brain.

Tyrrell, who had fallen soft, had merely sprained his ankle, and refused to go to bed before he had told what he wanted to divulge. So he was carried into the commercial-room, given a stiff glass of brandy-and-water, and spoke as follows:

"Mr. Cray, you think a lot that's bad of me, but I never was bad until this day. You know, in course, that I love Miss Audine, and you know that I knowed that you loved her. Well, I was gettin' desperate, 'specially when I heard that she was engaged to you, and when I saw that John Wildie was all for you and turned agin me. So says I to myself, 'I'll tell him'—that's Martin Lock, as he calls himself—'I'll tell him what I knows about him, and I'll make him give me Miss Audine for a wife.' So I tells him——"

"Yes, yes," said Roland and Liscombe together, "and what was it?"

"Well, it was just this," continued Tyrrell. "Twenty years agone I was out at the diggings in California. I was only a lad of fifteen then, but I remember it all jes' as if it wur yesterday. I was at Red Gulch Camp, Calaveras County, me and a lot of other young fellows what had stowed ourselves away, and him that calls himself Martin Lock was a digger of the name of John Wildie, and a precious rough lot he wur, I guess, didn't think no more o' bowiein' or gouglin' another man than I do of drinking this 'ere. Well, there came a gentleman there a prospectin', his name wur Charlton, and he had a little kid along on him, which her name was Audine. He was powerful rich he was, and slung the dollars around like ha'pence. Well, one day he wasn't to be found, no more wasn't his little kid, no more wasn't his purse nor his portmanteau, no more wasn't John Wildie. Arter a week we come across the poor old gentleman at the bottom of a canon, terribly mauled about, as if he'd had a fight for life. The boys didn't think no more about it, for you see, gentlemen, in '47, killin' one another was a everyday game with 'em, but I couldn't help it, I was young and green, an' I never forgot it. Then I comes on John Wildie here. Twenty year didn't make no difference, I remembered him. Well, about to-day, gentlemen. I was desperate, as I said afore, and I goes in to John Wildie last night, and I tells him that I know him, and that he must let me have Miss Audine."

"This mornin' I sees him again, and he says, 'O. K., we'll fix it.' So we arranges to take the gig with Miss Audine, as if for a outin', but really for me to get away with her and marry her. He takes with him a big stick. Says I, 'What for?' Says he, 'In case o' accidents,' and smiles ugly. We starts with poor innocent Miss Audine, all laughin' at the notion of a drive in the fine weather, and we gets into the country, and we has tea all pleasant like at Ash—leastaways we has tea, Wildie he sticks to brandy—and we starts for Sandwich. John Wildie, he wasn't exactly drunk, but very near it, and just as it was gettin' dark he jumps up and says:

"'Tyrrell, you ain't goin' to have Audine.' I riles up at this, and we has a long argument, all the time the gig was standin' still, and Bay Jack the pony eatin' out of the hedge. Then he ups with his stick and tries to bring it down on my head. He meant murder, I see'd that, but I was too quick, and we begins to struggle, and poor Miss Audine she begins to cry, and altogether we made such a noise that Bay Jack got frightened, and started off with the bit between his teeth for home. Then John Wildie, who was goin' on like a madman, got chucked out, and then there we was, for there wasn't no holdin' Bay Jack—and you know all the rest, gentlemen."

That Martin Lock's a murderer, gentlemen, and if he's to be found I can prove it against him."

Such was the mystery about the landlord of The George inn, and such was the chain of events which brought Audine and Roland Cray together without a dread of separation. All search for John Wildie, *alias* Martin Lock, was in vain, and he was never heard of in person again, although the story connected with him afforded food for gossip and comment in all the countryside round X— for many a year after.

Audine's surprise at what had happened may be imagined, but it was still greater when a formal letter arrived, some weeks later, from Messrs. Liscombe and Liscombe, informing her of her great good fortune.

Roland Cray made her his wife quietly in the little village church of X—; Ben Tyrrell was his best man, and Liscombe gave her away.

Stratford Place was at first a little sceptical as to the genuineness of the *dénouement*, but thawed as Mrs. Roland Cray proved herself to be as good and as devoted a wife as she had been true sweetheart in the days when she was but the country-inn barmaid, Audine.

## Dead Love.

NAY, 'tis no good; he died but yesternight,  
And as the shadows fell across the sun,  
And all the hills lay radiant 'neath its light,  
His course was run;  
Folded his weary hands and sank to rest,  
Pale hands upon a pale storm-wearied breast.  
His work was done.

I sat beside, and as he breathed his last,  
Methought I was not as when we two met,  
Before my first bright days were scarcely past;  
Can I forget  
How beautiful Love looked that long dead morn,  
Whereon my heart and he alike were born?  
Not yet, not yet!

Would he and I had never, never strayed  
Among his roses—roses white or red!  
Would that before that day I had been laid  
One with the dead!  
Nothing to suffer, nothing much to know.  
A spotless life-page, pure and cold as snow,  
No tears to shed.

He cannot live again; once love is gone  
He may not rise from out his prison tomb.  
He dying, passes, though life floweth on,  
Beyond the gloom;  
He knows no resurrection, comes no more  
From that mysterious, far-off, shadowy shore  
Where lies our doom.

So I will lay him softly to his sleep  
'Neath passion-flowers that shall climb and cling  
About his monument; and while they creep,  
Roses I'll bring  
To die above his heart, to strew the ground,  
Where, deaf to every song or sweet soft sound,  
He's slumbering.

Then will I turn me to my life and live  
As I had lived if he'd ne'er passed my way;  
An he is dead, perchance I can forgive.  
So pass away,  
Thou bitter time in which I saw his face!  
So fade he swift from the familiar place—  
Love died to-day!

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book II.

#### CHAPTER III. AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT.

How many times had Ivor Grant looked down the elm-tree avenue, or wished the morning hours would speed more swiftly, or visited the old deserted nursery to look up stores of his own childish toys? It was wonderful, too, his anxiety about luncheon, his delicate hints to the housekeeper, his directions as to flowers and fruit and sweets, and all the dainty trifles which women love. But even with all these cares the time seemed to drag along very heavily. He betook himself to the terrace at last, a cigar in his mouth, and his dog, Royal, at his heels.

The spring air was keen and exhilarating, and that new sense of

youth and delight was thrilling his pulses with fire and fervour. He could not acknowledge even to himself the reason for such feelings, but the consciousness of their existence was as assured as his own.

The sun was at its brightest, it was just noon, when at last the looked-for figures came in sight. To him there seemed to be only one—a young goddess floating over the smooth wide drive, with all that was brightest and best of earth, and air, and sunlight surrounding her as she moved, encircling her with such magic halo of life and loveliness as surely had never touched woman before.

He threw the cigar away, and went down to meet her with eager steps.

The meeting was easy and unawkward now. Both knew their own ground, and both were sure that nothing but a very frank and very cordial friendliness gave them that feeling of supreme content in the prospect of each other's companionship.

There was nothing to look back upon with regret, or forward to with fear. They were young, and life was fair, and the present moment held rich possibilities of enjoyment. That was all.

"I am afraid I am very early," said Beryl, after the first greetings were over. "But the children haven't given me a minute's peace since breakfast."

"Not at all early," said Ivor eagerly, feeling as if he had never half estimated the worth of juvenile pertinacity. "I expected you long ago."

"Not before breakfast surely," she said, with a glance that made him laugh at his own stupidity, and then she laughed too, and little Jack, seeing an opportunity of striking in, said in his pretty plaintive voice:

"Has 'oo dot any toys?"

"Lots!" said Ivor with enthusiasm. "A rocking-horse, and a boat, and some tin soldiers."

"And books?" enquired Jack, as he paused.

"Books?" said Ivor, looking at him wonderingly. "Why, what a funny little chap to want books. Picture-books, I suppose. Well, I dare say we shall find some."

"He is very fond of books," said Beryl quietly. "He is always bringing them to me to read stories to him."

"Oo will tell me stories," said little Jack coaxingly, from that vantage-point of Ivor's shoulder where he was perched.

"Certainly," acquiesced Ivor, who in his present genial frame of mind would have promised anything in, or out of, reason. "What about? Giants, and fairies, and—"

"No," interrupted little Jack gravely. "Me likes 'bout Joseph and Samuel, and Noah in de ark, wot mummy tells, and the 'ittle boys who had the porridge, when the other 'ittle boys had meats, and—"

"He means pulse," said Beryl, growing crimson. "Daniel, you know, at the Court of Darius. He is such a child for Bible-stories."

"Mummy tells me them vev'ry night," said little Jack, "after me has said my pwayers. Does 'oo say pwayers?"

"Jack is very silly," interposed Cyril apologetically. "He's so very little, you see, sir, and he thinks everybody says prayers, like himself."

"Mummy does," says Jack eagerly. "I hearded her. She sez—"

"Hush, darling!" interrupted Beryl hastily. "You mustn't talk so much. Mr. Grant will be tired of you."

"On the contrary," said Ivor gravely, "he makes me think of a certain verse I used to con over in my young days, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings—'"

Here the questioning came to an end for a time, and Beryl directed the boys to run on in front of their elders, so Master Jack was dismissed from his pedestal.

"You must really excuse them," said their mother. "They say such odd things. You see they have been entirely with grown-up people, and Jack is naturally old-fashioned."

"They need no excuse," said Ivor gravely. "I think they are simply charming."

She glanced around. That sense of newness in what met her eyes, combined with another and more exquisite sense of enjoyment, and the pride in her own land and its tranquil beauties, soothed her as nothing in that long foreign sojourn had done.

Ivor noted her admiration, and it seemed to bring them into yet more perfect sympathy. The full, rich sunlight poured itself upon her face, and lit its soft and tender lines with a sweeter meaning. She looked to him a woman

Perfect as a young man's dream,  
And breathing beauty.

Yet in that moment it came home to him with a sudden pang how well he had remembered that face through all these years. How never since he met its gaze had he cared to look with interest upon another.

The warm air played about her—the very sunbeams seemed to rain their lavish gold as on a thing they loved. The children



danced before them, their voices ringing out in happy laughter. It was like an idyl of spring itself, an idyl of hope, and love, and promise. And yet what mad, strange fancy was that which flashed across Ivor Grant's mind for one moment only—a fancy that all of earth's joy and heaven's glory might centre itself in one look from eyes that shone like stars beneath ruffled dusky hair.

But fancies are quick to come and go, and the thoughts of youth are hard to curb when the gladness of spring runs riot through the veins. And, after all, a fancy—unspoken—hurts no one.

Luncheon was over. Beryl had been introduced to Mrs. Grant, and, strange to say, charmed that proud and fastidious lady without an effort. Perhaps as much by her total unlikeness to Mrs. Grant's imagined picture of her as by anything else.

A lovely face, a perfect manner, a frank, fearless spirit, bright wits, and good sense, made up a charming combination of attractions. Then Ivor was so perfectly unembarrassed, so cordial, yet so utterly devoid of any of the *empressment* which Mrs. Grant had dreaded, that her momentary fear on his account died out.

Certainly Mrs. Marsden was attractive—dangerously so; but then Ivor had stood the batteries of so many attractive women, the snares of so many beauties, that he might safely be trusted with one so securely fenced in by matronhood and motherhood as this woman. The children, too, delighted her with their grave shyness and quaint grace. As for little Jack, she fell down in perfect adoration before the solemn baby-face with its intense earnestness and sweet pathetic beauty—a beauty that no mother's eyes had ever yet gazed upon untouched, yet no mother's heart remembered without a pang of something too like fear for outward expression.

Having left the children in the housekeeper's charge, Ivor and Beryl were "doing" the picture-gallery in a leisurely and somewhat neglectful fashion, indulging in little desultory scraps of talk—gossip as to mutual acquaintances—London life—books—art—all the many topics that spring up between two people moving in the same sphere of life, and naturally intelligent and observant of the world around them.

"Do you remember our discussion on music the first night we met," asked Beryl laughingly, "and how you told me you could sing? Do you still do so?"

"Yes," he answered, pausing by her side, under one of Kneller's famous portraits which the living beauty beneath seemed to utterly extinguish—at least such was his private opinion. "And I remember too what a trick you played me about that young lady, whose notes ran up to the chandelier and down again, and reminded me of fireworks in more ways than one. Not only were they brilliant and uncertain, but they contained so many—crackers."

"Oh, for shame!" cried Beryl in pretended horror; but she laughed all the same—it seemed so easy to laugh to-day. "Doesn't it seem odd," she went on presently, "that we should only have met once? And yet I had been a month in town, and Madge knew so many people that you knew."

"I suppose you never thought of me again?" said Ivor, unwisely but impulsively.

He was surprised himself at the suspense with which he waited for her answer.

She was silent for a moment. Then her lips relaxed into a half-smile.

"Yes, I did. I could not help thinking of you, because you turned out so different to my preconceived idea. In those days I had a way of nicknaming people according to the fancy of the moment, and—"

She paused and coloured softly.

"And," he questioned gently, "you favoured me with some *sobriquet* also? I wish you would tell me what it was."

"Oh no," she said, shaking her head gravely; "I could not do that."

"And why?"

"Well, in the first instance, my judgment was incorrect; in the second, I should have to know you a long, long time before I could venture to tell you of my—rudeness—and expect you to forgive it."

"I think," he said very low and very earnestly, "there never could be a time in which you would ask for my forgiveness, and fail to obtain it."

"Spoken with a man's rashness," she answered lightly. "How can you tell? I might offend you dreadfully some day. I am not at all good at keeping friends."

"Friends, no; but a friend?"

She sighed softly; her eyes turned to the budding woods.

"I don't think I ever had one yet," she said at last.

Then they were both silent—Ivor for fear of the suddenly-checked impulse that longed to break into words, and she in that grave thoughtfulness which at times clouded the brightness of her face, and spoke of deeper cares below the surface.

"You are forgetting your duties of cicerone," she said at last. "I haven't had half the history of your ancestors yet. By the way, is Sir Hector such a great invalid?"

"At present he is laid up with that family heirloom, the gout," said Ivor. "When he is all right he is as brisk and active as I am."

"And do you find life dull here after London?"

"No, not now. I got somewhat *blasé*, used up, sick of the endless, useless life of pleasure I led. And my mother wanted me here. I think I was glad of the excuse to come."

"Your mother loves you greatly; anyone can see that," said Beryl thoughtfully.

"I believe she does," he answered with equal gravity. "Not that I deserve it—I am a selfish, idle fellow at best—but it is a way mothers have, I suppose."

She looked up with a smile.

"Are you alluding to me? Do you think I spoil my boys?"

"I don't think love can spoil anyone," said Ivor gently, "and yours is a wise love as well as a good one. There is something very beautiful in a mother's love," he added thoughtfully. "I think most men feel that in their hearts, even if they pretend to ridicule it. Perhaps as children we never understand or value it. It is only in after-years that the word 'mother' carries significance to our minds—tells us of something sweeter, holier, tenderer than words can quite express—a sort of pure, unconscious influence that once was about our days and hours, asking no reward, faithful even through neglect, and forgetfulness, and sin."

As he ceased speaking he looked at her.

"You—you were going to say—"

"Only that you make me very much ashamed of my errors in judgment," she said, laughing and flushing alternately. "What business have you to turn out so very different to what I thought you?"

"I am sorry," he said apologetically. "It was very good of you to fancy me better than I am, or, indeed, to think of me at all, but—"

"Oh," interrupted Beryl hastily, "did I say that I had fancied you—better—than I find you? Might it not be the reverse?"

He looked puzzled.

"If you would tell me the *sobriquet* you once gave me, I might find some clue to your real opinion. I confess I am at a loss to understand your words."

"Don't try," she said lightly. "I assure you they're not worth it."

"I have my own opinion as to that. Besides, you pique my curiosity. Will you give me leave to try and find out for myself?"

"Assuredly," she said, her lips one dimpled line of happy laughter now. "Full and free permission, for you could never, never discover it."

"Don't be too sure," he answered pleasantly. "If you put me on my mettle I shall leave no stone unturned till the discovery is made."

"And then?" she questioned, colouring despite herself at the grave challenge of the eyes she met.

"And then," he answered, his voice sinking to a lower tone, "I will take my revenge, of course."

"Mummy, mummy!" shrieked an ecstatic voice from the opening door of the gallery, "me's dot two tittens, and such a funny 'tittle bowwow. And the lady says me may have one for my very own; and does 'oo think the mummy pussy will be very angedy if me takes one away? She—she's tummin' to ask you!"

Tableau. Jack with one kitten clasped to his breast and another held in the skirt of his frock, and the distressed mother walking round and round, giving vent to anxious cries for her offspring's return.

Behind, Cyril with a small fluffy dog, very black, very curly, very difficult to hold.

All serious talk was at an end.

Beryl went down on her knees to examine the new treasures, the little lads leaning against her and bending their eager heads beside her own, the light from the stained oriel falling in a lovely glow of violet, and amber, and crimson over the pretty group. Ivor stood there and watched them, his face grave almost to pain.

It seemed to him in that moment that he at last knew what his beautiful home lacked, and yet that the knowledge had come too late to be of any use.

So often, so sadly often, knowledge does come in similar fashion to our blind and wilful hearts.

#### CHAPTER IV. FOR MOTHER'S SAKE.

"Me's had such a happy day, mummy," said little Jack. He was sitting on his mother's knee by the bedroom fire. In his

arms was clasped the tiny fluffy dog which, along with one of the "tittens," Ivor had insisted upon presenting to him.

Cyril, standing opposite, and gravely undressing himself, surveyed the pair with somewhat wistful eyes. Of course it was nice to be old and strong, and no longer a baby in frocks and pinafores, still—well, mother never petted him like that, and he could not help feeling a little envious of Jack's privileges now and then.

"Me hasn't tried once," persisted Jack, doubling up his rosy feet, and hugging himself together in a fashion that rather discompoised the fluffy one, who uttered his remonstrance in the form of a sharp velp.

"Why should you cry?" asked Cyril, with his usual contempt for his baby brother's speeches. "It's so stupid, and it doesn't do you any good."

"Me tan't help it sometimes," said the little fellow wistfully. "Me thinks mummy is angry."

"I am never angry with you, my sweet," said his mother fondly.

"Not when me's a 'tittle bit naughty like me was this morning?"

"Well, certainly you were naughty to get up without leave, and then go all in the wet grass. But Cyril is older than you, and should have known better than to let you. You must never do it again. Six o'clock is quite early enough to get up, and I generally wake then."

Cyril turned aside his flushed proud face. Of course it was his fault—he was always in the wrong. Yet had not Jack suggested the idea, and harped upon it all the previous day? He had only carried it out.

"Me's very tired," said little Jack, with a sleepy yawn. "Me do to sleep now in mummy's arms."

"And what's Pluff to do?" enquired Beryl.

"I thought you couldn't go to sleep without saying your prayers," interposed Cyril, who attired himself in his little nightgown, and now came and leant against his mother's side.

Jack looked wistfully at the fire and the little cot, and his eyes drooped very heavily now.

"May me say me own pwayers?" he asked.

"Any you like, my darling," answered Beryl.

He folded his little hands, too tired to slip down and kneel on the rug.

He was asleep almost before the little prayer was finished, cradled in the tender arms that were so sweet and sure a refuge for all his baby woes. Pluff had escaped and curled himself into a round black ball on the rug.

Cyril still stood leaning against his mother's shoulder, his eyes, unusually thoughtful, gazing into the bright coals as they leapt into flame or shadow. The silence had lasted so long that he thought his mother had forgotten him, and he looked at her face and saw it bent in rapt and awestruck adoration above the lovely little sleeper in her arms.

The little face was colourless as marble, dark rings of ruffled hair fell over the blue-veined forehead, the lashes of the closed eyes hung like a fringe of dusky shadow upon the white cheeks, and through the parted lips the faint breath came slow and soft, and sweet as scents of flowers in spring.

"Are the angels like that, do you think?" asked Cyril softly, as if even to his careless, joyous nature something in that stillness and holiness appealed with an unknown and inexpressible power.

She started—not so much at the voice, as at the echo of an undefinable fear that it had struck from the chords of her own heart.

"They cannot be fairer," she said with a half sob, rising and laying the beloved little figure down in its resting-place for the night.

Then she came back and knelt down on the soft rug, and drew her eldest born into her arms.

"Cyril," she said, and her face was very grave, and her voice had such a strange pathos in its full tones that the boy's quick ear caught it, and for long, long after years seemed to treasure it in his heart, as then she never dreamt he would; "Cyril, my dear, I want to speak to you very seriously for a few moments. You know you are much older than Jack, and stronger too, and you must try and not lead him into mischief as you so often do. He is such a delicate little fellow, and if—if anything ever happened to him through your carelessness or thoughtlessness how sorry you would feel in after years. And another thing, my darling, you know I have come home with you both because India did not suit you, as indeed it seldom does suit children, but papa may not care for me to stop here long, and then I should have to leave you and go back alone, and—"

"Oh, mother, mother!" a cry so low, so stifled, so full of the tears the eyes were too brave to show, that it smote her to the heart.

"Don't fret, dear, I am only telling you what might happen. I don't say it will. And if it did, I should like to think that you

would be very good and very careful of your little brother, and look after him as well as ever you can for mother's sake. And then when I come home to see you, and find you both so strong, and clever, and good—"

"I can never be good," sighed Cyril despairingly; "I try so hard, but somehow I'm always doing something wrong."

"But you will try very hard," urged his mother gently, drawing him closer still in that strange urgency of feeling which neither could explain, and one was never to forget.

"Yes, I will try," said the boy gently, clinging to her with a suppressed intensity of his own sorrow, all the more touching in that it was so new and so unexpected a thing. "But do you think really you will have to leave us here and go back across the sea? Do you love papa better than us?"

"Heaven help me, no!" came in a stifled cry from the mother's lips. She could not say more. She could not explain how just because there was no love for that stern, neglectful father in her heart, the sense of duty waxed but stronger and pointed with imperative finger along a rough and stony path that called itself her future. She could not say this, or indeed anything of the dread and pain with which her heart was filled. He was so young, and she gave him credit for only a young child's depth of feeling. Yet she clung to him now in a passion of grief, as to some frail spar that would drift her into a haven of refuge when the dark and unknown sea of the coming years had been braved and passed.

They were silent for a brief time.

"Should we have to go to school?" asked Cyril at last, in a low reluctant whisper.

"I—I am afraid so. In his letter papa says—"

"I don't want to hear what papa says," said the boy coldly. "Papa never loved us. He doesn't care whether we are happy or miserable, or ill, or—or anything. He never did. And if he takes you away from us I shall hate him."

"Oh, hush, hush! You mustn't talk like that, my child. You are too young to understand what is best for you. Papa has other things to think of, you know. Money and business, and all that. I—I have only you."

"Jack wouldn't like school," said Cyril again. "He's so little and so timid, and then he's so fond of you. Can't you think of him if you were away, so lonely and so sorry? and I couldn't help him one bit."

She could think of him, aye, and did, even while she tried to put the thought away, and treat it as some far-off possibility that after all might never touch them half so nearly as their own fears touched them now. She did think of it for long hours after the boy had gone to bed, when she sat in the rectory parlour by her father's side, hearing his praises of the great and fortunate merchant to whom her life was bound, listening with a sad smile to the comments on her own good-fortune. Think of it, yes, and think, too, of her starved heart and lonely life, of the sad and pitiful mistake she had once made, and for which there could never be any remedy now!

Think of it, aye, and look back, too, on the sacrificed girlhood, when circumstances had laid so many a mesh that then she had never even suspected. Think of it until she saw herself changed as she was changed now. The frank, free spirit only asserting itself against a thousand mean and hopeless tyrannies—the light, and laughter, and natural joyousness of her nature alternately crushed or subdued to meet the demands of a selfish and gloomy despot.

No one but herself knew what her inner life was—how utterly unsuited in every degree of feeling, tastes, dispositions, sympathies, were she and the man she had wedded six years ago.

There are some conceptions of duty too deep for mortal ken, and Beryl Foster's had always been a very strong one. The same respect and obedience she had yielded to her father she had been prepared to yield her husband. Of any other feeling she had had no thought. How soon she found out what a terrible mistake she had made, it needs not to say. Human lives are full of such errors, so full that one can but hope for more pitiful judgment hereafter than ever we meet from our fellow-men below; so full that the burden of life is but one weight after another of the foolish, impulsive, short-sighted actions that make up the sum-total of that life's arithmetic; so full that the only wonder is we glean even a little glimpse of happiness here and there, a something to cheer us with hope, or sweeten our days with sunshine, lest indeed we grow quite desperate, or quite evil, or quite mad.

Gradually and surely Beryl Marsden's nature would have deteriorated had it not been for the love and delight that had come to her with her children's birth. They gave her back her youth; their love unlocked the floodgates of her own wealth of passionate feeling. For their sakes she bore her cross as many another martyred womanhood has borne it, and turned a bright, brave face to the world that envied her.

Yet, as the years went on, she learnt that to display these feelings only served as a fresh weapon in the hands of her taskmaster, for

through them his sordid and tyrannical nature stabbed her in a thousand petty ways.

The utter breaking down of her own health, and little Jack's extreme delicacy, had been the sole cause of his reluctant consent to her going to England with the children.

The doctor had insisted upon it so stringently, that for appearance sake he was obliged to yield; but, as Beryl had told Cyril that night, his very first letter had been full of some project to curtail her stay and embitter its hours of liberty with an unending dread.

She tried to kindle some spark of sympathy in her father's heart, but he had an idea that mothers were apt to be foolish over their sons, and thought it really his duty to take her husband's view of the case.

What man living ever did understand that pang of heartache, that sick, cold, horrible dread which rends a mother's soul in twain as she thinks of her carefully-guarded treasures passing into a stranger's hands? As she dwells on the countless little wants to which she has ministered, and which she feels assured no alien mind can understand; of the tender nature, which is like a sensitive-plant to rough handling, and must undergo agonies in the rude and careless school of life, turning in vain for the accustomed sympathy and perfect comprehension of a mother's love, and, failing that, growing hard, and chilled, and sullen, for very inability to seek or find an answering comprehension.

All these things Beryl thought of, while her father prosed on, with that utter inability to comprehend his daughter's pain and solitude of heart that is often a distinct mark of the sympathy of one's own kindred.

All these things crushing and lying heavily upon her, she left him at last with her accustomed good-night, and went upstairs to her own room.

Stooping over first one, then the other, of the little beds, she saw the angel-face of one sweet sleeper calm and placid as his dreams, but on Cyril's lashes the tears were glistening still, and his rest was broken ever and anon by a low and sobbing sigh.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## When the Golden Stars Shine Out.

'Tis when the golden stars shine out  
Upon the brow of night,  
And circle round their silver queen,  
Like sparkling gems of light,  
That then amid the silent calm  
Of Nature's peace and rest,  
Sweet tender thoughts of thee, dear love,  
Rise softly in my breast.

The distance is as nothing now  
That thine and my life parts,  
Nor time nor space can break the chain  
That binds our two fond hearts.  
And at the still and midnight hour  
I wake and think of thee,  
And hope if thou art waking too,  
Thou hast a thought for me.

Not much of time for loving thoughts  
Is ours throughout the day;  
The round of toil and constant care  
Drives tender dreams away.  
'Tis when the restful night hath come,  
And moonlight gilds the sea,  
'Tis when the golden stars shine out,  
That then I think of thee.

## "Lovely and Pleasant."

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"Oh, I say, Miss Raymond, it is just too bad! You might at least give me an extra. What is the use of only two waltzes?"

"Really, Mr. Merriman, you are very hard to please. I kept those two expressly for you, and now you are not satisfied. I assure you I have not a single one left. Look for yourself." And Violet Raymond, the prettiest and most popular girl in the town, laughingly held out her programme.

"I don't want to see," was the sulky rejoinder. "You might have kept me an extra."

"We are wasting our dance, Miss Raymond." And the tall, good-looking gunner who had been waiting with visible impatience while his partner spoke to the two young subalterns who had

accosted them, offered his arm to the girl. She took it, and with a smile at the other two, turned to go back with him to the dancing-room. "Those boys are really absurdly impudent. I think you are too kind to them. You ought to snub them a little."

The words, spoken in a tone that there was scarcely an attempt to lower, reached—as the speaker was perfectly indifferent whether they did or not—the ears of the two left behind.

"I'd like to wring his neck—he gives himself such confounded airs!" exclaimed Merriman savagely. "Boys, indeed! We're just as good men as he is any day, and I would soon show him that, if he would only give me a chance."

And the young militiaman certainly looked—if energy and force of feeling, and a strong determination to assert his own dignity, go towards making a man—that he was well qualified for the title.

"He's quite right. We are only boys," returned the other in a slightly drawing tone, which, with his half-shut eyes and general air of languor, gave an idea of perpetual sleepiness. He had stood quietly by while his friend had been pleading for a dance from the belle of the room, and had listened patiently to Oscar Merriman's violent tirade against the other man. "We aren't twenty-one. I shall not be grown-up for two months yet. Till then we are only hobbledehoes. That's what a girl called me the other day. I overheard her. Come along!"

"No, I won't. It's beastly. I shouldn't mind if Arundale were a decent sort of a fellow, but you know there are a jolly sight too many stories about him to make him fit to be the husband of a girl like that, and, hang it all! if a man——"

"Boy."

"Do shut up, Garth, or I'll knock you down. If a fellow can't win the girl he wants, at least he would like to see a respectable man step into his shoes."

His friend had nothing to say to this most disinterested sentiment, so he remained silent, and waited quietly till Merriman should have recovered a little from his irritation. But at present he was evidently too ruffled to move, and sat with his hands in his pockets, his legs stretched out, rubbing his head backwards and forwards against the wall. They were outside in the parade-ground, about which the guests wandered between the dances. Seats had been placed along the walls of the fort, on the flagged pavement where the dancers strolled up and down; but with the exception of a little cluster of girls, partnerless, sitting with their chaperons, and one or two of those men who seem to have no earthly reason for going to a dance at all, for they neither dance nor attempt to make themselves agreeable, but only get in everybody's way by filling up doorways, and lingering about the refreshment-room, the two had it nearly all to themselves.

It was a lovely afternoon towards the end of June. Fort Ravine lay bathed in sunshine. The heat was almost too great for dancing, yet the band, playing one of Waldteufel's sweetest waltzes, had evidently proved irresistible, and the long mess-room given up to the dancing was crowded. It was a waltz to which Oscar Merriman and Violet Raymond had often danced together, and as the strains floated towards him, and he pictured Captain Arundale enjoying what he was deprived of, he grew still more savage, and brought his heels down on to the ground with such an impatient energy that Garth, who had been gazing listlessly at one or two squads of men doing punishment-drill in the distance, turned and looked at him.

They were both good-looking young fellows; Sydney Garth was really the handsomer of the two, but he never made the same impression on people as his friend Oscar Merriman. The latter was always the favourite both with men and women. There was a reckless dash about him, a curious eccentricity in dress and manner that carried with it a sense of individuality, and made him noticeable.

This power of impressing people with your own personality is a great thing in an age when civilisation seems trying to polish and pare down men and women until they present a uniform and therefore slightly uninteresting appearance. Sydney Garth was generally considered rather slow and stupid, and no one knew if it were shyness or natural reserve that seemed to fence him off from the rest of his fellow-creatures.

The friendship between the two, unless from sheer force of contrast, was an unaccountable one. But it was evidently very real. It had begun at school, continued through their career at a crammer's, and they had finally apparently both made up their minds to work really hard at last and pass together into the line.

This was a necessity with Oscar Merriman, who, unlike Sydney Garth, had no private means, while the latter was the heir of a rich but eccentric uncle.

This friendship, and the fact that Oscar Merriman was broad-shouldered and of a good height, with a complexion that but for his outdoor life would have been fair as a girl's, and bore some resemblance to the description given of the Israelite king, had gained for the two the nickname of Jonathan and David.

Garth was tall, and of a slighter build, with a dark complexion, and a faint air of delicacy that perhaps accounted for his indolence.

Merriman was the voice and Garth the echo. The two were never apart, and now in this unfortunate love-affair that had so terribly upset poor Oscar Merriman, Sydney Garth, without saying much, would show himself in his cool, slow way sympathetic and patient. Merriman's devotion to Violet Raymond through the whole of the training had been the amusement of all the beholders. It made no difference to his affection that she was two years older than himself. He never once wavered in his devotion, bearing patiently the merciless chaffing of his brother-officers, as well as the alternate coldness or kindness with which Violet herself treated him. But the appearance on the scene of Captain Arundale had been the finishing-touch to the unrest and bitterness that had so troubled the careless life of the young subaltern. He would enlarge on the subject for hours to Garth, who in his turn would say very little, while the amount of cigars the two got through during these confidences threatened seriously to impair their constitutions. Things were proving very hard for Merriman this afternoon.

"It's horribly hot out here," said Garth as his disconsolate friend showed no signs of moving, and was evidently perfectly unconscious of the fact that the sun was shining full on to his unprotected head, and was not improving the colour of his nose. "Let's go in and have an ice. A vanilla is soothing to the brain. Besides, there's no reason why we should let that fellow crow over us. He will be outside soon, and you'll be the chaff of the place if he sees you knocking your head against the wall in that deplorable condition. I say, do come."

With a growl Merriman rose, but he had come to a decision, and when once Oscar Merriman made up his mind he never wavered. There was an amount of dogged perseverance or obstinacy in him that would have startled most of his friends and acquaintances if they had suspected its existence. At least Violet Raymond should not marry Captain Arundale without knowing what manner of man he was.

He would have nothing to say for himself, but, boy as he was, his love was great enough to think of her happiness before his own. When he went to claim her for the waltz, instead of dancing, he asked her to go with him to the gun-room. He led her to the farther end, where they could talk uninterruptedly. Then he stopped suddenly and faced her. His face was a little flushed, but his eyes were clear and true, while a new kind of dignity seemed to have taken the place of the "spoilt-boy" kind of manner he generally put on.

He had never appeared to such advantage before, and Violet Raymond, noticing the change, was a little startled, even impressed by it.

"I am not going to bother you," he said as he saw from her face that she dreaded one of the wild declarations and appeals to which he was in the habit of treating her. "I will not trouble you about myself again, though I shall never love anybody as I love you. No, don't look vexed, Miss Raymond, I'm not going to begin," and his voice, which had trembled a little, grew steady again. "The two years you are always saying make such a barrier between us are nothing to me. If you were ten years older I should care for you just the same, and work and wait for you. Nothing can change what I feel for you, but I don't want to cause you pain, as you said I did, by making you refuse me. I only say this now because I want you to think that I don't mean to be impertinent in what I am going to say—that I love you too much for that, and that I must say it, though I dare say you will hate me for it. Captain Arundale—"

Violet flushed hotly, and she made a sudden movement, but Merriman went on:

"He admires you awfully, I know, and you have money, and he is fearfully in debt. Please don't, for your own sake, have anything to say to him. I know," the colour in the boy's face deepened, "lots of things about him that wouldn't be fit for you to hear, but he has behaved so badly that—"

"Thank you, Mr. Merriman," said Violet slowly, drawing herself up to her full height. "I scarcely thought that even a boy's impertinence could go so far. Your love, as you call it, gives you strange licence."

The next moment she was half-way down the gun-room.

Her icy tones, her cutting speech, stabbed poor Merriman to the heart.

He stood looking straight before him, while the big gun facing him seemed to become suddenly indistinct through an odd kind of mist that came between him and it.

"I've just done for myself," he said when he could collect his thoughts. "It is awful!"

He drew out an elaborately-bordered pocket-handkerchief and passed it slowly over his pale face as he leaned back against the wall. Then, after a few minutes, he made his way out to the passage. Garth was standing there, talking to an acquaintance.

Merriman went up to him.

"Come out and take a turn, Garth. I feel ill."

"You do look ill," said Garth's companion, a pleasant-looking girl. "Yes, go by all means, Mr. Garth. He's as white as a sheet. He's had a sunstroke, I dare say, and no wonder, sitting out, as he has been, in the blazing sun, with no hat on. I will wait here for you."

The two friends departed arm-in-arm. They found a secluded spot on the ramparts, and, sitting down, Merriman told him what had happened.

"You were a fool!" was all the comment Garth made.

"I know I was, but what was a fellow to do? It makes one's blood boil to think of what that man is—a cold-hearted sneering cad, with no faith in anything in heaven or on earth. Garth, you can't imagine how I love her. I can't give her up. If I can win her on this side of the grave I'll do it."

Garth did not speak.

"Wouldn't you do the same, old man?"

"It sounds rather impossible, does not it?" returned Garth slowly, as he gazed meditatively at the toes of his boots.

"Perhaps so, but I would wait years." Then his eager face grew troubled. "It's awfully hard lines, being without a penny, as I am. If I had only a little money of my own it would be so different. I should feel that I had more to offer. Still, there are a good many turns in the wheel. I may be well off yet one day, and as you are the only man I ever want for a friend, so she is the only woman I will ever have for a wife. I sha'n't leave here directly the training's over. I shall hang about, and I will write and let you know how matters are going on."

"Yes. Don't you think I had better go and find my partner? She may think it odd."

Three months later, Violet was married to Captain Arundale.

Another two years saw the fulfilment of Oscar Merriman's prophecy. Captain Arundale, a reckless gambler, hampered by debt, had only married Violet for her money. He had never cared for her—worse still, all the love he had to give was given to another woman. Violet had borne patiently the squandering of her money, but this discovery did what no coldness nor prospect of being left penniless had effected.

She left him and went back to her mother.

## CHAPTER II.

"You here, Garth? It's awfully good of you to come. I meant to try and look you up this evening, as I hadn't seen you for the last day or two; but I'm just done up entirely;" and Oscar Merriman, unbuckling his sword as he greeted Garth, who had been waiting for him in his quarters, flung himself down on the bed, stretching himself out at full length.

The separation which had taken place after they had been gazetted to different regiments, had not been of long duration, and the two young men found themselves shut up with their respective battalions in Candahar, waiting for the relieving columns.

There had been a sortie this day, in which Merriman's regiment only had taken part, and Garth, as soon as he was off duty, had gone up to spend a short time with him. As Merriman lay there, the back of his head resting on his arms, his eyes half closed, it was a little difficult to reconcile his present appearance with the wonderfully clothed young dandy of a few months ago. His uniform worn and stained with the effects of work and weather, his face and hands at this moment very decidedly grimy, and burnt red with exposure to the sun and air, made him look very different to the youth, the tightness and varied hues of whose faultlessly fitting garments had been the wonder and astonishment of his friends at home.

Garth's appearance was not much better, and he too at this moment looked, in spite of the sun's tan, tired and rather done up, as if he had found his work on the fortifications nearly as trying as that in which Merriman had taken part. But there was something more than fatigue in Merriman's face and expression as he lay stretched out on the bed, and Garth saw it, and waited for the explanation.

It came at last.

"Arundale's gone," said Merriman abruptly, turning his head a little away from the window through which the light was streaming.

"Killed?"

"Yes."

There was a short silence.

Then there came another restless movement from the bed, and Merriman sat up.

"I would have saved him if I could, Garth."

"Yes, I know," returned Garth, not looking round, and Merriman fell back again.

"A shot struck him just as we thought everything was right."

Then for the space of six or seven minutes a silence reigned between the two.

A great many changes had taken place since that afternoon-dance. Perhaps not the least was that from the careless, light-hearted, reckless gaieties of their old English stations to the stern realities of war with its terrible fatalities and ceaseless anxieties.

But the old schoolboy attachment which used to result in such wild freaks and escapades, was as strong and real as ever, had even been deepened by the perils and dangers that surrounded them. Neither had they in any way forgotten the past, though they rarely ever alluded to it, generally spending the short time their respective duties in the besieged town allowed them to be together in discussing the progress of the war.

Perhaps the present, with its dark anxieties, was too absorbing to allow them to dwell much upon events that had become only a memory. By one of those strange orderings of fate, Captain Arundale was also in Candahar. Naturally in the course of their duty the three came across each other now and then. Garth spoke to him occasionally, but Merriman never exchanged a word with him, neither had he ever till this day mentioned his name either in anger or contempt to Garth. But the intensity of his dislike was proved by the shock that the man's death had given him.

In the fact, and the light it brought with it, of Arundale's utter inability ever to return any more the contemptuous hatred that the younger man felt towards him, of the awful and complete check that had been laid upon him, which had taken from him all power to mar or wound, or even to repent in this life for ever—the hatred and wrath which Merriman had thought justifiable and even righteous, appeared a thing terrible, unclean, unholy.

It seemed as if when the man, who, whatever his faults, was a splendid soldier, and at the moment of his death had been doing his duty as the noblest and best man would have done, was struck down, all bitterness, and anger, and desire of vengeance had been swept away from Merriman's heart as the leaves of a tree blasted by some scorching flame, and the revulsion of feeling which set in sickened him.

Violet was free, but at what a cost! No matter what the pain and suffering had been, could anyone be glad at such a way of escape?

With a muttered exclamation of weariness, something very like a groan, Merriman rolled himself over, and turned his face away from the window with its crimson light.

The impatient movement roused Garth. He turned his head, and looked for a second or two on the recumbent figure of his friend. It was an odd sort of look—steady, sustained, intent, as if he were looking at a kind of moral conflict in which he could have no share himself because he had no interest at stake, but in which contest every blow given and received, every advantage lost or won, had a reflection in the quiet passionless sweep of his own soul's current. He was not in the fight, but he might have been. Was he thinking that, and was it regret, pain, or pity for his friend who had entered the lists and been discomfited which darkened for a moment his grave face?

He was the first to break the silence, as, rising from his seat on the table, he said in his ordinary voice:

"Going to sleep, old fellow? Well, I'm off too. What a head I've got, to be sure! I was just going without the very thing I came to say, that is, in case—and of course there is always the probability—anything should happen to me—"

"What!" exclaimed Merriman, sitting straight upright and staring at Garth, who was carefully arranging his white helmet before a wonderful little mirror of Merriman's hanging on the wall, a glass which had a strange faculty of so altering the features of the person reflected in it, that it would have been difficult for a mother to recognise them as those of her own offspring, especially if she had any previous convictions on the subject of her child's beauty.

"Don't shout like that," he said rather testily, having apparently fixed the strap of the helmet to his own satisfaction. "I was only going to say that if I get knocked over—"

His sentence was brought to an abrupt conclusion by the rug that Merriman, catching up from under his own head, flung at him.

"If you are going to talk that rot, you had better stay away for the future. Just as if there weren't enough things to worry a fellow without you going to add to the number."

"It isn't rot. Don't you remember with those two fellows, Jonathan and David, Jonathan was potted first and David made a lament over him. I wonder what yours would be like?" Garth laughed as he spoke, but infectious as his laugh usually was, Merriman for once did not join in it. "Well, I'm really off now. There's your man coming across the court."

"Good-bye. I say, just chuck me back that rug again. It's a soft one. I'll come and look you up some time soon—to-morrow, if possible," said Merriman, catching the rug which Garth tossed back to him.

Merriman remained for a second or two half-raised on his elbow, listening to the quick, light steps of Garth as they struck sharp and clear on the flags of the court outside, while gradually into the depths of his eyes stole a light that certainly gave the lie to the scepticism of the nineteenth century, which laughs politely at loves and friendships, and maintains that, in the busy whirl of its everyday life, men and women have not time to stay and wring each other's hands.

But there was no one there to see or profit by its confession of faith, unless perhaps the invisible witnesses whose presence is taken little account of in these days of material and common-sense worship, and Oscar Merriman's head went down again on to the rug.

To-morrow, and to-morrow!

We dream our dreams in the night, and wake in the daylight only to learn their emptiness.

Fate holds in its hand a weapon stronger than our loves and our friendships, our hates and desires, our hopes and our aspirations, and that weapon is—death.

This passionless peace, this white stillness, may be well for the wearied, the unhappy, the halting, but for the young, and the brave, and the happy, what is this enforced quietude beside the rush and stir of life's grand battle, where every noble aspiration may mean a glorious victory?

If Merriman could have thought at all, he might have asked this question as he hurried, some days later, through the streets of Candahar, past the groups of excited men still discussing the result of the sortie which had been made that day, and which had ended in so disastrous a loss of life. It seemed as if he had not thought at all since that moment, a few hours before, when Garth, the friend he had fought so desperately to reach, had been struck down before he could come near him. He knew nothing after that, only that he had been in a fierce, mad fight, and that among the dead and dying Garth had been carried back into the town. The moment he himself was free, he had started off to see him.

Garth seemed to have been expecting him, for he was lying with his face turned towards the door of the small room in which he had been placed, and as Merriman's figure appeared in the doorway his face brightened.

Merriman had intended greeting him in their usual undemonstrative fashion, but the news he had just heard outside the door from one of the doctors, and the sight of Garth's white face, proved too much for him.

"Oh, Garth—Garth!" he exclaimed, sinking down on the edge of the narrow couch.

"Is that David's lament?" asked Garth rather faintly, but with a smile so like and yet so strangely unlike his usual one, that it went straight to the heart of Merriman like the stab of a dagger. It seemed so to seal and ratify the doctor's verdict.

"I say, don't, old fellow," he said, his voice sharp with the pain. "The doctor said you weren't to talk. I've nothing to do, so I've come to sit by you for a little."

"I sha'n't keep you long."

"Garth, it's positively wicked for you to talk like that. You'll never get well if you don't look on the bright side of the question."

Garth did not answer, only the same curious smile fluttered across his pale lips; and Merriman knew what it meant. He rose abruptly and walked over to the window.

"It is jolly that you have got the room to yourself," he said, coming back to the bedside, the short pause giving him time to steady his voice.

"Yes, I'm glad. I've something to say, and—"

"You're not to say anything," said Merriman shortly.

And then there was a silence.

One of the doctors came into the room to look at his patient, and he told Merriman what he was to do and what he was to give him.

Merriman said he would not require help, as he meant to stay till it was time to go on duty, and Garth seconded his wish. The doctor left them alone, for he and his colleagues were very busy, and there was nothing to be done here beyond the common services for alleviating the pain of a sick-room. Nothing could stay the life so fast ebbing away.

Neither of the two spoke much. Merriman could not. He was afraid to trust his own voice, lest it should betray the hopeless pain of his heart, and mar in any way the faintest possible chance there might still be for Garth's life.

Garth was too weak to say much at all, and it required all his strength of will not to betray the pain that was racking him, and so add to the hardness of his friend's watch.

He knew that he was dying, but he was too exhausted and too suffering to know whether he cared much if he were or not, or if death appeared as stern and merciless a fate as it might have seemed if he had been strong and well, only he was glad that he had settled everything in time, and that there would never be any more reason



for poor Merriman's occasional railings against fortune for the poverty which, even if he had won Violet's love, would have necessitated so long a waiting before he could claim her as his own. So he lay quietly there, accepting gratefully the ministrations of Merriman, who proved an unwearied nurse, while he was even less able to think than Merriman himself. The long weary night had almost passed away, the watch by the sick-bed being only broken by the usual round of hospital visits.

For the last hour Garth had been perfectly silent, and as he lay with closed eyes, his breath, which had been short and laboured, coming gradually slower and deeper, Merriman thought he was asleep, and a wild hope sprang up in his heart that the doctor might have been mistaken after all. As he sat there keeping his patient, tender watch, almost pathetic in its contrast with its keeper, the strong, stalwart young subaltern who, but a short time before, had been the despair of his crammers, the incorrigible young militiaman, the life and the soul of every mad escapade in any place he might be quartered at, all their past life—at school, with their tutors, through their trainings—came back to him. For the first time he saw clearly what Garth had been to him through all that time. It was always Garth. Garth who had helped him out of difficulties. Garth who had kept close to him in all his troubles, whether brought on by his own fault or by outward circumstances. Garth whose good advice, given in that curious indifferent way of his, as if he did not care much whether it were taken or not, which never wounded or irritated by its assumption of superiority, but was always so good and true, that had helped and guided Merriman when, otherwise, he would have failed and given in. He had led Garth? Why, it was he who had guided and governed him, only with such a simple, honest, unselfish away, that he had never felt the rule, but had been strengthened, encouraged, directed all unwittingly. Why, it was Garth who had made him what he was, and enabled him to enter on a profession which was honourable and glorious, for if it had not been for Garth's grumblings and lectures at his indolence and recklessness, he would long ago have given in and emigrated, perhaps only to die in want and degradation on some distant gold-fields. The thought of it all almost maddened him, accompanied as it was with the dread knowledge that nothing he could do could hold back his friend from the beckoning hand of death. Like David with his son Absalom, he could have cried out, "Would God I had died instead of thee." But Absalom died just as Jonathan had died before him, and all David's love and grief could save neither.

There was a slight movement from the bed, and Merriman, with the strength of devotion subduing every trace of trouble in his voice, forced himself to speak gently and quietly. Garth was awake—if he had been asleep—and was trying to raise himself a little.

Merriman lifted him up gently and arranged the pillows, rather awkwardly, as hands unaccustomed to sick nursing are liable to be, but the tender care of his touch made the slight discomfort of little account in Garth's eyes.

"Thanks, dear old boy," he said rather slowly, but in so much stronger a voice that Merriman's heart gave a throb of gratitude. "I have something to say to you, and you must not interrupt as you did before. Before I came here I made a will, leaving you everything. There is no one else, and I could do as I like. No; it is no use you making a fuss. It is done. Only there are just a few legacies——"

A scarlet flush dyed Garth's pale face, but he would not heed Merriman's entreaties to be silent. It seemed as if, knowing his time was short, he wished to make haste.

"The legacies are to one or two people. One is Violet Arundale. Let me finish. I knew she was left without anything, and I thought even if ever she were able to, she might not care to marry again, so if I could help her I would. You don't mind, Merriman?" he asked entreatingly. "You will let me do so much for her?"

He looked up into Merriman's startled face as he spoke.

What was it in the look that drove every drop of blood from Merriman's lips? He turned away abruptly from the bedside, and took a half turn across the room.

"Garth," he said in a low, strained voice, as he came back suddenly and sank down by the bedside, "does it mean that? Oh, Garth!"

Garth returned the questioning misery of Merriman's look by one as steady and quiet as if death had indeed brought its promised peace to all tempted and suffering spirits.

"It does not matter now, Merriman, or else I should not have told you. Only I thought if you ever guessed it afterwards, from that legacy, you might be sorry, and I should like you to know that it did not really matter. I think I always loved her from the first day I saw her. Do you remember that dance at Eastney? Don't look like that," he continued, his own face growing troubled at the sight of Merriman's; "I didn't mind. She never cared for

me. It was she who called me a hobbledlehey," a faint smile coming into his face as he spoke.

"But you never tried to make her think otherwise. And to think how I must have hurt you sometimes with——" And Merriman laid his head down on his arms as they rested on the bed by which he was kneeling, and could have groaned aloud at the thoughts that overwhelmed him.

How he had talked of his love and his doubts and fears to Garth, who had listened so patiently, never betraying what he must have felt during those long confidences; how he had never spared Garth, but constantly devised plans for throwing him into the society of Violet in his own endeavours to be always near her!

"It worries me to see you take it so much to heart," said Garth appealingly, his voice already growing fainter, and the pauses between his words longer. "I really didn't mind so much. Only once, it was hard—that night you came to my rooms in town and told me that you had just met her in the train, coming up all alone to London, after she left Arundale, not knowing where to go—I felt half mad to think that she was so near, in such trouble, and I could do nothing for her. If I had dared, I almost felt I would have offered her a home. Don't think me a brute. It was only for a moment."

"A brute, Garth! What have I been?"

"The jolliest friend a fellow could have," said the other, stretching out his hand and meeting Merriman's half-way.

It was not one of the easiest parts of the latter's task to sit there passive and quiet, keeping back the burning words of his pain and remorse, but he saw that Garth could not bear much more.

"You will be kind to my people in Scotland, and do what you can for them? They have been very good servants and tenants. You and Violet will look after them if you ever win her; perhaps you will, now she is free. She always said she would like to live in Scotland."

"Garth, I cannot stand it! I owe you everything, and then to come between you and trying to gain her love, it is——"

"You must not think of that. I would not have lost you as a friend for anything. What was it David said of Jonathan? That is what your friendship has been to me."

But Merriman was beyond an answer. Passing the love of woman, could his own affection, true though it had been, make up for the loss of Violet's love, which perhaps Garth might have won if he had tried? Could any devotion on Merriman's part fill up the measure of his sacrifice, made so simply and quietly? All that he could say to himself as he sat there, his face turned away from Garth's eyes, was, that his friend had been very lovely and pleasant in his life, and that now that life was ending, and the pleasant things of loyal friendship and tried trusts were vanishing into that past from which there was no coming back.

A slight movement from the bed roused him, and as he turned to look, he could see even by the dim light in the room that there was a change, as if the awful wing of death's angel had already come between Garth and earth's light, and cast its grey shadow upon his face, as he lay back exhausted on his pillow. Merriman's first impulse was to rush for help, but Garth's appeal stopped him.

"Lift me up, I don't want anyone else," and as Merriman placed his strong arms round him, and raised him gently, a look of relief came into Garth's eyes.

"The night is coming."

"No, it is morning," said Merriman, not knowing himself how his voice could be so quiet and steady with that burden in his arms. "Look," he added, looking towards the window, through which could be seen in the far east the first opal tints of the dawn, to lighten in a few minutes into the glorious splendour of a new day.

Afterwards his words seemed to bear another meaning, but then they were only uttered with a passionate longing to interest his friend for just a little longer in the things of this life.

"Is it? It is growing so dark."

"Do you mind very much, Garth?" asked Merriman, while he could scarcely see, through a mist of pain, the face of Garth as it lay white and still against his own shoulder.

"No—for underneath—are—the—everlasting—arms."

"It is all over," said Merriman a moment later, as he gently laid Sydney Garth back on the pillows, and turned to greet the two doctors who had just come in again to look at their patient.

And the doctors, knowing the names the two young men had gained, let him pass from the room without troubling him with questions.

"And that was how Garth died," said Merriman, when he spoke afterwards for the first time of his friend's death.

Even to-day he could only have spoken of it to one as close and as near to him as Garth had himself been in the old days. When, having at last gained the promise from Violet he had waited so patiently for, he and she could speak together as both having had so great a part in the life that was gone.

They were standing, this summer afternoon, looking up at the window that they had put up in memory of Sydney Garth in the chance of the village church near his old home in Scotland—the home that was Oscar Merriman's now, and to which Violet Arundale had promised to come in another year.

Violet had already learned the story of Garth's love for her, Oscar Merriman having told her that before he spoke again of his own, and Garth's patient devotion, his generous care for herself in her need, his grand surrender of self—giving all and asking for nothing in return—had brought him almost as near to her as he had been to Merriman himself.

"Do you see what I had put after his name? 'Lovely and pleasant in his life.' He was that to me." And something very like the look that had come into Merriman's face as he left that room in the hospital two years ago in Candahar came into it again as he looked up at the name of his friend.

It touched Violet with its expression of perfect love, from which the intervening years had taken only the bitterness of the parting.

Garth had never been forgotten, though the sharp sting of that moment when he had passed out of Merriman's life had been softened into the loving memory of after-years. Both of them had been true as steel to her—to themselves.

She passed her hand through his arm.

"You were wonderful boys," she said softly.

"I don't know about myself," he said slowly; "I only know what Garth was."

"Dear Sydney!"

The softness of her tone showed that Garth had won his own place in Violet's heart, and told Oscar Merriman that in some way his friend was sharing the gladness which had come into his own life.

He bent down and kissed her, drawing her closer to him, for there were no curious eyes to see them. Only the soft west wind floated in at the open church-door, bringing with it the scent of the purple heather and wild thyme, while the sunlight fell upon them in rays of gold and crimson light from Sydney Garth's window above, as if the love and the faith of his life were still casting the radiance of its blessing upon them.

## The Editor's Note Book.

WHEN French revolutionists first, and Bonapartists afterwards, posed as the "saviours of society," the world was more disposed to laugh at them than to accept their statement. It is odd to find a hard-headed practical man like Mr. Chamberlain going back to the old absurdity and hoping, in his speech at Newcastle, that it would not be considered too great an assumption if he said that the Liberals, after all, are the true saviours of society.

THIS is just the mistake which all energetic party-politicians make. Parliamentary majorities are made by society—using the word, as, of course, Mr. Chamberlain did, in its extended and not in its limited sense—and when society wants saving it gives its orders to whichever political party seems most likely to carry them out, and the business is very soon done. Ministers, nowadays, as Mr. Chamberlain occasionally seems to forget, are the servants and not the masters of the country, a fact which is emphasised by the complete overthrows of Mr. Gladstone and of Lord Beaconsfield in turn.

THE opposition to the proposed lock at Isleworth has proved too strong for its promoters, so the Bill has been withdrawn, and the matter will not be further proceeded with until evidence has been laid before the Select Committee which is to sit next session. No one who knows anything of the condition of the river between Kew and Teddington can doubt the absolute necessity of something being done. Unfortunately there is as yet no prospect of an agreement being come to among the people most directly interested, and the state of the river goes steadily from bad to worse.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT has told us more than once that London is one of the safest cities in the world, and the statement has been emphatically contradicted by many correspondents in the newspapers, who declare that at most hours, and certainly after dark, the streets swarm with dangers.

As in most matters of this sort the truth lies between the two extremes. Occasional violent assaults and daring highway robberies undoubtedly occur, and it would be surprising if, in a population of some four millions, they did not. But, in nine cases out of ten, I am sure the victims of street outrages have only their own imprudence, or their own carelessness, to thank for their sufferings.

It will be remembered that Dr. Edmund Bower, of East Dulwich, was prosecuted for negligence some little time ago by the father of a

child who had died under his care, and that the father's action was supported by the Public Prosecutor. The case was dismissed by the magistrate with contumely, and some of the most influential members of the medical profession have now shown their feeling on the subject by the presentation to the doctor and his partner of handsome testimonials.

FROM this case it would seem that the Public Prosecutor is chargeable with sins of commission as well as of omission, and that it would be well, while reform is in the air, that some enquiry should be made into the manner in which this functionary discharges his duties.

THE proposed amalgamation of Metropolitan Gas Companies is opposed by the Board of Trade and will consequently fall through. This would seem to indicate that London municipal reform is really to be taken in hand, and that the tyranny of gas and water monopolists is approaching its end. But there are so many slips between the cup of reform and the public lip that it will be wise not to be too sanguine.

OUTSIDERS who were beginning to lose their way in the mazes of the Belt Case may take comfort. The fog with which this litigation has come to be surrounded has been too much even for the Master of the Rolls, who was obliged to ask in the course of the proceedings last week which of the litigants it was who was appealing.

THE prosecution of the Park Club by the police, on the charge that it is nothing but a gambling-house, is likely to lead to rather extensive litigation, as the points at issue are notoriously difficult and doubtful. What is a *bonâ fide* club, and what are its rights? are questions as to which the law is ambiguous, while the other point, what constitutes illegal gambling, is even more uncertain. At present the legal position of gambling depends a good deal on the construction of a statute of Henry VIII., which was passed more with a view to the encouragement of archery than to the improvement of public morality.

IF Dr. Carter Moffat is right, the fact of so many Italians being blessed with beautiful singing voices is due entirely to the air they breathe, and, as that air can be exactly imitated by chemical means—so says the doctor—it follows that Concentrated Artificial Italianized Air will produce equally beautiful voices anywhere else.

WHETHER the Concentrated Artificial Italianized Air can be manufactured or not is a matter for chemists to determine, and experience alone can show its value when it is made, but there is one point which makes me a little sceptical about the whole discovery. Is Dr. Carter Moffat prepared to prove that English people who go to Italy with feeble singing voices always show marked improvement after a reasonable term of residence in the country? If the real air does not produce such an effect I have no faith in the manufactured article.

MR. BARNUM's white elephant—which appears, after all, not to be white—has arrived, and will probably be the leading attraction at the Zoological Gardens for some time to come. It is to be hoped that the appearance of this animal will not be the cause of a repetition of the nonsense which was written and talked about Jumbo; but I am afraid that in these days of the worship of sensational trivialities this is almost too much to expect.

THE *matinée* of "Claudian" which Mr. Wilson Barrett gave last week to the members of the dramatic profession was a most interesting event, not only for the unusually admirable performance of the play itself, but for the opportunity it afforded Mr. Barrett of contradicting in his speech at the end of the play certain malicious misstatements which have been circulated as to its success. Mr. Barrett declared emphatically that, from a financial point of view, "Claudian" has far surpassed any of his former productions.

As Mr. Pinero's comedy at the Globe has perished prematurely, it is not necessary to dwell at length on what was in truth a crude and awkward piece of work. The only really interesting feature in the whole performance was the Mr. Vereker of Mr. Carton. It is a thousand pities that the intrinsic weakness of Mr. Pinero's comedy prevents us seeing more of this admirable and thoroughly original study of character, which was quite as good in its way as anything I ever saw on the stage.

ONE of the most beautiful theatres in London is Mr. Edgar Bruce's new house, The Prince's, in Coventry Street, which, both for the beauty of its decorations and the completeness of its arrangements for the comfort of the audience, is quite perfect. Its situation also is one of the best in town, and if Mr. Bruce can only provide his excellent company with good material to work upon, he is certain to secure the success which his enterprise so well deserves.

THE balance-sheet of the Théâtre Français for 1883 is not reassuring to the advocates of a State-aided theatre for the encouragement of the classical drama. The *sociétaires*, or full members of the company, received for their share of the profits twenty-five per cent. less than in the previous year, and whether this is due to the

unattractiveness of the *répertoire*, or to a growing desire on the part of the Parisian public for a less conventional style of acting, the fact is significant.

MR. CLEMENT SCOTT will have done good service, if his letter to the *Times* brings about the abolition of the dangerous nuisance of cigarette-smoking in theatres. People who cannot get through a ten-minute wait without a cigarette ought to stay away from theatres altogether, or, at least, go out into the street if they must smoke between the acts. Unfortunately the prohibition of smoking is only one of many reforms in the arrangements of our theatres which are urgently required, and which we do not seem at all likely to get.

MR. EDMUND YATES has inaugurated in the *World* a new style of dramatic criticism, which has the double merit of being extremely simple, and of affording unrivalled opportunities for the manufacture of ill-natured paragraphs at the smallest possible cost of time and labour.

THE new system is that a critic should write about a play which he has not seen, and should abuse the people concerned in its production, not so much for what they have actually done as for what he himself chooses to assume it possible that they may do.

THUS, because a good deal of fun is got out of Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness—two essentially comic characters—in the adaptation of the “Old Curiosity Shop” which I have recently written, and which has been successfully produced at the Opera Comique by Miss Lotta and Mr. Harry Jackson, Mr. Yates assumes, without the slightest reason, that Miss Lotta, Mr. Harry Jackson, and I are quite ready to burlesque Little Nell herself, or to make Paul Dombey’s story the subject of a pantomime opening. And, taking this gratuitously insulting supposition as his text, Mr. Yates proceeds to deal with us in his most graceful and fascinating manner.

MR. HARRY JACKSON and I are perfectly well able to take care of ourselves, and can afford to pass over such attacks as this with composure. So far as we are concerned, therefore, I do not propose to comment further on the article to which I have referred. But I cannot refrain from taking this opportunity of briefly characterising Mr. Yates’s assault on Miss Lotta as grossly unfair and cruelly unjust.

C. D.

## Cookery.

### LIGHT DIET.

ONE of the most common directions given by doctors is that for a light nourishing diet without meat. Sometimes white fish is allowed, and generally eggs, milk, beef-tea, some kinds of soup, broth, and all kinds of farinaceous food come under the head of light diet. In some cases chicken and game are included, and there is then no difficulty, especially when expense is not an object, in providing a bill of fare. But when it is necessary to avoid even the lightest animal food, it is puzzling to provide at once sufficient variety with a high degree of nourishment. Under such circumstances everything which a patient takes must be very carefully prepared, so that nothing be lost from the substance under treatment, but that rather by the skill of the cook it may be made more nourishing.

Too great care cannot be bestowed on the preparation of beverages. Even toast-water may be so made as to have some little nutriment, and that without leaving in it any particles of burnt bread, which are so disagreeable alike to sick and healthy. There is, perhaps, no beverage more generally useful or acceptable than barley-water, yet although it can be properly made with very little trouble, it is in a great many instances so vile a mess as to create such a dislike that the very name makes an invalid shudder. When well made, barley-water is perfectly white, soft, and with a flavour so delicate that it is often preferred to any other beverage, and may be described as “fascinating.” Although it is very good plain, the best form in which it can be taken is that in which it is combined with cream and milk. For that form it should be made thick, and be reduced to a suitable consistency with cold or hot milk. This can be used as a breakfast beverage, and it would be well if barley-water found a place at the tables of the healthy instead of tea and coffee. Flavoured with strong extract of cocoa made from the nibs, with wine or spirits, with lemon or fruit syrups, mixed with the yolk of an egg or simply sweetened, barley-water is delicious and nourishing.

In making barley-water, be careful first to wash the grains in cold water, and then boil them for ten minutes in plenty of boiling water, which then drain off and throw away. This done, again boil the pearl barley, half a pound to two quarts of water, from three to four hours, water being added from time to time as required. Barley-water can be made in a much shorter time, but it is only by long boiling that a rich and entirely satisfactory decoction is obtained. The last and most important matter is the straining. For this a good and clean hair-sieve with two wooden or silver spoons are required. Use one spoon to rub the barley-water through the sieve, the other to remove that which hangs beneath it. Do not use the first spoon for the latter

part of the operation, as by so doing you may get some of the grain into the liquid and destroy its smoothness. Barley-water should, in warm weather, be made fresh every day, and in cold weather, three times a week.

From time to time little dishes of fish, suitable for invalids, have been given in this Journal, and the paper in No. 48 will be found useful. It is always desirable to have fish perfectly fresh, but for those in delicate health too much pains cannot be taken in this matter, for stale fish has undergone changes which render it less digestible and less nourishing. It was hoped that one result of the Fisheries Exhibition would be that of bringing fresh fish within the means and reach of all classes. At present, however, it is just as difficult as it ever was to get fresh fish anywhere except at shops in London itself. Very few suburban tradesmen go to market every day, and they keep fish on ice during many nights, exposing it on the shop-board for sale during the daytime until, to an experienced eye, it is positively disgusting. If housekeepers made a point of always choosing their fish a better state of things would soon prevail. Cleaned fish should never be bought, for it is almost certain to have been kept for a day or two, and then, as was before said, it is comparatively valueless. It is not a good plan to deal exclusively with one fishmonger, or to allow him to send anything he pleases. The housekeeper will do well to go from shop to shop until she finds fish fresh from the day’s market, and to let it be seen that she can distinguish it from that which is stale. One often hears a lady at a fishmonger’s say, “Are the soles fresh?” but we never heard any other reply than, “Oh yes, ma’am,” no matter how evident the falsehood.

A great deal of nourishment is wasted in skinning fish; a sole fried in its skin is more juicy and of much finer flavour than one which has been skinned. A whiting baked in its skin is lighter than when fried without it and more nourishing than when boiled. Many cooks think that fish for invalids must be boiled in plain water in order to keep it delicate, but, as a rule, white fish is improved in all respects by being boiled either in fish or meat stock. All these little points should be carefully attended to when catering for invalids, both because such attention ensures the highest possible amount of nourishment, and because when a dish has its full savour it is more relished and is consequently more digestible.

For some patients, sweet dishes are interdicted; in such cases savoury jellies and blancmanges are often useful and make a decided change from beef-tea and broth. For both of these, recipes, which may be suggestive of other similar forms of nourishment, are given. Gelatine served in this way is useful when diarrhoea is present, and although the quantity given is sufficient to set the jelly, more, in such a case, may be used with advantage.

### BEEF JELLY.

Cut one pound of fine beef or rump steak into dice, rejecting all skin and fat, put it into a bright stewpan, sprinkle over a small pinch of salt, cover the stewpan closely, and put it on the range at a low heat in order to draw out the juices of the meat, which will take about twenty minutes. There must be no approach to frying, as that would dry up the extract and alter the character of the preparation.

About every five minutes during the process, drain off the juices as they come; if the meat was fine and fresh there should be rather more than a gill of these. Now put them aside, until you have boiled up the meat with a pint of water for half an hour, or until the liquid is reduced to half a pint. It is better not to strain this, but to pour it off with all the sediment, in which lies the chief nourishment. If, however, the jelly is required clear, this liquor with the juices must be strained through a napkin, and afterwards be boiled and skimmed until perfectly bright. Mix the juices at first extracted with the liquor, and having taken off every particle of fat, use for the jelly.

Soak half an ounce of Nelson’s gelatine in half a gill of water for an hour or more, and dissolve it in the beef extract in a stewpan over the fire without allowing it to boil; add seasoning as required. When this is done stir the jelly occasionally until cold, when put it into a mould.

### SAVOURY BLANCMANGE.

Make half a pint of veal broth, or chicken broth if preferred. For the former cut half a pound of veal cutlet into dice and boil it in a pint of water, until reduced to half that quantity. A small bit of lemon-peel, mace, and sweet-herbs may be used according to taste. When the broth is made, strain it through a napkin, and boil up in it half an ounce of Nelson’s gelatine, previously soaked in a little cold water, pour into a basin, and stir in a gill of cream or milk, adding salt to taste.

## Freaks of Memory.

THERE are no phenomena of memory more strange than those in which—usually through some illness or some accidental injury to the brain—some particular facts, or classes of facts, baffle the recollection altogether. The instances recorded by Abercrombie, Winslow, Wigan, Carpenter, Holland, and other physicians, are too well founded to admit of any doubt. There was a gentleman who, when in disturbed health, uniformly called coals paper, and paper coals, quite unconscious of any anomaly in the matter. Another called his snuff-box a hog’s head, and it was remarked that, in earlier life, he had been connected with the tobacco trade

in the West Indies. Dr. Scandella, an Italian physician resident in New York, was attacked there with yellow fever. He spoke only English when first attacked, only French in the height of the fever, and remembered only his own Italian just before his death. A Frenchman, at the age of twenty-seven, spoke English well; he received an injury to his head, and for some time could only remember French, believing and asserting himself to be but sixteen years old. At St. Thomas's Hospital an invalid suddenly began to talk in Welsh, a language which he had entirely neglected for thirty years. One lady lost the memory of exactly four years, well remembering events before and after that period; and, in another instance, the lost years amounted to eight or ten. A gentleman forgot the names of his friends, but remembered their ages, and adopted that as the most convenient mode of referring to them. Another lost so completely the meaning of nouns substantive, that he unconsciously gave the names of places to things, persons to events, and so on, rendering his talk unintelligible. A lady, similarly under temporary ailment, could not remember the names of any of the ordinary things in her household. She was forced to go from room to room and point to the articles concerning which she had any orders to give, or any observations to make. A military officer, mentioned by Dr. Winslow, sometimes remembered his own name, but not his address; at other times remembered his address, but not his name. He would occasionally, with a perplexed expression, accost a stranger: "I am Major —; can you tell me where I live?" Under his other frame of mind: "I live at —; can you tell me my name?"

Corroborative instances of a kind more or less analogous are so numerous, that we need only cite a few more as illustrations. There was a man who could remember the first syllable of long words, but no others. A soldier after receiving an injury in the head forgot the figures 5 and 7, and everything connected with them. A gentleman in a similar way lost the memory of the letter F. An old French lady could express herself intelligibly in any ordinary conversation; but if a direct question were put to her, her memory seemed to depart at once, except in reference to two words; her regular reply was "St. Antoine." In another case, of a wounded French soldier, he evidently understood the meaning of what was said to him by others, but his memory could only assist him to the uniform reply, "Baba." John Hunter, the great surgeon, called on a friend at a time he was indisposed; for a few hours he could not remember any person or object beyond the walls of the room he was in. It was a painful time to him, for, without any hallucination, he knew perfectly well that his memory had in a great measure temporarily deserted him; he walked to the window, as a possible means of getting back some recollection of the outer world. An artillery officer, in 1785, could read out well when a book was open before him, but could not remember a word of the contents when the book was closed. A Spanish tragic author forgot his own writings; when reminded of them, he declared they must have been written by someone else. A French scientific man could scarcely ever remember the names of his colleagues; he was accustomed to speak of them as the authors of such and such works or papers, or as the discoverers of such and such facts. One gentleman forgot the names of the whole of his children for a time. An agriculturist, a man of extensive business and good intelligence, was obliged to use a dictionary to understand the ordinary implements of his trade; the sound of each word suggested the shape of the letters, and the sight of the latter suggested the sense, but the sound did not directly suggest the sense. A lady, after an illness, forgot all pronouns, and all inflexions of verbs except the infinitive; when wishing or intending to say, "Stop, my husband has just come," she said, "To stop, husband to come."

Another variety is what may be called perversion of memory, memory running to wildness, generally manifested during or immediately after an illness. One instance is that in which we imagine other persons to be doing or feeling that which is really attributable to ourselves. There was a gentleman, who, when thirsty, believed that others experienced the thirst; and after he had coughed, said to a friend near him, "I am sorry you have such a bad cough." Samuel Rogers, when very aged and declining, was riding in a carriage with a lady, who asked him about another lady well known to both; the name seemed a blank to him, and stopping the carriage, he asked his servant, "Do I know Lady M.?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. A gentleman sitting with his wife in the evening, found his thoughts wandering back to a lady at whose house he frequently had spent an evening in former years; ludicrously confounding time, place, and person, he rose up, and, addressing his wife as "madam," declared that it was getting late, and that he must return home to his family.

The forgetfulness arising from sheer absence of mind is different in its nature from any of the above. The man may be in good health, and may be the reverse of stupid, but so absorbed in a particular train of thought as to be oblivious to surrounding sayings and doings. Sydney Smith cited two instances of absence of mind which struck his fancy. "I heard of a clergyman who went jogging along the road till he came to a turnpike. 'What is to pay?' 'Pay, sir, for what?' 'Why, my horse, to be sure.' 'Your horse, sir! what horse?' There is no horse, sir.' 'No horse? Bless me!' said he, suddenly looking, 'I thought I was on horseback.' Lord Dudley was one of the most absent men I think I ever met in society. One day he met me in the street and invited me to meet myself. 'Dine with me to-day; dine with me, and I will get Sydney Smith to meet you.' I admitted the temptation he held out to me, but said I was engaged to meet him

elsewhere. Another time in meeting me he put his arm through mine, muttering, 'I don't mind walking with him a little way. I'll walk with him as far as the end of the street.' He very nearly overset my gravity once in the pulpit. He was sitting immediately under me, apparently very attentive, when suddenly he took up his stick as if he had been sitting in the House of Commons, and tapping the ground with it, cried out in a low, but very audible whisper, 'Hear, hear!'"

An absence of mind more or less similar has often been displayed by men habituated to deep study. Domenichino, the great Italian painter, became so absorbed in his own picture of "The Martyrdom of Saint Andrew," that he reviled with the fiercest passion a soldier who was represented insulting or mocking the saint. Caracci, who was present, was so struck with Domenichino's excited expression of face, that he afterwards adopted it as an impersonation of rage. Crebillon, the French dramatist, impatiently said to a friend who entered his study: "Don't disturb me; this is a moment of exquisite happiness. I am going to hang a villainous minister and to banish a stupid one!" Isaac D'Israeli says: "It has been told of a modern astronomer that, one summer night, when he was withdrawing to his chamber, the brightness of the heavens showed a phenomenon. He passed the whole night in observing it; and when they came to him early in the morning, and found him in the same attitude, he said, like one who had been collecting his thoughts for a few moments: 'It must be thus; but I will go to bed before it is too late.' He had gazed the whole night in meditation, and was not aware of it." Dr. Stukely called upon Sir Isaac Newton, and was told that Sir Isaac would come to him directly. The waiting was long and tedious; dinner was brought in, and Stukely, feeling hungry, sat down and nearly demolished a tempting roast fowl. Newton at length appeared, and seeing the empty dish, exclaimed: "I protest I had forgotten I had eaten my dinner!" The Count de Brancas, a friend of La Bruyère and Rochefoucauld, was one day reading in his study, when a nurse brought in a little infant. He put down his book, and took up the infant and caressed it admiringly. A friend coming in, Brancas threw the baby on the table, thinking it was a book, and did not detect his error until loud crying announced it. On another occasion Rochefoucauld crossed the street to greet him. Brancas said: "Heaven help you, my poor man!" Rochefoucauld smiled, and was about to speak, when the other interrupted him: "I told you I had nothing for you; there is no use in your teasing me; why don't you try and get work? Such lazy idlers as you make the streets quite disagreeable." Rochefoucauld's hearty laugh at length roused him from his reverie. Men have been known to exhibit such instances of absence of mind as the following: Taking out a watch, looking at it, and then asking "What's o'clock?" Going to a house where friends have lived, and forgetting that they had removed. Going up to dress for dinner, forgetting the main purpose in view, and getting into bed instead. Taking imaginary pinches of snuff while talking, forgetting all the time that the box is empty. Dante went once into a bookseller's shop to witness a grand street procession. He became so absorbed in a book, that the whole spectacle passed without his noticing it; and when he got home, was surprised at being reminded of it. Hogarth, dining one day with friends, rose in the middle of dinner, turned his chair round, sat down with his back to the company, meditated awhile, resumed his proper position, and went on with his dinner. Sheridan, conversing with his sister one day, unconsciously cut up into shreds an elegant pair of ruffles she had just made for her father. A gentleman invited to dinner sat in the drawing-room alone for awhile; by the time the lady of the house appeared, she found that he, in a brown study, had picked a hearth-brush to pieces. He had the denuded handle in his hand, while his dress was covered with the hairs.

## The Prose of Knitting.

MACHINERY bids fair to supplant our fingers in many branches of industry, notably in domestic handiwork. Needlework, for instance, is not, indeed, entirely taken out of our hands by the sewing-machine, but those parts requiring the greatest nicety of finger-work and exactitude of eye are now done infinitely better by it in both these respects. All kinds of embroidery are now made so well and so rapidly by machinery that the old and tedious process of embroidering by hand on muslin is a thing of the past. Edgings and trimmings of all kinds are cheap, pretty, and abundant, and have ousted tatting and crochet.

KNITTING still retains its place in the list of feminine handiworks. There is a knitting-machine, and we believe it does its work well, though as yet its high price puts it out of the reach of all but the well-to-do, who do not need its help so much. We cannot, however, carry our knitting-machines about with us, into the thousand-and-one places to which we take our four steel pins and ball of wool—into the garden, into the lecture-hall and concert-room, to the railway-station, in the train, on board the steamer, in the pleasure-boat—in short, almost anywhere and everywhere. You can take your knitting, but you cannot take your knitting-machine. Moreover, the one is noisy, the other is silent. We may knit while we chat with our friends over their kettle-drum, but we could not venture to drown their voices with the buzzing hum of a machine. "Gain time," the canny North-folk call it, when you get a little work done in time otherwise unoccupied. We know a lady who



always brings out her knitting on the arrival of visitors, be they duchesses or farmers' wives, to talk *Court Circular* or poultry and butter. It matters not; out comes the knitting—or rather, it is always out, ready to be taken up at once. The farmeresses are occasionally affronted at the want of respectful idleness exhibited, the duchesses never. Her good example has set this fashion in many houses, and by this simple means many a round of knitting is "gained." No one talks or enjoys her tea the less—rather the reverse, for the fact of the fingers being occupied removes an unhappy consciousness that valuable time is being too often wasted in mere desultory chat.

THERE are several recognised standards of knitting amongst expert and experienced knitters—the German, the French, and the English. English knitters hold the left hand over the needle, the point between the finger and thumb. The right-hand needle is laid over the hand, between the thumb and first finger, and the wool, after being twisted, for the sake of regulating the tension, round the little finger, is worked by the first. Germans, French, and Swiss all knit holding the left hand over the needle in the same way we do, but the right hand they hold over the needle, working the wool over the first finger. It is a disputed point, and probably will ever remain so, which is the better of the two modes. It is certain that the German-Franco-Swiss way is a very rapid one, but English knitters have occasionally beaten Germans and French in knitting-matches. Quick knitters can knit rapidly either in the English or the foreign way, and slow knitters do not find either way increase their speed.

THERE are several points of essential importance in order to ensure good regular knitting. Good needles are a great desideratum. It is impossible to produce good work, unless the needles used are all of the same size, well-made, of good steel, smooth, and the right length, as well as a right size for the wool to be knitted. By far the most handy needles for stockings (of any moderate size), socks, and small things generally, are the short steel German needles. Four or five may be used; they are lighter and more convenient to work with than the old-fashioned long steel needles, which must, however, be used for larger work—jerseys, petticoats, etc., where a large number of stitches are set on each needle. All needles, whether of steel, bone, or wood, may and should be accurately sorted by means of a knitting-needle gauge, a little implement made in various materials. The best are in hard steel, as the softer kinds are apt to wear away imperceptibly and gauge the needle wrong in the course of time. They may be purchased at any Berlin wool shop for a shilling. The sizes are plainly marked at each slit, and the needle is gauged by drawing it through the slit. If they pass down easily, without using any force, they are of the size marked on the slit—they are not gauged as many suppose by the holes. Wools of various thicknesses should be exactly fitted with needles of a suitable size. If different sized needles are used, even with the same number of stitches, a different-sized article will be produced, or if the set—that is, the whole number used upon the work—do not all fit the same gauge, the knitting will be rough and uneven.

SUITABLE material for the special work to be done, is another important consideration. It is a waste of time to do an elaborate and lengthy piece of knitting with inferior silk or wool. The time and labour expended are well worth the best that can be got; and the superiority both in appearance and in wear amply repays any trouble that may be given in the search for good knitting materials. One of the best firms in England, Scotland, or Wales for knitting materials, as well as knitting appliances of every kind, is that of Jevons and Mellor, Worcester Street, Birmingham.

A COMPARATIVELY new stocking-wool has been lately introduced, the "Sicilian," which combines fineness, lightness, softness, and yet great durability, in the most perfect way. It is unsurpassed for ladies' and children's stockings. It takes needles No. 18; the thread, though fine, is not tender, and is exceedingly pleasant knitting.

AN excellent top to a long stocking, in lieu of the old clumsy two inches of ribbing, is one invented by a knitting friend, who kindly gives permission to insert it here. Cast on the required number of stitches on each needle, and knit twelve rows plain, then one row of holes, thus: thread forward, take two together, repeat all round; then twelve more plain rows; double down the knitting at the holes, and knit a round, taking one stitch of the first cast on round, with each stitch of the round on the needles; then proceed with the plain knitting in the usual way. You will then have a flat hem formed at the top of the stocking, something like that of a woven stocking, only much firmer and stronger, calculated to resist any amount of wear and tear. This is a charming invention for children's long stockings, which, from being so constantly pulled up, wear out at the top first. It is also well adapted for the bottom of knitted petticoats, boys and girls' jerseys, etc. It is not suitable for socks, as the ribbed tops being elastic serve to keep up the garterless short stocking. In order to make the ribbing really elastic and firm, it should always be knitted on needles one size smaller than the rest of the sock; i.e. if the sock is knitted with No. 15 needles, the ribbing should be knitted with No. 16. After knitting each row, the work should be pulled out lengthwise, taking hold of the needles with one hand and the ribbing with the other, this ensures great elasticity as well as evenness, and soon becomes such a mechanical routine as to consume a mere trifle of extra time.

FOR ladies' stockings the most suitable wools are Sicilian, Rutland, fine German Fingering, Super Scotch ditto. For silks, Spun Silks and pure Knitting Filoselle are the best. A very nice, even, and durable cotton is the Filanfer Cotton, sold in quarter-pound skeins, and in all fast colours and mixtures. All these, both for silk and wool, take No. 17 needles. For gentlemen's hosiery, in thick materials for knickerbocker-stockings and shooting-socks, the most serviceable wools are the Scotch Fingerings, Irish Yarn, and Alloa Yarn; the needles should be No. 15; for the ribbed part, No. 16. For socks and finer wear, Cyprus Yarn, Camel's-hair Yarn, German Fingering, and the finer Scotch Fingerings are very suitable, with needles No. 16, and No. 17 for the ribbing. For children's stockings and socks, the Scotch and German Fingerings, Worcester Knitting, Rutland Yarn, and Scoured Welsh Yarn are all good for strong wear and older children. For little ones, Sicilian Ladies' Wool is softer and finer, and very little more trouble to knit. No. 16 needles for any but Sicilian and Rutland, which require, the former No. 18, the latter No. 17 needles. For babies' socks, white Sicilian is the very best material that can be used in wool, as it does not shrink, and this, where such constant washing is required, is a great consideration. Babies' socks should always be knitted on pins one size larger than you would generally use for the wool, to prevent any shrinking, which naturally takes place sooner in a tightly-knitted sock. Andalusian wool is also much used for babies' and small children's wear, also Filoselle and Lady Betty; but we have never found any wash so well and knit so evenly and true as Sicilian. For shawls, squares, and other fancy work, the different wools are legion. Berlin is a good old-fashioned favourite; Shetland also, with the new mixture, which is partly cotton, and washes better than pure Shetland, but lacks its delicious thorough softness. There is a large variety of fleecy wools of different thicknesses, from six-fold to twelve-fold. Berlin Fingering is a newer class of wool, Zenobia a very soft close wool, and Zephyr fleecy. Andalusian, Pyrenees, Ice Wool, and a very useful wool called Petticoat Yarn, with Peacock Fingering in all colours, are the best for the woollen petticoats.

MANY persons after spending a good deal of time and labour upon the knitting of Shetland and other fine woollen shawls, especially white ones, are vexed to find how soon they sully, and how badly they wash. They quickly soil, it is true, but with the following recipe they need not wash badly, and should look new again after each wash:

Shred two ounces of pure white curd soap in fine shavings into two quarts of clean soft water, in a perfectly bright brass pan, set it on the stove, and stir, till the soap is entirely dissolved, with a bit of clean white wood; pour it into a bath, add cold soft water, enough to make it just perceptibly warm, put in the shawl, move and rub it gently between the hands in the water, but use no soap. Continue moving it about until it looks white and clean, then gently squeeze it (do not open or spread it out, as this breaks and strains the delicate fibre of the wool) and lift it into another bath of clear, cold, soft water, rinse it up and down, not too high, changing the water until it is quite free from soap. When quite clear, squeeze it between the hands and dip it into another basin, in which one tablespoonful of dissolved gum arabic has been diluted in one quart of soft water, wet every part thoroughly, squeeze gently between the hands, and then clap it softly in a clean, dry, white towel, pin a clean sheet on to an unused bed or on the carpet, lay the shawl upon it, pull it cautiously and gently out to its right shape and size, and pin it all round, leaving it to dry by degrees, covered with another sheet. All articles knitted of Shetland wool, or of any soft fine wool, either shawls or veils, should be finished by dipping them in weak gum arabic water as above. It gives them the necessary stiffness required to keep their shape.

SHETLAND veils, so easy to knit, and so far superior when knitted by hand both in size and quality, should all go through this process, even the black ones. A very pretty, useful stitch for a Shetland veil, especially if great warmth is desired, is to cast on any number of stitches divisible by three, knit one, thread forward, take two together for the whole row, purl the back or return row, and so on till the veil is of the right size. A few plain stitches at either end make it firmer and squarer.

LITTLE cases made to secure the points of the needles when not working are an admirable invention, and save many lost needles. They are made in ormolu, ivory, mother-o'-pearl, oxydised and frosted silver, porcelain and carved wood, in every variety of fantastic forms.

A GOOD plan to prevent the needles from rusting in an unused piece of knitting, is to run the stitches on to a thread, and remove the needles altogether. The store of knitting-needles should be kept in a case. These are readily made of American leather, lined with silk or print, stitched in divisions an inch wide, and the numbers marked distinctly over each division, with a pocket provided for the gauge.

## Good Things.

GOOD things said at public dinners are often quickly forgotten. The following lively descriptions of the failure of their artistic aspirations, given at the dinner of the Royal Academy of Arts, by the



Earl of Granville and Mr. James Russell Lowell, deserve a better fate. Lord Granville said :

"It may be said that it requires no eloquence to make a good speech on a subject which you understand well. But here, again, I am in a difficulty. Whatever my natural artistic powers may have been, they have been sadly discouraged in youth and in middle age. I took lessons in drawing at school. I brought back, with the assistance of a kind and attentive drawing-master, a beautiful drawing of a church. I remember well the pride of the family circle; but it had its fall when, upon being asked to reproduce the sketch, I found it impossible to do so in the absence of my master. I found myself later at Rome, at an age which I then thought old, which I now think very young. I was intoxicated by the artistic atmosphere of the place. I sought out an eminent artist, who I knew was sometimes induced to give lessons. I asked him whether I was too old seriously to study drawing. He answered that he had known persons who had begun when older, and who had met with complete success. My first lesson was as good as settled when he put a piece of paper and pencil in my hand, and requested me to draw something out of my own head. I immediately produced and handed to him with some satisfaction a pretty little composition. If I remember right there was a cottage, a silver fir, and a bush. The eminent artist was so much pleased with the perfection I had already attained that he handed it back with the observation that, on the whole, he advised me not to take lessons."

Following Lord Granville Mr. Lowell said :

"I do not know that my own artistic experience can compare with that of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs, which almost tempts one to parody a line of Pope, and say,

'How great an artist was in Granville lost !'

But I remember an achievement of my own youth in some respects comparable with his own. I, too, began the art of design, and I was set by my teacher to make a drawing of a bathing-house in the neighbourhood where I lived. I succeeded, I thought, pretty well with my sketch, but it occurred to me that I could improve it by putting in a moon, which I did without much reference to what had gone before. When my teacher saw it he said : 'I must compliment you on having performed a feat which none of the great artists of the past have ever equalled. You have made moonbeams come round the corner.'

Another extract from a speech of Earl Granville's is too good to be neglected :

"I was once acquainted with a very eminent foreign diplomatist, a man of great ability. His sovereign was a man of strong will, and the heir-apparent, who might succeed any day, fell in love with a charming princess, but the father raised great objections to the match. My friend the diplomatist was called upon to write a memorandum on the subject. He nearly died of it, but he performed the task, and, having performed it, he took the memorandum to a very intelligent friend of his, and begged him to tell him whether he entirely agreed with the opinions expressed in it. His friend read the memorandum, returned it to the diplomatist, and said : 'I cannot accede to your request, because, after reading it most carefully, I have not the slightest idea what your opinions upon the subject are.' Now, I cannot help thinking that Sir Stafford Northcote, looking at his speeches of last week, must have consulted some intelligent friend of his, and asked him whether he agreed with his views. That intelligent friend no doubt answered that he had known Sir Stafford as a good free trader all his life, but that, so far as his speeches were concerned, he had not the remotest idea what his views now were. The scene doubtless ended by Sir Stafford clasping his intelligent friend in his arms, always supposing the friend to have been a gentleman."

## Economy.

ALL economy, whether of states, households, or individuals, may be defined to be the art of managing labour. The world is so regulated by the laws of Providence, that a man's labour, well applied, is always amply sufficient to provide him during his life with all things needful for him, and not only with those, but with many pleasant objects of luxury; and yet further, to procure him large intervals of healthful rest and serviceable leisure. And a nation's labour, well applied, is in like manner amply sufficient to provide its own population with good food and comfortable habitation; and not with those only, but with good education besides, and objects of luxury, art treasures such as those you have around you.

But by those same laws of Nature and Providence, if the labour of the nation or of the individual be misapplied, and much more if it be insufficient—if the nation or man be indolent and unwise—suffering and want result, exactly in proportion to the indolence and improvidence, to the refusal of labour, or to the misapplication of it.

Wherever you see want, or misery, or degradation in this world about you, there, be sure, either industry has been wanting, or industry has been in error. It is not accident, it is not Heaven-commanded calamity, it is not the original and inevitable evil of man's nature which fill your streets with lamentation, and your graves with prey. It is only that, when there should have been providence, there has been waste; when there should have been labour,

there has been lasciviousness; and wilfulness, when there should have been subordination.

Now, we have warped the word "economy" in our English language into a meaning which it has no business whatever to bear. In our use of it, it constantly signifies merely sparing or saving: economy of money means saving money; economy of time, sparing time, and so on. But that is a wholly barbarous use of the word—barbarous in a double sense, for it is not English, it is bad Greek, and it is worse sense. Economy no more means saving money than it means spending money. It means the administration of a house; its stewardship; spending or saving, that is, whether money or time, or anything else, to the best possible advantage. In the simplest and clearest definition of it, economy, whether public or private, means the wise management of labour; and it means this mainly in three senses; viz., first, applying your labour rationally; secondly, preserving its produce carefully; lastly, distributing its produce seasonably.—*Ruskin*.

## Pianoforte Studies.

THE amateur musician is apt, as a rule, to think a great deal about pieces, but very little about studies. Amongst professionals, on the contrary, the studies are always the great point of interest, and test of proficiency. If you see two Academy students talking together, the first thing they will ask one another will be, "What studies are you learning?" and they will guess how far advanced their fellow-student is according to the nature of the reply—whether it is the studies of Heller, or Moscheles, or of Chopin, that they happen to be learning at the time. And when professional students meet together, it is rarely pieces that they play; they never show off to one another, or play the ear-tickling melody, or the effective but easy variations that bring down the applause in the concert-room—no, these things are for the public who do not know "how it is done;" when they are with their compeers, the question is always "Can you play such and such a study in Chopin's Second Book?" and they play these hard-and-fast things, in which no deception is possible, and where execution can only be gained as the fruit of hard work. To play difficult studies well is the one thing one student admires in another—the one thing to which he will accord the most hearty and ungrudging praise.

STUDIES are the bricks with which you build your house, the materials with which you found your style of playing. All great pianists have been indefatigable players of studies, and many an amateur would be astonished to see the piles of books of studies that these hard workers have been through. As a rule, the studies are the weak part in an amateur's practice; he will work at the interesting sonata, or at the pretty light piece that will be so useful to play out, but he will almost invariably slur over his exercises for some reason or another. But nobody can play well if they do not take pains with their studies; book after book must be gone through, and style after style acquired; there is so much to learn, and there is no single difficulty in piano-playing that has not been made the subject of a study by some composer or another, therefore it behoves the pianist to be up and doing, and to work very hard and persistently at these difficult things which will make everything else seem easy to him by comparison.

FIRST come the simpler exercises, dealing chiefly with the rudimentary difficulties, but very useful and necessary all the same. "Czerny's 101" belong to this category, and are considered by experienced masters to be the best things of their kind ever written. After a long course of these, Cramer's Studies, dry as they are, will come as a kind of relief. Old-fashioned they may appear, but they are excellently written, and every one in a different style. The "Étude de Vélocité" is another good book of studies, and the good to be got from them is very great. But it is better not to give them to any pupil who is very slow at reading music, as there is so little melody to catch hold of, and if too much time is spent in mastering the notes no good is got out of them. They are just studies of scale passages put into different forms, and are extremely beneficial to the execution. People say that if you could play the "Étude de Vélocité" with a metronome you could play anything, but there is hardly a pianist who could do it. It is so hard to get all the passages up to time.

THE student has every occasion to be diligent and energetic in getting through these earlier books of studies, for even when he is safely through these, how many are the difficulties that await him! There are the ponderous books of Moscheles, there are the preludes and fugues of Bach, and then as a prelude to the more modern style of pianoforte playing there are the tremendous studies of Henselt, Chopin, and Liszt. All of these present enormous difficulties, both of reading and playing, all of them positively must be gone through if the player aims at the performance of high-class works of other kinds. About each of these books we shall have a little word to say.

WHEN once a player has mastered the rudimentary difficulties of Czerny and Cramer, the best thing to put him to is the first of the two books of studies by Moscheles. They are very dry, and tiresome to read, but the good that is to be got out of them is incalculable.

No player could go through them without gaining strength of fingers from their performance, and that is the great thing in playing, for strength is elasticity. There are twelve studies in this book, all carefully fingered, and all useful for curing some defect or another. The first one is good for acquiring strength and a fluent touch. The second is one of the best studies for playing spread-chords ever written. So many players seem completely upset when they come, in the course of a piece, to a few chords that have to be "spread." They nearly always begin too late, so that the last note of the chord comes long after the beat, instead of exactly upon it, and the emphasis is given to the bottom note instead of to the top one. Moscheles's second study is an excellent one for curing this tendency, written as it is entirely in spread-chords throughout, sometimes for one hand singly, sometimes for both hands together.

THE third study is for the practice of the chromatic scale interspersed with double notes. It is extremely fatiguing, and few people will commence it without a groan. However, like many other disagreeable things, one has the satisfaction of knowing it is extremely "good" for one, but there is a sprightliness about the tone of the composition, and a cheerfulness in the way it sets off for a fresh horrible run after balancing itself, so to speak, for a moment, on a less difficult bar, that is almost aggravating in its absurd pretence of freshness. It recalls the piquettes and bounds that the tight-rope dancer gives when he leaves the circus, and tries to demonstrate that he is not at all tired.

PASSING over Number Four, of which the time is the chief difficulty, we arrive at the fifth, which is a study for playing pieces in the style of Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words." It should be studied with a due regard to the part-playing, and when proper feeling is inserted, it will be found to be a very charming and pathetic composition. Number Six is marked *Allegro Giocoso*, and must be played smartly. It is chiefly remarkable for the awkward way in which the double notes come in—just on that part of the bar where it is most difficult to play them. It seems rather a grim pleasantry when we are adjured by Mr. Moscheles in a foot-note to perform these difficulties so as to maintain throughout an apparent character of "ease and playfulness!" The other exercises in this book are equally useful. Number Seven will be found extremely efficacious for mastering the shakes and turns which appertain to music of the "powder and bag-wig" period, and the Octave Study on page thirty-six will be found interesting to play, which is more than can be said of most of the studies in octaves one comes across in the course of one's experience.

## Household Gardening.

A MILD, pleasant autumn and winter is often followed by a term of wet, frosty, sleety, and generally inclement weather, and when such prevails, it will always be wise policy to keep off the land. Some light, porous soils work freely shortly after a shower, but the majority remain unkind and adhesive for a considerable time. Whenever they are in that condition and cling to the boots of the workman and his spade like glue, let them alone, as ground in that state can never be worked profitably. At the same time, whenever the surface is moderately dry let no opportunity pass for completing the digging of vacant ground, as the more fully it is exposed to the ameliorating action of the frost and air, the more fertile it will become and the less infested with grubs and insects that are so inimical to crops. Also, except on very wet days or during frost, let planting be proceeded with.

### USEFUL ORNAMENTAL TREES.

Last week we referred to some trees which by their attractiveness of habit, blossoms, and fruit, are perfectly appropriate for associating with evergreens in shrubby borders, provided, as is often the case, that a separate plot of ground cannot be devoted to them. A few other varieties may now be named.

#### THE SIBERIAN CRAB.

Although belonging to the same genus as the Apple, the Siberian Crab has no resemblance to that fruit, and those, therefore, who are not acquainted with the tree under notice, must not associate it with the sour and not enticing Crab of the hedgerows.

The Siberian Crab is in appearance much more like a Cherry than an Apple. It is, indeed, often called the Cherry Apple on account of its small bright scarlet fruits that are produced in abundance.

The tree never attains a large size, but forms a round elegant head, not unlike that of a medium-sized Cherry-tree. In the spring the flexible branches are wreathed with pretty blossoms which render the tree decidedly attractive, while it is even more striking in the autumn when all aglow with its harvest of fruit.

The tree is very hardy, as might be expected, since it is a native of Siberia, and it grows well in any ordinary garden-soil in which Lilacs, Laburnums, and such like flowering shrubs flourish.

In Siberia the fruit of the Cherry Apple is largely employed for making punch, that is much enjoyed; but in England it is used as a preserve, and by most persons is regarded as excellent. It also makes a pretty dish for the dessert-table when freshly gathered, and its sparkling sub-acid flavour is refreshing to many palates.

There are not many gardens in which ornamental trees and flowering shrubs are grown in which a Siberian Crab might not be planted with advantage; yet it is absent from the majority, and this is the more to be regretted, since trees can be had from any good nursery at a trifling cost.

#### THE MORELLO CHERRY.

Few trees are more beautiful than this, either in spring or summer, while none bears more freely; the fruit, moreover, usually escaping the ravages of birds.

The Morello is a small-growing tree. Grown as a standard it forms a compact weeping head, and as the fruit is borne on the young shoots the branches require no pruning.

Many trees are also grown as dwarf bushes—that is, are grafted on stems not more than a foot high, and in this form are suitable for many positions where standards would be incongruous.

The variety under notice is often called the Brandy Cherry, because the fruit is not only preserved in brandy, and then coated with sugar, and used at dessert, but the juice of the fruit is mixed with the spirit and cherry brandy is made.

#### THE MAY DUKE CHERRY.

Sweet cherries are often grown in pleasure grounds for the beauty and profusion of their blossom mainly, as there is not much certainty of ripe fruit being gathered except by birds, unless the trees are netted, or in positions not much frequented by our feathered friends.

The variety named is not selected because it is the richest and best, for in that respect several others excel it; but is chosen on account of its even, compact, and upright habit of growth, that renders it suitable for associating with shrubs, over which more vigorous and spreading growers might encroach inconveniently. This and other kinds of dessert Cherries are equally adapted for training to walls, which they cover usefully and ornamentally.

#### DAMSONS.

Favourites with almost everybody, it is a matter of surprise that both purple and yellow Damsons are not seen in every garden in which space can be found for Hawthorns and other spring flowering trees whose blossoms are not followed by useful fruit.

In the spring, Damson trees are densely covered with blossoms, in some years each tree resembling a huge white bouquet. In this respect they compare favourably with most other flowering trees that are planted for ornament, while in the autumn the former are rendered more attractive still when heavily laden with clusters of purple and yellow fruit.

In many parts of Kent Damson-trees are planted at intervals of twenty yards or so in the hedgerows that separate fields. Thousands of trees are thus grown, and both in spring and autumn present an appearance not soon forgotten by persons who see them for the first time.

Damson-trees are equally ornamental and useful when associated with shrubs and evergreens in the borders by the sides of carriage-drives, or in the marginal strips that surround the enclosures of less pretentious dwellings.

For this purpose, undoubtedly the best variety is that known as the Cluster, because the trees never attain a large size, while they are compact in habit, fitting them admirably for gardens where space is limited. This variety is, moreover, an enormous bearer of small dark fruit, which is highly esteemed for preserving.

Considerably larger is the fruit of the Prune Damson, but the crops are rarely heavy, while the tree, being a strong and spreading grower, needs more space than can often be found in villa gardens. This is a tree for the orchard rather than the garden, and those who have the requisite space and desire large fruit may plant it, but, as before observed, the smaller kind is generally preferable.

Yellow Damsons are always admired when the trees are covered with the amber grape-like fruit. The fruit is also excellent both for tarts and preserves, and for the first-named, is not the less acceptable because it will often hang on the trees, if permitted, till November, and after most of the leaves are blown from the branches.

For the purpose indicated—beauty with utility, the trees above-named should be planted more freely, and positions can be found for them in gardens innumerable. We have other trees to refer to, including some of the most beautiful blossoming Apples, the flowers of which are not excelled in attractiveness by many rare tropical plants.

#### EARLY PEAS.

Of all early vegetables, fresh Green Peas are the most universally esteemed, and the earlier they are, the more they are prized by the growers. For affording the very first gatherings, seed is often sown in November, but there is always risk of the plants being injured during the winter.

The present is the safe time for sowing, and no time should be lost in procuring seed. A sheltered position is desirable and free porous soil. The best variety that requires sticks three feet high is William the First, and the rows should be four feet asunder. The best dwarf variety requiring no sticks, or very short ones, is the American Wonder, and the rows may be eighteen inches apart.

Prepare flat-bottomed drills three inches wide and two inches deep, scatter the seed regularly over them with spaces of about half an inch between the Peas, then cover with light soil, and the work is done. Where mice abound, the Peas may with advantage be sprinkled with paraffin before being placed in the drills, and they will usually be safe from the depredations of these enemies.

## Odds and Ends.

PAUL SIRAUDIN, confectioner and playwright, who died lately at the age of seventy-two years, was one of the authors of the libretto of "La Fille de Madame Angot." He wrote in all some eighty plays and opera librettos, was one of the brightest wits and practical jokers in Paris, and will enjoy endless fame in theatrical history for the trick which he played on Nestor Roqueplan, manager of the Théâtre des Variétés. Roqueplan barred his doors against all authors, receiving only those who were shrewd enough to overcome the obstacles in their way. "The very fact of his penetrating to my door is to me proof of a man's aptitude," he would say. Siraudin, having been bluntly repulsed by the *concierge* a dozen times, saw some bricklayers at work, with a tall ladder, reaching direct to Roqueplan's window. Quickly he changed his clothes with one of the labourers, shouldered a hod, climbed to the window, and in a moment stood in the obdurate manager's presence, hod on shoulder, and manuscript in hand. Roqueplan was forced to give him a hearing. "But only on one condition," he said, "that you go back to the ladder and read there." Siraudin did so; but at the third scene Roqueplan cried: "Enough! Come and sign an agreement for the production of your play." It was that wonderfully successful bit of buffoonery, "La Vendetta."

"FATHER," she said, as the old man sank into an easy-chair after a hard day's work at his office, "I noticed in the evening paper that sealskin mantles are advancing in price." "So they are, my dear; so they are." "And you know you promised to buy me one this winter." "I know I did," he replied, "and I will keep my word. But with the increased price and the scarcity of money, I expect it will cripple me somewhat." "I was thinking," his daughter then said, as she clasped a pair of soft white arms about his neck, "if it would not be better to wait until next winter. My old cloak will do very well, and perhaps sealskin mantles will be cheaper then?" The old man groaned in anguish of spirit, and murmured to himself: "My worst fears are realised." In the morning the young woman was tenderly taken to an insane asylum, where it is believed that with proper care she may ultimately recover her reason.

GEORGE III. was the possessor of the smallest watch ever made, which was the work of the famous chronometer-maker, Arnold, and was set in a ring like a jewel. It contained one hundred and twenty different parts, and weighed about as many grains; so that the parts weighed, one with another, one grain each, the balance-wheel and pinion weighing only the seventeenth part of a grain. Of course ordinary tools were useless for such delicate work, and Arnold had to make a special set of implements for it. The king was so pleased with the wonder that he rewarded the skilful maker of it with five hundred guineas. The Emperor of Russia wanted a watch like it, and offered Arnold a thousand guineas for one, but in order that his gift to the king might not be lessened in value, and at the same time to preserve its unique character, he refused the offer.

"VERY fine, nice pie," said the polite Japanese, bowing and smiling at his hostess. "What's its name?" "We call this 'mince-pie.' I'm glad you like it. Do you have mince-pie in Japan?" asked the lady. "Oh yes, thank you; mince-pie in my country," he replied. "Of what do they make them there?" asked the lady. A gentleman of his rank need not have blushed to say, "I do not know;" but he felt bound to keep up the honour of Japan so far as it rested on mince-pies. Again tasting the pie slowly, and with the air of a critic, his face brightened up as he said: "In Japan mince-pies are made of pears and fish."

A JUDGE was once visiting a penal institution, and being practically disposed, he trusted himself on the treadmill, desiring the warder to set it in motion. The machine was accordingly adjusted, and his lordship began to lift his feet. In a few minutes, however, the new hand had quite enough of it, and called to be released; but this was not so easy. "Please, my lord," said the man, "you can't get off. It's set for twenty minutes; that's the shortest time we can make it go." So the judge was in duance until his "term" expired.

It happened that Dean Swift, having been dining at some little distance from Laracor, his residence, was returning home on horseback in the evening, which was very dark. Just before he reached a neighbouring village his horse lost a shoe. Unwilling to run the risk of laming the animal by continuing his ride, he stopped at one Kelly's, the blacksmith of the village, and having called the man, he asked him if he could shoe a horse with a candle. "No," replied the son of Vulcan, "but I can with a hammer."

EVERY solitary kind action that is done the whole world over is working briskly in its own sphere to restore the balance between right and wrong. Kindness has converted more sinners than either zeal, eloquence, or learning; and these three never converted anyone unless they were kind also. The continued sense which a kind heart has of its own need of kindness keeps it humble. Perhaps an act of kindness never dies, but extends the invisible undulations of its influence over breadth of centuries.

THERE are some great troubles that only time can heal, and perhaps some that never can be healed at all; but all can be helped by the great penance, work. When grief sits down, folds its hands, and mournfully feeds upon its own tears, weaving into a funeral pall the dim shadows that a little exertion might sweep away, the strong spirit is shorn of its might and sorrow becomes our master.

ENQUIRE not too much into your bosom companion's griefs, nor compel him to tell all the tale of his life. Much and all will be told to those who do not ask; and you shall have the secrets into which you do not pry.

BAD temper is its own scourge. Few things are bitterer than to feel bitter. A man's venom poisons himself more than his victim.

HEARTLESSNESS and fascination, in about equal quantities, constitute the recipe for forming the character of a coquette.

THE setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone.

AN amusing instance of the terror an unfamiliar danger may have for a man whose courage in his own particular line of life is indisputable, has been recorded in connection with the history of Charles Augustus of Sweden. When he was besieging Prague, a boor of a most extraordinary visage desired admission to his tent, and, being allowed to enter, offered to devour a large hog in the king's presence. The old general Koenigsmark, who stood by the king's side, hinted to his royal master that the peasant ought to be burnt as a sorcerer. "Sir," said the peasant, "if your majesty will but make that old gentleman take off his sword and spurs, I will eat him before I begin the pig." The doughty general, who at the head of a body of Swedes had behaved with exemplary gallantry against the Austrians, could not stand this proposal, accompanied as it was by a hideous play of the rustic's jaws. Without uttering a word, it is said that the veteran turned pale, suddenly ran out of the tent, and precipitately fled to his quarters.

A FEW years ago the magistrates of a certain burgh, which may be seen on a clear day from the Carlton Hill, upon the south side of the Forth, received information of the theft of a cart-wheel. Highly incensed at the circumstance, they resolved to spare no pains to discover the offender; and hearing next morning that a recruiting party which had been quartered in the town was about to march to another station, they caused the whole of their knapsacks to be searched.

WILLIAM PENN and Thomas Storey once took shelter beneath some house in Pennsylvania from the rain. The owner came forth with great pomp of manner and said: "How dare you take shelter here without my leave? Do you know who I am? I am the mayor of this place." "Pooh, pooh!" said Friend Storey, "my friend here makes such things as thou art; he is the Governor of Pennsylvania."

WE do not know if "a cat may look at a king" in Bavaria, but criticism on royalty is a dangerous thing in that country, where an unlucky journalist has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment for having in an article expressed regret that King Louis allowed himself to be seen so seldom. The verdict declared that no person has a right to criticise the king's actions.

LORD DURHAM was about to embark for Canada, and it was said the expense of his outfit was enormous; amongst other things he carried with him being a great quantity of musical instruments. Upon someone expressing their astonishment at this, Sydney Smith said: "Of course he does. Don't you know he is gone to make overtures to the Canadians?"

ONE bitterly cold night a village doctor was roused from his slumbers by a very loud knocking at the door. After some hesitation he went to the window and asked: "Who's there?" "A friend." "What do you want?" "To stay here all night." "Stay, then, and welcome," was the reply, as the doctor closed the window and crept again into bed.

AN old woman unable to read, on receiving a letter from an absent son, asked a friend to read it to her. It commenced: "Dear mother." Upon the reader making a stop to find out what followed, as the writing was rather bad, the old lady exclaimed: "Oh, it is from poor Jerry; he always stutters."

"MY brethren," said a minister, "the preaching of the gospel to some people is like pouring water over a sponge—it soaks in and stays. To others it is like the wind blowing through a chicken-coop. My experience of this congregation is that it contains more chicken-coops than sponges."

MONSIGNOR CAPEL is struck in America by the precociousness of the children. He called with the archbishop upon a Baltimore lady, who said to her four-year-old boy: "My son, speak to the Archbishop." The boy readily held out his hand and said: "How do, Arch?"

It was at the close of the wedding-breakfast. One of the guests arose, and, with glass in hand, said: "I drink to the health of the groom. May he see many days like this." The intention was good, but the bride looked as if something had displeased her.

A LITTLE boy caught his foot in the wool with which his sister was working the sentence, "Mercy is divine," on perforated cardboard, and got such a box on the ear from the amiable sister as showed how fully she appreciated the motto she was using.

"DOCTOR," said a gentleman to a physician, "my daughter had a fit this morning, and afterwards remained half an hour without knowledge or understanding." "Oh," replied the doctor, "never mind that; many people continue so all their lives."

THE three reasons which a good woman presented for objecting to a preacher were striking ones. She said that, in the first place, he read his sermon; in the second, he did not read it well; and, in the third place, it was not worth reading.

ON a gentleman complaining to Chief Baron O'Grady that he had caught a boy stealing his turnips, and asked if he could not prosecute him under the Timber Acts, the Baron replied quickly: "No; not unless the turnips are sticky."

It is not uncommon to see philanthropists, especially of the softer sex, who so lavish the cream of human kindness on the bad that they have only the skimmed milk left for the good, and even that is generally kept till it is sour.

A MAN is always a fool. If he be young, the world says when he is older, he will know more; if he be older, it says he is old enough to know better; and when he is old, it says there is no fool equal to an old fool.

A CONTEMPORARY has an article on the mysteries of vegetable life; but it does not tell us how it is that the largest specimens always get on the top of the measure that is filled by the market-gardener.

VERY rarely, and, indeed, Oliver Wendell Holmes says never, do you hear a woman make a pun. And when you do hear the one she does make, you don't wonder that she never tries it again.

A MAN in one of the suburbs knows how to play on two cornets at once. The neighbours say they don't object to his knowing how, but he had better not try to do it.

NEVER travel without a pocket companion. A well-filled pocket-book is the best.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### ANSWERS.

**ANXIOUS MOTHER.**—In most neighbourhoods there are Provident Dispensaries, where, for a small payment, working people are admitted as members, obtain advice free, and medicine for a penny or so on each prescription. If there is no such dispensary open to you, take your poor child to the nearest hospital. The case is evidently one requiring careful treatment.

**BUMPKIN.**—What are now known as "Wards" in the City of London were originally large estates, owned by men of great influence, called "Aldermen," who gave their names to the wards, and were much in the position of lords of manors. In the time of Henry III. these large estates became broken up, and the wards began to assume their modern names, and after his reign ceased to be owned by the aldermen. For an interesting account of the "Corporation of the City of London and Some of its Useful Work," see *Whitaker's Almanack*.

**CEUR-DE-LION.**—Your questions are rather out of our line. Write to the editor of the *Referee*, Fleet Street, who will, no doubt, give you the information you require.

**CUPID.**—Try purified ox-gall with water for removing the greasy appearance of your black silk. In some cases no remedy can be found, and if the ox-gall does not answer, we are afraid you must give it up.

**EVENING PARTY.**—1. There are no particular novelties in sweet dishes this season. Cocoa-nut and Banana Creams are, however, new to many people. You will find recipes for them in *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, Nos. 52 and 99. 2. It is impossible to tell, without further details, why it is that you fail in making your jelly bright. Perhaps you put the whites and shells of the eggs to the jelly whilst it is hot enough at once to set the former. The liquid should be tepid when the eggs are stirred in. Stone's raisin wine makes jelly of a very fine quality and flavour.

**INQUIRER X.**—The sect about which you wish for information were called Glasites in Scotland, and Sandemanians in England. In 1727, John Glas, a minister of the Church of Scotland, published "The Testimony of the King of Martyrs, concerning His Kingdom (John xviii., 36)," in which he opposed national Churches, and described the original constitution of the Christian Church, its doctrines, ordinances, officers, and discipline, as given in the New Testament. Having been deposed in 1728, he and others established several churches formed upon the primitive models. The publication of a series of letters on Hervey's "Theron and Aspasio," by Robert Sandeman, in 1755, led to the establishment of churches in London and other places in England, and also in North America. A meeting-house at Barnsbury, London, was erected in 1862.

**L. DÖLLE.**—Many thanks for the information you have kindly sent. We will forward it to our correspondent.

**LOIS.**—The poem is an early production of Mr. Ruskin's, and is to be found in a very scarce volume printed for private circulation. On the title-page is inscribed simply, "Poems, J. R., collected 1850":

### REMEMBRANCE.

I ought to be joyful, the fest and the song,  
And the light tones of music resound through the throng;  
But its cadence falls dully and dead on my ear,  
And the laughter I mimic is quenched in a tear.

For here are no longer, to bid me rejoice,  
The light of thy smile, or the tone of thy voice,  
And, gay though the crowd that's around me may be,  
I am alone, Adele, parted from thee.

Alone, said I, dearest? O, never we part—  
For ever, for ever, thou'rt here in my heart;  
Sleeping or waking, where'er I may be,  
I have but one thought, and that thought is of thee.

When the planets roll red through the darkness of night,  
When the morning bedews all the landscape with light,  
When the high sun of noonday is warm on the hill,  
And the breezes are quiet, the green leafage still:

I love to look out o'er the earth and the sky,  
For Nature is kind, and seems lonely, as I;  
Whatever in Nature most lovely I see,  
Has a voice that recalls the remembrance of thee.

Remember, remember—those only can know  
How dear is remembrance, whose hope is laid low:  
'Tis like clouds in the west, that are gorgeous still,  
When the dank dews of evening fall deadly and chill.

Like the bow in the cloud that is painted so bright—  
Like the voice of the nightingale heard through the night;  
Oh, sweet is remembrance, most sad though it be,  
For remembrance is all that remaineth for me!

**LONGEVITY.**—No doubt the signs of long or short life are well understood. Lord Bacon, generally regarded as the keenest observer and profoundest thinker who has appeared on this planet, wrote much on longevity. His signs of short life are quick growth, fair soft skin, soft fine hair, early corpulence, large head, short neck, small mouth, fat ear, brittle, separated teeth. Some of his signs of long life are slow growth, hard coarse hair, rough freckled skin, deep furrows in the forehead, firm flesh with veins lying high, wide nostrils, large mouth, hard, gristly ear, strong contiguous teeth. He adds that early grey hair is not significant, some of the longest livers having turned grey in early life.

**QUEEN'S ENGLISH.**—We are on the side of those who object to the word "reliable," but we are aware that there is some authority for its use. Dr. Ogilvie says: "This word has been again and again attacked by different writers, having been at various times stigmatised as an Americanism, as irregular in formation, as unnecessary, as vulgar, and what not. Against such charges, however, it has found able defenders, the most notable of whom is Mr. Fitzedward Hall, in his little work 'On English Adjectives In-able, with Special Reference to Reliable.' The first instance of its use, as known to him, was in a paper written by Coleridge to the *Morning Post*, in 1800, the expression in which it occurs being, 'the best means and most reliable pledge.' Coleridge used it repeatedly afterwards; and it has also been used by many good writers since. It is now, indeed, of everyday occurrence, though no doubt certain persons still object to the use of it. Among those who have employed it, Mr. Hall mentions Rev. James Martineau, Mr. Gladstone, Dr. Newman, Mr. Stewart Mill, Dr. Henry Maulesey, Bishop Wilberforce, Dean Mansel, Harriet Martineau, and Mr. Leslie Stephen—names surely sufficient to support any one who chooses to use the vocable in question. . . . Altogether it seems too late in the day to protest against the use of the word now. Those who do not like it can let it alone; but, as Professor Whitney remarks (the quotation is from Mr. Hall): 'We have had to swallow too many linguistic camels to want to make life more uncomfortable by straining at such gnats as that.'"

**SINCERITY.**—1.

Yes, child of suffering, thou may'st well be sure,  
He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor.

"Urania," OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

2. Your second quotation cannot be found.

**TRUE TO THE CORE.**—The tale of the faithful wives who carried out their husbands on their shoulders as their dearest and most valued possessions, is probably not much more authentic than that of Lady Godiva's self-abnegation. At Weinsberg, in Wurtemberg, are still shown on the summit of a hill the ruins of a castle, which is known by the name of "Weibertruhe," or Woman's Faith. During the Guelph and Ghibelline wars the castle was in 1140 besieged by the Emperor Conrad III., who, in his exasperation at the protracted resistance made by the garrison, vowed to put all the men to the sword, but promised to spare the lives of the women, with the engagement, moreover, that each should be permitted to carry out along with her her choicest treasure. The offer was accepted, and each woman marched out with her husband on her shoulders. The incident has been made by Bürger the subject of one of his ballads, entitled, "Die Weiber von Weinsberg," which has been spiritedly rendered into English by Mr. Brooks. See Ripley's "Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature," Vol. XIV., "Songs and Ballads."

**WORLD WORN.**—The lines are by Longfellow:

Something the heart must have to cherish,  
Must love, and joy, and sorrow learn;  
Something with passion clasp or perish,  
And in itself to ashes burn.

W. R. T. B.—"Ten Thousand Wonderful Things" (Nimmo), 5s.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 145.]

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Only a Pink.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

It is a simple story that I am about to tell—common enough, perhaps, in this strange, sad world, where the visible tragedies are as nothing compared with those which are hidden for ever from our eyes, but it is none the less pathetic for that.

There is but little in it of thrilling incident or startling adventure, and those who seek for either in these pages will be disappointed. Some there are, however—and perhaps they are not the few—to whom the record of a life self-spoilt, in this world, at least, irretrievably, may not be devoid of a certain sad interest, and to those I address myself in recalling the story which was told to me under the following circumstances.

It was towards the close of a hot, weary, dusty summer's day, when most of the inhabitants of Tours had left the town, and the few who stayed behind loitered out in the evening, and sat listlessly and idly on the stone parapet of the great bridge. I had been detained, sorely against my will, in the deserted town. On this particular evening my imprisonment had begun to feel more intolerable to me than ever, and the thoughts which filled my heart, as I wandered out aimlessly and wearily beyond the boulevards, were depressed and despondent. I knew of no life outside my own in which to take that interest which alone keeps the heart from preying on itself.

The future was dark to me; the past seemed fruitless; the present grey as the dust on this long monotonous road, which stretched on before me for miles without a curve or slope to relieve its weary straightness.

I stopped at last, looked round for a moment before I turned homewards, and saw the only pleasant sight that had met my eyes that day. Nothing but a mass of deep-red flowers in the window-sill of a small, mean-looking house close by, but no one could ever guess how that spot of colour refreshed my eyes, wearied by the dust and glare of an August day at Tours. I could not resist the temptation, and, crossing the road, bent forward to smell them, when I became aware of a face in the window looking at me with kindly interest.

In some confusion I hastily drew back, and asked pardon for the liberty I had taken. I saw then that the face was that of a woman no longer in her first youth, who was lying on a bed that had been drawn close up to the open window. It was of rare beauty and refinement, but the features bore, alas! that sharp, pinched look which accompanies habitual suffering. In answer to my apologies she smiled sweetly, and said, in a voice which I thought the most musical I had ever heard in France:

"Madame likes these flowers, they are sweet and will refresh her?"

I had forgotten the flowers already in the pleasure of seeing a face which carried such infinite suggestions with it.

I thanked her, however, most heartily, and was about to pluck one of the pinks when she forestalled me, and with a tenderness which I can only describe as reverential, cut several for me herself, and tied them up into a bouquet.

"Madame looks very tired," she said, glancing at me with eyes that seemed gifted with a power of discerning more than mere physical weariness.

"I am rather; but you—you are ill, I fear," I answered, struck again by the lines of pain about the mouth.

"I am always as madame sees me now. I cannot move."

"But have you always been so?" I asked with interest, for there was more than passive suffering and resignation written on that worn, sweet face.

This woman had lived, she had reached the high-water mark of life's most powerful emotions; for her the worst was over. We cannot lose that which we have never possessed. I did not pity so much as reverence her, because I felt rather than knew that she had attained a point impossible for me.

"No, madame, not always," she replied, in answer to my question. "Three winters ago I slipped in the snow, and hurt my spine, and they say I shall never walk again."

She said it calmly enough. I wondered vaguely in my own mind through what storms of anguish she had learnt such a lesson of perfect patience.

I stayed with her for nearly an hour after, meaning to go every five minutes, and resisting all her invitations to go in and sit down. She drew me to her, I could not tell how or why; what the

bright spot of colour had been to my dreary walk, her look, and gentle words, and gracious manner were to my hungry, aching heart.

Only when our interview was disturbed by the return of her brother, did I turn away at last from the open window, and prepare for my homeward walk. She had spoken of him two or three times already in the course of her talk with me, and I was not unprepared to see in him a man quite out of the common, and far above the apparently humble position he now held as clerk in M. Maine's office.

He must have been at least ten years older than his sister, for there were many grey threads plainly visible in his thick black hair, and though he lacked the charm that was so visible in her, I felt at once that he was a good man, and liked and trusted him accordingly. I could see what he had been to her, by the way in which her eyes rested upon him, when, after having politely saluted me, he entered the house, crossed over to the bed, and changed her position with the skill and tenderness of a woman.

My interest in the two increased every moment, and when at last I left her, it was with the permission—asked on my part with eagerness, and granted on hers with evident pleasure—to go and see her again as often as I would.

I will not weary the reader by describing how often I found my way to the poor, mean-looking abode, which I should doubtless have passed and repassed twenty times without even noticing it but for the wonderful wealth of colour blooming in the window-ledge. Neither will I wear out his patience by telling of the charm of voice, and look, and manner which increased upon me daily. Suffice it to say that by degrees I won her confidence, and she told me, as it were, in various chapters, the history of her life, which I will strive to blend together, and tell as nearly as possible in her own simple and pathetic manner.

"We have not always been as poor as we are now, madame," she said in answer to one of my questions. "My father was a *notaire* at Strasbourg, and his business was large enough to enable him to give us, my brother and me, a better education than falls to the lot of the *petite bourgeoisie*. I do not remember my mother; she died when I was still quite little, and of my father I never saw much, for I was at school till seventeen, and soon after he died, and I was left with only Jean to take care of me.

"He is many years older than I, and he had always been steady, and was far more grave and serious even as a boy than many men of twice his age. He succeeded to my father's business, and I lived with him and kept the house, and, having no relations and but few friends, I had much more liberty than is generally thought good for a young girl in France.

"I do not know how it might have been for others, but I am sure it was not good for me. I was pretty—people told me so, and I soon began to think so myself. I saw that my brother's friends thought so, and by-and-by I began to see it in the faces of those whom I met in the streets, and I grew vain and *coquette*, and cared more for dress and less, I fear, for making Jean comfortable at home. He lived much in his books and affairs, more than than he does now, for I was too young and gay to share his anxieties.

"He was very good to me, and gave me all I wanted, and did not make reproaches when he might very well have made them; but he did not let me live in his life, and sometimes I felt this to be unreasonable. I knew that I was something more than the little doll he took me for, and it fretted me when he treated me as a child before his friends, and smiled at my ideas.

"I know that he was often right, but I think perhaps he had it in his power to have made me wiser by raising me to his level, instead of condescending kindly but half-pityingly to mine. I know he thinks so himself now.

"I soon saw, however, that others thought me clever if he did not. I began to feel my power with men, and to use it, often without regard to the pain I gave, because it pleased my vanity.

"In short, madame, I was *coquette*, and from that came the beginning and end of all my griefs. I did not care for these men with whom I thus played and amused myself. They pleased me well enough, if you will, but they did not touch me, and I had too much liberty in my home to be willing to marry unless I gained something that would more than recompense me for what I lost.

"I felt in my soul the need of being understood, and yet some strange instinct, half shamefaced, half coquettish, made me hide away the very need, and seem as gay and smiling as if I were never troubled with a serious thought.

"People spoke severely of me sometimes, and '*légère*' was a word often applied to me in those days, nor do I say there was no truth in the accusation. Therefore it is, dear madame, that when I see a young girl *coquette* it makes me sad for her, because I know that she is doing everything she can to ruin her own life, and perhaps not only her own.

"One evening in July—it was such a day as this, hot and sultry—Jean and I were sitting in our little garden, he reading, and I with



my work, when old Jeanne, our *bonne*, came out to us, and told my brother that some one wished to speak to him. He went in, but returned almost immediately with a young man whom he presented to me, saying:

"Marie, this is my friend, Eugène Groult; thou hast heard of him often."

"Yes, madame, I had often heard of him, and I had liked what I had heard. He was younger than my brother by about five years, but he did not seem to me much older than I was, and I was quite disappointed by his youthful appearance. He was not remarkable, he was not handsome, and he had not the air of being gay and lively. Indeed, he scarcely seemed like a Frenchman at all, for his voice had a foreign accent in it, and I did not know at that time that his mother had been a German, and he himself had lived at Leipsic for many years. Neither did I know then, though I did afterwards, what a pure, noble soul this was on which I was so rapidly passing my poor judgment. But I will not try to describe him."

"Let me show madame his portrait; that will give her a better idea of what he was like than any words of mine."

As she spoke she drew from her pillow a little volume of the "Imitation of Christ," which I had noticed beside her on the very first night of my acquaintance with her.

Among the leaves lay a photograph, which she took out and laid in my hand without a word.

It was as she said, not a remarkable face, not at least in the sense in which that word is generally used, neither was it by any means handsome, yet the moment I saw it I could understand the nature of the undying love she seemed to bear him. There was a pathetic expression about the eyes, and certain sorrowful lines about the steadfast, well-cut lips which told plainly enough of aspirations and yearnings too great ever to be satisfied on earth, of a sensitive refinement and delicacy of nature that could not fail to be the cause of keen suffering, and which must needs have been jarred on perpetually.

It was the face of one whose love would have been pure and tender as a woman's, and deep and passionate as a man's, alike strong and jealous, sacrificing and exacting—one which would lavish all freely upon its object, but could be satisfied with nothing short of all in return. Yes, I could understand it all now. He had loved her only, and for her there was but this one man in the world. Looking from his face to hers, I did not wonder that it should be so.

She looked at me enquiringly as I gave her back the picture.

"It is as you say, a pure noble soul," I said in answer to her silent question. "I thank you for having allowed me to see this."

She thanked me by a quick, grateful smile, and then went on.

"Madame must know that he and Jean were *camarades* together at school. Jean had always loved him dearly, and had been like an elder brother to him."

"He had, even from his childhood, shown a wonderful talent for music, and when his father died he went to Germany with his mother, and lived at Leipsic for many years, studying at the Conservatoire. He had been organist in one of the churches there till just lately, but now his mother was dead, and he had come back to his native town, having heard that the post of organist at the cathedral was vacant and being anxious to obtain it."

"And thou hast not left thine heart with any German maiden?" my brother asked him merrily.

"He shook his head and smiled, and said he had no heart but for his organ."

"I do not believe that," said Jean, laughing; "but thou shalt come in now and play for us. I want Marie to hear thee. She has known thee by repute for a long time, hast thou not, Marie?"

"I have, indeed," I answered, and I too prayed of M. Groult to come in and make music."

"I soon saw that my brother had not praised his wonderful talent too highly. It seemed to me that I was in heaven as I listened to him. I did not know whether he played his own music or that of another, but it flowed like water from his fingers; sometimes it lulled me, sometimes it stirred up longing yearnings in my soul; sometimes it made me rejoice, and then again I could have broken my heart in weeping with a blissful sadness or a painful pleasure."

"We have no playing like that in all Strasbourg, have we, Marie?" my brother said when he had finished.

"I did not answer, but I came forward to where M. Groult was standing, and I met his eyes for the first time."

"I cannot tell how I knew, but I did know, and I think he knew it too, that I had found a soul that would understand mine. He made me feel as I had never felt before with any man—humble and unworthy, and yet wishing to be better than I was. I had watched his face in the dim light as he sat playing. I knew by instinct that he was more pure and unworldly than any man I had ever met, except my brother, and I had a strange mixture of restlessness and satisfaction in his presence which yet made me half-angry both with myself and him. Perhaps madame can understand what I mean?"

"I do perfectly," I answered.

"But I must not weary you, madame," she said after a moment's pause, during which she had lain with closed eyes, doubtless seeing clearly in her mind's eye the gracious vision which she had been striving to paint to me.

"After all, there is not much to tell, but from that evening my life was changed, for he was in it. He obtained the post of organist without much difficulty, and took a lodging in the same street as ours. We saw him often; he was Jean's greatest friend, and he had liberty to come in any evening that he pleased, that we might make music together, for people said at that time that I had a fine voice."

"He never said so, yet I knew it pleased him. He never paid me compliments, as others did. He never praised my dress or said a word to make me think I was pretty. Yet I knew that he loved me. I knew in my soul that to him I was the best and dearest in all the world, and certainly he was that to me. It was not long before I knew that I could never marry any one but him, and yet—you will think it strange, perhaps, madame—we often made each other very angry. He was jealous by nature—the French blood told there. He could not endure to see me laugh and coquette with other men, and when I saw that he was angry a wicked spirit took possession of me, and I talked and rattled on all the more fast, because in secret I often despised myself for doing it."

"Alone with him and Jean, it was different. There was something in him which made me more soft and gentle in spite of myself."

"The *raison d'être* of a woman," as he said once, '*c'est la douceur*.' And with him my whole nature seemed to flower out and grow. Ah, madame, he loved me well, in truth, but he would not have loved me as well as he did if he had not loved God better!"

"But if he loved you, and you loved him, what separated you?" I asked curiously.

"He was poor, madame," she answered simply, "and I was well off, and he knew it, and was too proud to ask me to marry him till he could bring me to a home at least as good as that in which he found me. If I had been less of a coquette it might have been different, but as it was, looking back upon the past I can well understand why he kept silent for so long."

"And for how long was it?" I questioned her.

"For a year, madame, till the summer came round again—the summer of 1870."

"The year of the war?" I exclaimed with interest.

"Yes, madame," she answered, sighing heavily. "During that year I had seen him often, and loved him better each day. And yet as the time went on I cannot say that we drew nearer together. There were many points on which we differed entirely, and I think perhaps it was not good for us to live so near each other."

"We had too frequent opportunities for finding out the radical differences in taste and temperament which existed between us. For instance, he, half a German by birth, and more than half by sympathy, naturally loved the country where he had spent so many happy years; while I, foolish child, hated both the country and the people, and would not read the books he offered to lend me, if they were written in German. In his own nature there was the very same strife. I have heard since that his father's marriage with his German wife had not been a very happy one, and I think that the bitter drop was in the child. He was at war with himself and the world around him."

"Therefore it has always seemed to me strange, above all other things, that he should have chosen me on whom to lavish his great wealth of affection. I who could never have soothed him until my nature was transformed. And yet I loved him. Ah, Heaven knows how I loved him through it all!" she added, as if to herself. "Moreover, I could not understand then, what I have learnt since, that one may be a good Christian without being what many of the priests would call a good Catholic. Eugène was always the former; he never was the latter. To me, in those days, his ideas seemed very dangerous; he spoke so earnestly and even sorrowfully against what I know now to be the undoubted evils of our Church."

"I remember one night telling him at last, that I believed for all his heavenly playing at the mass, which was a kind of religion in itself, so entirely did he make it express the true devotional spirit, he was yet at heart no better than a German heretic. He did not speak for a moment, but his face grew white and set, as it always did when I made one of these speeches to him."

"Mademoiselle," he said at last, taking a little book from his pocket, 'I believe in the religion that is taught here. If the man who wrote this be a German heretic, then I am proud to be his disciple.'

"It was the 'Imitation of Christ'—yes," she added, following my eyes as I glanced at the little volume beside her, 'that is the same book, madame; I have had it ever since.'

"Of course I knew it and had read it often, as all Catholics do, but it had not impressed me with any deep sense of its marvellous knowledge of human nature. It is a German copy, as you may see, and for a moment I felt tempted to give it back to him, but, as I opened it, I observed that it was marked here and there, and the desire to study those parts he most cared for, overcame my love of teasing for the moment. He never asked for it again, and so I have used it ever since.

"Several weeks passed by after that evening, during which I did not see him, for Jean had taken me out to a little country house that belonged to us. It was not more than two leagues from Strasbourg, and Jean often walked in and out; but for me, I desired to forget the town altogether, and amused myself with my little garden, and with the work of the dairy.

"In this way the month of June passed by, and we lived quietly on, little thinking of the storm that was gathering to burst over our unfortunate country. I wondered why Eugène never came near us after our first Sunday in the country, and from wonder it was but a step with me to angry and suspicious jealousy.

"He had found someone else, I said to myself angrily, with whom to pass the long summer evenings. Well! he should find that to me it was a matter of very small moment. That he had not left Strasbourg I knew, for Jean had mentioned more than once having met him, but he said no more, and I was far too proud to ask for any news of him.

"But one afternoon I had been out a little distance from home to visit a friend who lived in a neighbouring village. Jean had gone in to town that morning, so I had been in no haste to return, thinking he would not come back till evening. It was past six, and beginning to grow cool, when I saw him—Eugène—coming along the road to meet me, and there was a curious spring and elasticity in his whole bearing which I knew of old meant that he was pleased and happy. Ah, why was I not ready to be glad with him, instead of thinking only of my own vanity, which I conceived to have been wounded by him? He came up to me as one who was at least hopeful of a kind welcome, and I could see that he was both hurt and surprised when I said carelessly:

"Good-evening, monsieur."

"Let me take this," he said gently, laying his hand on the little basket on my arm; but I answered brusquely, 'No; I prefer to carry it myself,' and I began to walk with greater rapidity.

"He did not say anything, and walked quietly beside me, but the glad look with which he had first approached me was gone, and he wore instead that troubled, anxious expression which, alas! I had the power of calling out in him so often.

"Have you seen Jean?" I asked presently.

"Yes, we came out together by the diligence; he is at home now."

"How did you know where to find me?"

"Old Jeanne told us where you had gone, and your brother pointed out the road to me, and bade me seek you."

"Why had Jean done that?" I asked myself. And my heart leaped into my mouth with a kind of terror at what I felt was coming.

"I began to hurry on still faster, but in a moment he had laid his hand on my arm, and said:

"I cannot let you walk so fast, you will overheat and fatigue yourself, and Jean bade me take care of you."

"Then it is a pity he did not come himself, if he was anxious about me," I said with a laugh.

"He did not come because he trusted me; his last words to me were that he confided you to my care."

"My faith!" I interrupted him scornfully; "Jean should know me better by this time, than to dispose of me without my own consent."

"He did not, mademoiselle, but you will not understand. I have, perhaps, vexed you unintentionally."

"I did not know there was anything to understand; you speak enigmas this evening, monsieur."

"You have wondered, perhaps, why I have left you so long without a visit, but—"

"I have not thought about it at all," I answered quickly. "I have been so busy and happy out here that I have wanted no one and nothing."

"If you knew all, mademoiselle—" he began again.

"But, monsieur, I assure you I desire to know nothing."

"Ah, but I will not weary madame by telling her of all the foolish things I said that day! It is enough that I ruined my own peace. I knew, though I would not let him tell me, that something must have happened which had enabled him at last to seek permission of Jean to speak to me. I knew that Jean had sent him to tell me this himself, and yet, foolish child that I was, I would not let him tell me, but interrupted and thwarted him at every turn, until even his patience could bear it no longer. At the head of the

little lane that led down to our house, he turned and looked at me with white face and reproachful eyes.

"Do you not wish to see Jean again?" I asked him carelessly, but he answered:

"Mademoiselle has taken such pains to show me that I am not welcome, that I will not intrude upon her any longer."

"He did not offer me his hand, or say good-bye, but only bowed coldly as he went away."

"I laughed, for I thought he would surely come back next day, and that I had but put off my happiness for a few hours; and I sang gaily as I ran down the lane by myself."

"Jean was standing at the door, and he gave a start of surprise when he saw that I was alone."

"Where is Eugène?" he said quickly.

"Indeed, I don't know," I answered; 'he refused to come in.'

"Marie, what hast thou been saying to him?" and for the first time in my life I saw my brother look really angry. His eyes were flashing with indignation, and mine fell before them. 'Hast thou been a fool?' he asked me angrily. 'Hast thou wounded one of the best and truest hearts that ever beat?'

"Still I did not answer, but I began to be frightened at his tone of displeasure."

"Answer, Marie," he said at last, taking me by the arm; 'did Eugène tell thee of his professorship?'

"No," I answered shortly.

"What did he tell thee?"

"I don't know, I did not care to hear."

"Dost thou mean to say thou hast refused to marry him?"

"I did not choose that he should ask me," I answered with a laugh.

"Marie, listen then, thou art a little fool!" said my brother with a crushing contempt. 'Dost thou know what thou hast done? Dost thou know that Eugène has loved thee ever since he first knew thee, that it has been the object of his life to make a home for thee, and now that it has been done, and he comes to tell thee of it, thou canst stand there and tell me thou dost not choose that he should ask thee? Go. Thou art not worthy of him. I hope he will never humble himself by asking thee again. Go, I tell thee! I do not wish to speak to thee any more;' and he dropped my arm and turned away.

"I stood there as he had left me, I cannot tell how long. I began now to know what I had done, and to wish it undone. It was not till later that I knew what I may as well tell you, madame, now, that all these weeks past he had been trying for a post at the Conservatoire, which would give him a position and income above that which he held now. It was but yesterday that he had obtained it, and he had sought me out at once to tell me, and it was thus I had received him. Ah, madame, I wonder sometimes shall I ever be forgiven for what in my mad vanity I did that day."

"It has been repented long ago," I said gently.

"Ah, if repentance could wash it out!"

She said no more, but there was such a volume of suffering in those few words as nearly broke my heart to hear.

"I still hoped that he would come back," she continued after a moment. "Yes, I still hoped that he would come back. I thought if I had been a man I would not have been baffled by a few sharp words, and, madame, if it had not been for the war, I cannot say but that he might have come; but as it was, Heaven had ordered it otherwise. I had let the opportunity He had given me go by. I was never to have it again."

"It seems so hard," I cried, feeling an inexpressible pity and yearning over the two lives thus spoiled.

"It was not hard, madame," she answered calmly. "I have learnt to see it since. I was not fit for him, and, besides, I have not been unhappy, at least, not always. To have loved, and to have been loved by a good man, is blessed, and no one can be always sad who has known that blessing. I thank Heaven I have known it."

"But he?" I asked, feeling almost abashed before her exquisite patience and resignation.

"He is far happier where he is than he could ever have been with me. I am content for him. What makes me sad in this matter is the thought of my own sin."

I was silent. This woman, taught by that best of all teachers—pain and suffering—had learnt one of the greatest lessons that can be learnt in this life—to love without needing to be loved again. A lesson learnt always hardy; only too often never learnt at all. Yet who that has not at least set himself to learn it, knows any thing of either love or life in their highest and best sense?

"Then he never came back after all?" I said presently.

"Pardon, madame, he came, but the time for speaking of love and marriage was gone for ever, little as I thought it then. A few days passed, the only days of my whole life in which Jean was stern to me. But I deserved his displeasure, and it gave me a greater respect for him than I had ever had before. At last, one glorious

afternoon, when I was sitting in the porch, I saw him—Eugène—at the garden-gate, and half in shyness, half in coquetry, I fled away to my own room, and watched him from behind the blinds as he walked up the path that led to the house.

"I heard Jean come out to greet him, and the sound of his voice; then the door closed, and I began to walk up and down my room with a beating heart, trying to prepare myself for what I thought was before me. Ah, how little I knew! It could only have been a few moments before the door downstairs was opened again, and Jean called to me in a loud and agitated voice to descend quickly. I ran down at once, but my heart almost stood still when I saw Eugène's face as he came forward to greet me.

"What is it?" I cried, looking from one to the other, for I saw in a moment that something had happened. "What is it then, Jean? Say quick!"

"The war!" he answered, with a face as white as death.

Eugène said nothing, but in the few days which had passed since I last saw him, he seemed to have gone through years of sorrow, so pale and drawn was his face.

"When did you hear?" I asked, turning to him.

"Only yesterday," Jean answered for him; and then he told me all that madame knows, doubtless as well or better than I. It was not at once that I could take it all in, and Jean had to explain it to me again and again.

"At last I said triumphantly:

"But, at all events, we are going to conquer."

"My brother raised his hand to silence me, and Eugène turned away, his lip quivering, and the tears started to his eyes. Ah, madame, what a terrible thing it is to see a man weep! We none of us spoke for a moment; then he said in a low voice:

"If this war comes, it is not with Prussia alone we must fight; all Germany will be called into the field."

"Ah, I could understand it now. France was his fatherland; he bore a French name, yet he spoke her language with a foreign accent, and in his heart, as I well knew, loved his mother's country and people far the best. Whatever issue the war might have, it could not but bring misery to him.

"But war is not yet declared," I said at last.

"No, mademoiselle," he spoke in a low tone of hopeless misery, "but it will be. Prussia will never yield to the demands of the emperor, and he will never be satisfied unless she does."

"Even as he spoke, I seemed to see, in a sudden flash, all that was coming upon us—the devastation of our fair pastures, the siege of our beloved city, the breaking-up of our home, the ruin of our fortunes. I saw it all, and, worse still, I knew that now, at least, there was no chance of my being allowed to undo what I had done.

"This was not a time to speak of love and marriage. Nay, I could not have loved him so well as I did if he had spoken of them then. But, oh, how I despised myself for my own folly when I saw his silent misery, and knew that I had shut myself out by my own act from all right to comfort him. Oh, how bitterly I wept when he had gone, and I found myself once more in my room, from the windows of which I had watched him so proudly and joyfully but one short hour back!

"The sun was shining just as brightly over the fair green meadows and smiling cornfields, but in imagination I seemed to see them ruined and devastated, and heaped with dead bodies, and I shuddered and sickened at the thought.

"Well, madame knows the rest. But a few days more, and the war was proclaimed, and the French army set out, crying, '*A Berlin! à Berlin!*' I felt no doubt but that in a few weeks we should arrive there in triumph, and when the days passed on, and our armies were utterly routed again and again, I was nearly wild with grief and humiliation. And Eugène—during those days he had no comfort but in his organ. Sometimes, at evening, I used to steal into the cathedral—for I had forgotten to tell madame that at the first mention of the war we had gone back to Strasbourg—and I heard him, in the dim light, playing like one inspired, but we never met now in the old way. He came to our house, indeed, but between him and me there was a barrier which neither would or could be the first to break down.

"Alas! neither he nor Jean could understand the strange inconsistencies of a woman's heart. He could not believe that, notwithstanding my shameful treatment of him, I yet loved him more than life. It is often so, I suppose, between a man and a woman. When they most love they seem least able to understand each other.

"These were the few days of suspense and anguish before the wounded were brought into the city; then the enemy closed in upon us, and the horrors of the siege began. For seven weeks, madame, we were under fire; there was not an hour in which we felt safe; houses were destroyed, and men and women struck down by hundreds, and the sufferings of my unhappy countrymen were beyond description. Our house was full of the wounded, and old Jeanne and I were employed in nursing them night and day.

"And all this time I never saw Eugène.

"Afterwards I knew that from the first moment the siege began he had never spared himself. Those whom he tended said of him later that his touch was as light as a woman's, and not their own wives or mothers could have cared for them more tenderly than he during those terrible weeks; but all the while he went in and out among them like a ghost, his heart almost rent asunder by the struggle between the two nations that was going on within him.

"Ah, it was well that he was taken away and spared all the misery that came after, to which this was nothing—yes, it was well. I thank Heaven!"

"Then he died?" I asked her gently.

She did not answer for a moment, then went on as if she had not heard me:

"It was on the 16th of September—a Friday evening. It had been a wearisome day, and at the end of it I had crept out with Jean to the open door to breathe for a few moments air that had not been tainted all day by sick and suffering men. There had been a lull in the bombardment, and the whole street was perfectly still.

"Now in this moment's breathing space my thoughts went to one who was never very far from them at any time, and the longing to see him again, if but for one moment, to feel his hand in mine, and hear his beloved voice once more, became so great as almost to overpower me.

"Well, I had my wish, madame, though not as I desired it. I had not been there many minutes before the firing began again, and I turned to go in.

"I was very weary, and Jean bade me go and lie down for a couple of hours before resuming my watch, from which old Jeanne must then be relieved. I remember that he put his arms round me with something of his old tenderness. From the time that the war first broke out he had quite ceased to be cold to me, though Eugène's name was never now mentioned between us. I did as he bade me, and laid down, but before I could close my eyes there was a crash so loud that I knew a shell must have fallen quite close to us, and in terror I started up, rushed to the window, and looked out.

"At the farther end of the street I could see in the dim light a group gathered round something—I dared not think of what they saw. I had seen the sight before many times, and had become almost hardened to it. Why should I have felt to-night, when I saw it, as if every drop of blood had frozen in my veins with horror?

"I watched them coming slowly down the street, and I went down and stood at the door to receive them. There were many other houses in that street, but I knew they were bringing him to me, and I waited quietly till I heard Jean's voice saying:

"Art thou there, my sister? Go in, poor little one; this is no sight for thee."

"I did not answer, but I threw open the door of the nearest room, and made place for those who were carrying him. They brought him in and laid him down, and I followed them. I had not seen his face, yet my heart had told me from the first who it was.

"After they had laid him down they stood away from him by Jean's desire, and I heard one say, 'He lives still.'

"My brother knelt by his side, and listened for any signs of life, then lifting up his head he said gently:

"Marie, bring me a light."

"Before I could turn to go, however, at the sound of Jean's voice Eugène had opened his eyes and looked round. In a moment I was beside him, and had taken his hand, and I fancied I saw a faint smile pass over his face. It might have been minutes that I knelt there, or it might have been hours. I cannot tell. One of those standing by brought the lamp that Jean asked for, and then fell back into his former place.

"Was it thus that my passionate wish was to be fulfilled? I asked myself bitterly. Had he been struck down close to my door only for this? Was he going away without giving me one word, one look, one smile to show that he forgave me? I would have given my life for a word from those dear lips, but it never came.

"When he would have lavished all his tender love upon me I had trifled with him, and made light of it. Now, when I would have given the whole world for even a look, he was to die, as I feared, and make no sign.

"Ah no, not that, madame. Just at the very end Eugène opened his eyes for one moment and turned them full on me. I saw them shine with an undying love. I saw his lips part as though they would try to speak, but I saw no more, and knew nothing till I heard Jean's voice saying beside me:

"Come, my sister, he has no need of us now."

"No, he had no need of us. When I looked on his face I knew how true it was. He lay there as peacefully as if he had fallen asleep on his mother's breast like a tired child.

"The cannon might sound on now, he would not hear them. His tender heart would no more be wounded and torn in the struggle; nothing could harm him, for he was safe with God. I could have

gazed for ever on that blessed face, but Jean said again with infinite tenderness :

"Poor little one, thou must not stay, he would not have it so."

"I turned away at these words, and saw then that we must have been kneeling there for hours. The lamp burned yellow and dim, and the faint grey light of dawn was struggling into the room. It fell upon one of these," touching the clove-pinks as she spoke, "almost the last left of a plant that he had given me in the early spring. He loved the flowers well in his lifetime. I have wondered sometimes whether he knew that I laid them in his hand when he was dead. I like to think he did."

"Then I saw my last of him, and Jean led me away. Ah, madame, I can never tell you what my brother has been to me since that night. It was as though he loved me from henceforth with some of Eugène's love as well as his own."

"When we left Strasbourg, ruined by the war, and came here to live in a manner so different from that in which we had always lived there, how brave he was—how tender!"

"And you?" I asked her gently, "you did not make it harder for him, I am sure?"

"Madame, I was indifferent to it all. Our national disasters were nothing to me. Our altered circumstances were nothing to me. I knew now what people meant when they spoke of a broken heart; and nothing more, as I supposed, could ever happen to make me either glad or sorry."

"I thought that my life was done, but ah, madame, there I was wrong. As long as God leaves us here we have work to do for Him, and He will never let our life be empty if we will to have it filled. I had not yet learnt that sorrow is sent not only to purify us, but also to open our hearts and make us better able to help and comfort others, and unless it does that we may almost as well not have suffered."

"And so it was with me when we first came to this strange place."

"No one could comfort me, so I did not seek to comfort anyone. It seemed to me that in my great grief I was quite alone, and I would not, or could not, enter into the sorrows of those around me. I know now that it needed just this helplessness, which of all other crosses is the most wearisome to me naturally, to bring me to God, and make me learn the lesson He had tried to teach me less hardly. So He laid me down here, and He has taught me many things, madame, in the past three years."

"That is my story, madame," she said presently. "I have never told it to any one before. I don't suppose I ever shall again."

"I thank you from my heart for having told it to me," I answered, kneeling down beside her and taking one of her wasted hands in mine. The scent of the pinks was wafted in from the open window, and she turned to them lovingly, saying :

"See how they have grown, madame, from that one little plant he left me!"

Ah me! that was the only token she had, then, of that great love, the earthly loss of which had been to her eternal gain—only a pink!

I bade her good-bye that night, and I have never seen her since. But I often have thought of her story, which I give now in her own simple words, letting it speak for itself. If, even in one solitary instance, it does not speak in vain, Marie Charpentier will be more than satisfied.

## A Lover's Revenge.

I SANG thee a tender song,  
I brought thee a flower of blue;  
But there are thy scattered thy flowerets all;  
And the song that I sang in the evening fall  
As I stood in the gloaming amid the dew,  
Thou hast not heard it; and bitterly  
I learn that my love is naught to thee!

For another brings thee a tender song  
And a little flower of blue;  
Though the flower is never a fairer than mine,  
Nor the tale of love more true;  
Yet he hath stolen the wealthy prize  
Of thy loving heart and thy glowing eyes!  
O would I were but that other one  
For the little space of a noonday sun,  
To avenge myself on thee!

Revenge is balm to the burning smart  
Of the thwarted, passionate, hopeless heart.  
Then would I never a ditty sing,  
Never would pluck thee a flower of spring—  
Never—! Ah, would for a little space  
It were mine—yes, mine—to stand in his place!

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book II.

#### CHAPTER V. ON SHIFTING SANDS.

As there was a clear month to pass before the arrival of the next Indian mail, Beryl Marsden resolved to live in the present, and be as happy as circumstances would permit.

A month—a whole clear month—well, one might get a great deal of enjoyment into a month if one set to work with a will. Her husband's tyranny had so shadowed her life, so often come between her children and herself, that the sense of utter freedom from such interference was as intoxicating as it was new. She could rise, walk, idle her time, eat, drink, sleep, when and how she chose.

To anyone who has known what it is to live under the rigid control of domestic tyranny, such liberty as this will speak for itself.

Day by day her heart unfolded itself as a flower to sunlight. The sorrows of the gathering years were hidden from her sight and ken, and even foreboding was shut out by a nature too frank, and simple, and content to brood on ills to come, since as yet they were only possible.

If in these days she saw a great deal of Ivor Grant, it did not seem a very strange or unnatural occurrence. His mother was always inviting her to the Court. Sir Hector had taken a warm fancy to her, and the little lads were as much at home there as at the rectory.

It was all very sweet and very pleasant. But "a sonnet without a swain, a pleasure without a pain"—are such things possible? Not for long, and not often indeed. Only the sweetness and the pleasure are so rare that it is little wonder Beryl seized them with eager hands, easing the long famine of heart and sense by a feast of continual yet simple enjoyment.

She grew very fond of Mrs. Grant, though at first she had felt a little in awe of her, and deemed her somewhat cold and proud. But the mother-love in both hearts made a bond of union between natures that were somewhat reticent and self-contained. To look at the two little brothers was as a matter of course to bring up recollections of Ivor at a similar age, and as Mrs. Grant liked nothing better than to speak of, and Beryl nothing better than to listen to, such recollections, they speedily became fast friends. To Mrs. Grant also Beryl could speak of that dim foreboding respecting her darlings, which she could never quite forget despite her efforts, and from her she met a sympathy so warm and genuine that it unconsciously sealed the bond of a friendship which at one time it seemed hardly possible could exist.

Ivor watched that ripening affection with delight. He had feared his mother might show herself distant and unapproachable, as he well knew she could. That she proved so very much the reverse seemed to augur well for Beryl's attractions, and the charms of mind and manner which to him had from the first set her apart from all other women.

So this friendship, as he called it to her—aye, and to himself—took deeper root, day by day, and, giving her a higher place in his thoughts than ever any other woman had held, yet fenced round those thoughts with so sure a barrier, that no pang of uneasiness stirred his lulled senses into wakefulness or fear.

Surely a man could like a woman with a frank, loyal liking, and no harm come of it. Surely he may find delight in her presence, voice, manner, looks, and yet hold no thought of her within his heart that is not to her honour and his own.

Alas! on how many such false foundations have men and women built up a fabric of self-deception—a palace of cards that will fall to pieces at one breath of temptation, passion, surprise!

How many indeed! But, of course, each fresh case is to be the one and only exception to all the others. The world is so censorious—so narrow-minded—always scenting danger where no danger can possibly be! Absurd world—absurd prejudices—absurd everything! save just that perfectly self-conscious rectitude, that complete honesty of thought and feeling that hides nothing, because there is nothing to hide, that can smile with calm superiority on the narrow-minded objectors, and say: "We have never spoken a word that all the world might not hear."

Very probably, but then if words were all the weapons in love's armoury, the little blind god might be trusted a thousand times more than he is, and would in all probability do not half as much harm as he does.

When once there is a subtle undercurrent of attraction between a man and a woman, when a look or a smile holds more eloquence

than any speech, when the mere consciousness of proximity can send a thrill of joy to the heart of either, when so perfect a sympathy is established that not a light or shadow on the face of one but is instantly read and feared by the other, then it will be perfectly correct to say to the censorious, "We have never spoken a word that the whole world might not hear." But, my friends, it is the unspoken words that hold all the eloquence, that are set to music swift and keen as the electric current of delight each presence sets in motion.

Believe me, it is not in what is said, but in what is unsaid, and yet fully comprehended, that the danger lies—the danger that our own hearts are often the last to read, and for which they are the surest to suffer.

So that happy springtime passed on with winged feet—an idyl of peace and happiness, and tender, mirthful hours. Happy—aye, every day that dawned, and every night that died, Ivor Grant told himself that, gathering from each dawn a hope that the dying nights but verified, and laying the garnered memories of each at the shrine of the false god he had elected to worship.

Perhaps it was a goddess, though—a goddess with the grace of the spring itself in her lithe young form, and a little queenly head, whose every trick and motion he seemed to know by heart.

Of course he had only studied them in the interests of friendship. He would have been horrified had anyone told him that his heart was not loyal to the core in the service and worship of this woman. He never even asked himself, "Whither am I drifting?" and she was no wiser than himself. The calm self-repression of years was taking its vengeance upon both.

The one question was—how long would the blindness last?

Time would show that—time, the enemy, as it is the friend, of all self-delusions.

That bright April month was drawing to an end.

It was on one of its late sweet afternoons that Beryl sat in the quaint old garden of the Court, the children playing on the grass, the great elm-branches shadowing her from the dying sunlight like a canopy, and about and around her that translucent wealth of colour and sweetness that speaks out the lessons of earth's floral treasures through every season of the years they crown.

Jack and Cyril were having a game of romps with Fluff, who looked blacker, and curlier, and rounder than ever. Beryl sat on a low basket-work chair, and Ivor Grant lay stretched on the grass at her feet, sometimes talking to her, sometimes watching the little lads and inciting Fluff to fresh eccentricities.

"You have no idea how much better you are looking," he said presently. "Certainly country air has done wonders for you, and the children too. Jack's cheeks are getting quite rosy."

"We have been having what the Americans call 'such a good time,'" said Beryl softly, moving to and fro between her bare slim fingers the branch of honeysuckle that little Jack had laid in her lap. "The rest, the peace, the freedom, the lovely air—better than physic these. I am only afraid it is all too good to last. Have you ever noticed what a spiteful delight Fate seems to take in disarranging one's plans, just as one has settled them comfortably with oneself? We go to sleep one night thinking that to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow will be just as happy as to-day, and we wake and all is changed. Never again can that 'to-day' be with us in any similitude of its deep content."

"Which proves that life's truest philosophy consists in making use of the present moment and enjoying it to the utmost," said Ivor; "as I am doing now," he added, laughing, and leaning back to look at her with his handsome azure eyes.

Her own had grown dreamy and absorbed. She scarcely seemed to heed his words.

"The month is nearly at an end," she said presently; "I wonder what the next will bring?"

"Nothing worse than this, I hope," said Ivor lightly. Below his breath he added, "Better it hardly could."

"You have no idea," she continued presently, and with a certain tremulous motion of the hands that still clasped those scented clusters; "you have no idea how I dread the arrival of the mail. I don't believe in presentiments as a rule, but—"

"Then pray don't say you are going to make an exception here," said Ivor hastily. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Besides," he added with a smile, "even mail steamers are not impervious to the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,' and by opposing very often end—themselves. The mail is overdue already, so you may have a reprieve."

She shook her head.

"Hardly likely. A day does not count for much."

"This one must, if behind it there is anything to dread," he said in those low earnest tones that sometimes sent to her heart so strange a thrill. "I shall keep you prisoner here. You talked of going

home, but you must not. The housekeeper shall give the children tea, and you will stay and dine with us, and afterwards I will see you all home. Come. Why that doubtful shake of the head?"

"I was thinking," she said, a slight access of colour stealing to the white-rose beauty of her cheek, "how often this week, and the 'before one,' as Jack says, I have accepted similar invitations on similar specious pleas."

"And why should you not?"

"Ah," she said with a comical glance, "don't let us argue the point, unless you wish me to confute your reasons altogether, or pursue you in your own line by a similar query: 'Why should I?'"

"For many reasons," he answered gravely. "Because it is a charity to take compassion on two lone bachelors; because the children like it; because there is nothing to call you home; because— Well," lowering his voice, and laughing uneasily, "that, of course, is the weakest and worst of the reasons—I beg it as a personal favour."

She looked at him calmly enough, though her heart was beating fast.

"It seems to me I am always here. As for the boys—no wonder they adore you! You have been playing the part of fairy 'god-father' to them ever since we arrived. But, you know, it really won't do to inflict you with such an unlimited amount of our society. You would be wishing us all back in India, if this sort of thing went on for another month."

"I fancy I see myself doing that," said Ivor grimly. "Long may it be before you give me the chance. What are you looking at so earnestly?"

"If my prophetic soul is not very much mistaken," said Beryl, "I see the well-known grey figure of our local 'post' coming through the trees. I wonder what he brings you?"

"Nothing important, I dare swear," said Ivor carelessly.

"Dat is berry wicked to say," chimed in a little rebuking voice. "You won't do to Heaven if you swear. I thought you was doot."

Ivor drew the little fellow into his arms, and kissed the rebuking lips.

"No one is good, my dear—at least, no man," he said with a sigh. "I wish we were."

"Mummy very doot," said little Jack thoughtfully. "Does doot people ky sometimes?"

"Why do you ask?" asked Ivor with a glance at a suddenly crimsoned cheek, that turned itself aside with ostentatious indifference.

"Cos' my mummy kyes often and often. But I don't tink she's naughty—do you?"

"Naughty! Bless the child, what things he does say!" cried Ivor, aghast. "Your mother couldn't be naughty," he added very low, as the little face nestled close against his own; "be quite sure of that, and try never to grieve her, or vex her yourself. Perhaps it is you who make her cry."

"Me doesn't think so," said little Jack with that deep far-off look coming into his eyes which always seemed to Ivor Grant too earnest and unchildlike for those baby years. "But she's a sweet 'little mummy, and me doesn't want her to kye, and me thinks Dod loves her very much—much as me."

With which ambiguous speech he slipped off Ivor's knee, and stood gazing down the walk that led to the back entrance of the house.

"Me saw somefins," he said gravely. "Oh!" and he danced off like a sunbeam. "Mr. Postman—Mr. Postman! Oo've brought some letters. Div' 'em to me directly once."

"Your letters b'aint among these here, my little gentleman," said the old man, who knew the child well. "I've left them up t' Rectory this hour ago."

"Then div' me Mr. Dant's," said Jack imperiously, and forthwith danced back with three or four missives in his little hands, which he presented triumphantly to Ivor. "See, Mr. Dant, I've a postman too! One—two—three. Dis a berry big letter. Does you know Indian people, like mummy does—a far way?"

But it was not an Indian letter. Only a foreign one, with the strange stamps and cramped fine writing which Ivor had learnt to recognise as Count Savona's.

"This is not for me, it is for my mother," he said, holding the missive between his fingers, and looking at it with frowning eyes.

"Let me take it to her," said Beryl eagerly, as she rose from her seat and stood before him in the full deep glow of the setting sunlight.

"Thanks, if you will," he said somewhat absently, and rose too, and gave her the letter, with so strange a look upon his face that she puzzled herself as to its meaning all the time she was making her way to Mrs. Grant's rooms.

It might have been half an hour later that she returned and found him on the terrace with the boys, teaching Fluff to leap over sticks in a mimic hurdle-race.



"Well," he said, looking up as she approached, "have you decided to stay this evening?"

"Yes," she said quietly. "Your mother insists upon it. But you won't be so dependent on my society soon, for you are to have another visitor."

"Another! Who is it?"

Her quick ear caught the ring of fear and dismay in his voice, even before she read the mingling of them in the eyes that met her own.

"A friend of yours, so Mrs. Grant said. Some foreign nobleman, the Count Savona."

Had little Jack caught that suppressed exclamation echoing in muttered thunder to the lightning-flash of the dark blue eyes, he would have declared Mr. Grant had said a "very bad swear" indeed.

# CHAPTER VI. THE GOLDEN SCEPTRE.

DINNER was over.

Lamps were lit in the great, old-fashioned, dusky drawing-room. Beside the fire, Mrs. Grant and Sir Hector were sitting, each with one of the little lads on a knee, and farther off, by the great Broadwood, Beryl sat, listening to Ivor Grant singing the "Maid of Athens."

The beautiful passionate words and the beautiful passionate music made her heart thrill with emotion, carrying her away from a dull region of prose and sorrow into some land of glamour, and romance, and exquisite delight.

With the last words and the closing notes she seemed to come back to herself, and, the better to hide her own emotion, entered upon a curt and commonplace discussion of the song which had called forth such weakness.

"What nonsense poets do write!" she said; "asking anyone to give back a heart, just as if it were a book, or a piece of furniture! And I wonder to how many ears Byron whispered that refrain, 'My life, I love thee!' It is to be hoped the Maid of Athens consoled herself as speedily as he did."

"And you don't like the song?" asked Ivor, disappointed.

"The song? Oh yes. It is very fine, and you sing it charmingly."

"Ah," he said, rising abruptly from the piano, and speaking with an irritation quite foreign to his usual courteous and indolent good-nature, "if you only knew how I detest conventional praise from you!"

She raised her eyes to his in surprise—in momentary forgetfulness, too, for he saw then the tears lingering on the long lashes, softening those starry depths; and saw, too, that her words had been only a disguise used to conceal the feelings awakened in her heart.

"Yes, poets are foolish, of course," he went on hurriedly; "or is it only ourselves who cannot see what sublime heights such folly may attain—what realms of beauty it can throw open to those who care to enter?"

"And suffer," she added very low. "The commonplace is always the safest. It is the brilliant hues that dazzle and bewilder, and make one's eyes ache as they gaze. The dull and sober tints are more useful, and less likely to fade."

"You must not turn cynical," he said gently; "it doesn't suit you at all. Your nature is naturally a happy one, I should think, and you ought to be on good terms with life."

"I never said I was not," she answered with spirit; "I am not so ungrateful, and," with a little unsteady laugh, "I have certainly a goodly array of the sober useful tints about me."

She rose from her chair, and stood leaning against the grand piano, turning over some loose sheets of music. His eyes rested upon her with a long look—a very sad one, had she seen it, but happily she did not.

"I sometimes think," he said in the same low, earnest voice that he had used throughout the conversation, "that you are very much changed from what you were. Perhaps I have no right to say it, and perhaps you think the experience of one evening too poor a foundation on which to base an opinion of a person's character, but I seemed to know you so well, even from that evening, that when we met again there was nothing strange about it."

"I should never have thought you a student of character," she said.

Her heart was aching, her brave, sweet eyes were full of tears. She was thinking how faithful a memory this must have been that had held her in such close remembrance for six years, but outwardly she gave no sign of being in any way moved. She looked only a graceful, indifferent woman, bending over those scattered printed sheets.

"Nor am I, as a rule," he answered. "I am not aware that I studied yours, only I cannot help telling you the impression you gave me."

"I should think you would be a very staunch friend," she said gravely. "I wonder if I might ask something from you?"

"Anything you will, Queen Esther," he said with a lightness he was very far from feeling. "The golden sceptre is quite at your service."

"It is only," she said, her voice low and hurried, "that in case my fears are realised—in case I have to leave my darlings—I want you to go and see them from time to time, if it is not too great a tax on the kindness you have so unflinchingly shown us all. At first they will be so lonely—it is young to leave a mother's care, though of course you could never quite understand what I feel about that. But if from time to time they saw you, they would know they were not forgotten, and you could talk to them of me as—as no letters could, and it would make me so much happier."

"I think you need say no more," he said gently. "For their own sakes I would have done all you asked, without that bribe your last words held out."

"I offered no bribe," she said in surprise.

"You said it would make you happier."

"And is it possible—?"

Before she finished the sentence, she looked up and met his eyes. Something in them—of pain bravely suppressed—of feelings dangerously near expression, startled her, and held her dumb.

"Yes," he said, his voice growing cold almost to sternness by the effort to steady its tones, "quite possible that I should care for anything that would make you—happier. Should I be worth the name of a friend if I did not?"

Her colour came back; she gave a sigh of relief.

"Thank you," she said simply. "Of course I may be alarming myself unnecessarily. I may not, after all, be called upon to leave them, only—"

"Only that absurd presentiment will speak out," he said lightly, as she paused. "Think it realised and answered if that pleases you. I love the little lads too well not to try and console them in any way I can."

"And you won't forget—"

"I could never forget anything you said, or wished," he answered, quite simply but quite earnestly.

"Then, as you have set my mind at rest, I will take myself and my treasures home."

"Must you go?" he pleaded. "To-morrow it will not be like this, and you are curtailing your usual stay when in charity you ought to lengthen it."

"What is Count Savona like?" she asked carelessly. "Is he really a friend of yours?"

"No," said Ivor brusquely; "and I don't particularly like him."

"Then why have you invited him here?" she asked in surprise.

"I did not do so. He invited himself."

"One of the privileges of friendship, certainly. But you could put him off if you wished."

"He does not give me the chance. He simply writes to say he will be here to-morrow."

Beryl was silent. She did not like to pursue the subject further. They walked up to the group beside the fire, and Jack slipped off Mrs. Grant's lap and held out his arms in eagerness.

"Doin' home?" he enquired. "Doin' directly once?"

"Yes, darling," she said, lifting him in her arms, and feeling a pang of compunction as she noted the pallor of the quiet little face.

"Is my sweetheart tired?"

"Very—very tired," said little Jack wearily. "Me on'y wants to do home, mummy, and seep wiz you."

"So you shall, my own," she murmured tenderly, and turned to take his outdoor wraps from the maid, for whom Ivor had rung.

"I am afraid he has been running about too much," said Mrs. Grant. "He does seem tired. But Ivor will carry him home for you."

"No, nunbody but mummy," cried little Jack with unwonted peevishness. "Me on'y wants mummy."

"But he is so heavy," remonstrated Ivor as Beryl assured him that he should have his wish.

"Never mind," she said lightly, "he is not too heavy for me, and it may not be for very long," she added below her breath. "He shall have me while he can."

Ivor Grant turned a shade paler. The unconscious words smote him to the heart with a sudden dread that for long he had not dared to face.

Walking home beside her in that silver world of starlight that little Jack called "the angels' suns," he was so silent and absorbed that she could not but remark it.

With the shelter of her child's arms about her neck, with the tender little heart beating there close and warm against her own, she felt so happy, so safe, so tranquil, that it never occurred to her

through what ocean of suffering this man's feet might have to wade for sake of her and her children.

She never asked what struggle was going on within his heart, and most assuredly never dreamt of the unasked vow he had registered that very night—"her happiness at any cost."

#### CHAPTER VII. "ILL-NEWS COMES APACE."

THE Indian letter had come.

There it lay on the parlour-table as Beryl entered, and the ominous dread at her heart increased as she saw the well-known caligraphy of John Marsden. She put the letter in her pocket. No need for haste in deciphering those cramped lines and hard-flavoured sentences with which her husband usually favoured her. She undressed little Jack, and laid him in her own bed as he had asked.

Cyril, who was never tired, and rarely anything but merry, and good-tempered, and mischievous, had already made his preparations for the night, and took a flying leap into his own crib that somewhat startled her.

"Now read your letter," he said, settling himself down amongst the pillows. "I want to know about going to school."

With a sort of desperation his mother took her usual low chair, and drawing the ominous missive from her pocket, proceeded to read it at last. Soon—only too soon—she knew her fears were realised. This was her husband's letter:

"MY DEAR BERYL,

"I trust your health is fairly established, as it is now three months since you left this country. Your last letter was very brief and unsatisfactory, and what you say about the children is arrant nonsense. Our mutual friend, Major Crumpleton, has told me of an establishment kept by an estimable lady who receives a limited number of boys to board and educate. His boy was there at the age of four, and he is highly pleased at his progress and efficiency. He can translate Cornelius Nepos, and can spell and write admirably." ("Poor little wretch!" sighed Beryl, remembering the sorrowful, large-headed boy who was the hope and joy of the race of Crumpleton.) "I have written to the lady by this same mail, telling her you will call and make the necessary arrangements. I see no reason why the boys should not enter before the midsummer term, in which case you can return here by the July steamer. I enclose Miss Crawley's address. I have had a slight attack of fever, but am otherwise in my usual health. Don't trouble me with any scruples or objections. The sooner boys have to rough it in the world the better. In your next letter I expect to hear everything is settled, and your passage taken."

"Your affectionate husband,

"JOHN MARSDEN."

The letter dropped on her lap. Her eyes, wide and sad, looked up in a sudden despair, and met Cyril's anxious gaze.

"Are we to go?" he asked breathlessly.

"Yes," said his mother in a strange, stifled voice.

There was a moment's silence. As if by one impulse the eyes of both turned to the bed where lay that little figure wrapped in deep and dreamless slumber.

"Poor little Jack!" sighed Cyril sorrowfully.

It was the last straw. It broke down the mother's strength, and, sobbing like a child, she fell down on her knees beside the little bed.

"Oh, I can't bear it—I can't," she cried in a very agony of distress. "It is too hard."

The boy looked at her, all the mirth and mischief gone from his face, his heart sinking within him as he saw that passionate grief. Possessed by an impulse too strong for resistance, he crept out of his cot, and came to her side, and put his arms about her as in some rare moment of tenderness he was wont to do.

"Don't cry, mother," he said cheerfully. "I will take care of Jack. I won't forget what you said."

Something seemed instinctively to tell him that it was for Jack, this grief, this fear, these passionate sobs, and amidst his sympathy with that grief and wonder for it, he had no time to think of the loneliness that had before now pierced him with a sense of loss and misery such as no one would have credited, even if it had been in any way possible for him to express.

Beryl hardly heard him. The sense of desolation and anguish that had swept over her was perfectly overwhelming. All else was forgotten.

Cyril grew alarmed at last at those stifled exhausting sobs.

"You will wake Jack," he said at last as the little figure stirred uneasily—perhaps oppressed, even in sleep, by some instinctive comprehension of his mother's grief.

Those words calmed her. She choked back the terrible sobs and rose to her feet, taking the boy's hand in hers, and leading him to the seat by the fire.

But for long she could not speak, and he—wise beyond his years

—waited there in silence, though the little fluttering heart was oppressed by a thousand vague terrors, and full of eager curiosity to know more of that new world into which the magic word "school" was to introduce him.

When she grew calm at last, she talked to him low and earnestly of the coming parting, and of the charge of that beloved little life whose frail existence seemed bound up in the very springs and core of her own.

If in her love for one child she was in some way taxing the youth and freedom of another; if in laying this charge on the child's shoulders, she was also laying a burden too heavy and important for its young years, she did not think of such things then.

Cyril had always been careless and heedless. It was his nature—a nature that no one credited with being capable of deep feeling and passionate fidelity.

So it is that surface judgment makes such fatal errors, so it is that in cases numberless as those errors, we pass from childhood to youth, from youth to maturity, only imperfectly comprehended, if comprehended at all by our nearest and dearest.

Beryl grew calmer by-and-by, feeling that she must face this great ill, since no law of Medes and Persians was ever more irrevocable than John Marsden's mandates.

Though she wept her eyes dry, though she crossed the seas to kneel at his feet and implore him not to send her darlings from her, he would only tell her not to be foolish and impulsive, as he had told her a thousand times before. What would he understand or care for her feelings, for the sweet fancies and sweeter idyls that were to be ruthlessly scattered at his will? He had never cared to watch the baby minds unfold, he had never gazed with eager eyes after toddling forms and dancing feet, or listened with all his soul in his ears for the faintest echo of that music which makes a mother's heart thrill and tremble with a rapture inexpressible, the music of a child's voice that calls her name. No; such sentiments and feelings as these were a sealed book to him; how then could she make him comprehend what treasures that volume held?

It suited him to have his wife back, it suited him to revel in the delights of domestic tyranny, and it was advisable that the children should go to school. That was all to be said about the matter.

The only thing that remained was to do it.

When Cyril had returned to bed, Beryl, feeling too heartsick and miserable to go downstairs again, undressed also, and crept in beside that little figure which soon—only too soon—would stretch out empty arms for "mummy." And if that night her pillow was wet with tears, and the dusky curls beside her received a new baptism of passionate sorrow, no mother's heart will blame her, or wonder that it should be so.

Meanwhile Ivor Grant was battling once again with that strange mysterious suspicion which had ever and anon crossed his mind.

What did his mother know of Count Savona, and what secret power did he hold over her that could so compel her submission to his wishes?

It was not the first time he had come on these strange visits, and after each there had been a greater difference in his mother's health—a perceptible weakness and increase of suffering; yet never had he been able to discover the reason.

At first the count used to write to Ivor, and propose a run down to the Court, but latterly he had omitted that ceremony altogether, and it was through Mrs. Grant he received the information.

Despite the count's attractions, his wonderful fund of information, and unfailing good-temper, Ivor Grant felt a growing distrust of him in his heart—a distrust that only gained ground with additional knowledge of the man.

Yet to find fault with him would have been impossible. He was so polite, so good-humoured, had such subtle deference of manner, that he could not help being an agreeable companion. Still, despite all these attractions Ivor could not help wishing him far enough away at the present time, and when he woke the following morning and remembered that he must stay at home and play host, instead of walking down to the rectory and idling with the children, or going off on one of those charming rambles, in which Beryl and they delighted, he felt most unamiably disposed towards his guest.

"I can't understand why Savona invites himself here in this unceremonious fashion," he said to his mother, as he paid her his morning visit. "I don't want him, and it's not so very long ago that you cautioned me against his friendship. Do you remember?"

"Yes," she said, growing very white. "He is not a safe friend; but he is a still more dangerous enemy. It would not do for you to offend him."

"Why on earth should I fear him?" asked Ivor wrathfully. "I've no secrets for him to unearth. I don't fear him, or any backstairs information he may possess of my past, but I do very seriously object to his dropping down on us just when he likes, and I don't understand it."

Never before had he spoken so plainly, never before had he put into words the smouldering indignation of years.

Mrs. Grant grew yet more deadly pale. She pressed one thin white hand against her heart, as if its beating were painful, and looked in agonised appeal at her son. But he was standing by the window with his back turned to her, and did not see the expression of her face.

"I think I shall give him a hint," continued Ivor ill-temperedly, "that in future, if I desire his visits, I will ask for them. I object to these self-enforced invitations."

"You never objected before," said his mother, speaking coldly to hide her agitation; "and you should remember, Ivor, that you are not yet master here."

He turned and faced her in very amazement.

"Mother," he said impulsively, "what do you mean? What is this mystery—for mystery there is, and I can see it. You, too, hate this man, and yet you fear him. You cautioned me against him, and yet you receive him here as if he were a friend. Have I ever asserted myself in a manner unfitting my position, that you should remind me I am not master? I am sure I have not. Sir Hector has never allowed me to feel the sting that your words have conveyed. Do I owe them also to this—count?"

"Ah, it is a good proverb of your country that says, 'Talk of an angel,'" interrupted a voice close at hand.

The velvet *portières* were swept aside. Before them stood the very man of whom they had been speaking.

"My train arrives an hour too early," he said, advancing and taking Mrs. Grant's reluctant hand. "Your servants tell me I shall find Mr. Ivor with you, and I hasten to pay my respects to both."

The pale quiet face with the strange eyes struck them both with an unaccountable chill. Ivor advanced, but there was no smile of welcome on his face, or any cordiality in his brief words of greeting.

The count noticed that, as he noticed everything, but it only amused him.

"Did I come at an inopportune moment?" he went on blandly, "or am I mistaken in thinking I answered my own summons, as they say Mephistopheles did?"

"An apt simile," growled Ivor below his breath. "You certainly answered to your title," he added aloud. "I was wondering what fancy could have prompted you to pay us a visit at this time of the year."

"I was pining for a whiff of your English country air," said the count with an odd little smile, "and then it is so long since I have seen you or miladi here. I—I trust my visit is not inopportune, madame," turning to Mrs. Grant, who had not spoken a word.

"Not at all," she said briefly, as her eyes turned in appeal to her son. "Only, as Ivor says, the country is very dull out of the shooting-season, and my health compels me to live in almost absolute retirement. So you will have to bore, or entertain, each other as best you can."

"There is something wrong here," said the count to himself. "I am not wanted by the son. As for miladi, I know her reasons; but what has come to the young signore? I must keep my eyes open."

He raised his head, and looked from one to the other with that keen, inscrutable glance of his.

"Life is all boredom, more or less," he said quietly, but with a curious distinct emphasis that seemed to make his words live longer in his hearers' memory than their purport warranted. "In the present instance I trust we only imply the last state."

Mrs. Grant had left her chair and crossed the room. She looked ill at ease, and her worn face was more worn than ever. The very presence of this man seemed to age her by years and years.

The count, perfectly unmoved and placid, watched both mother and son.

"Surely she has not told him anything," he thought. "She would never be such a fool—and yet there's never any knowing what women will do."

"Isn't that Mrs. Marsden coming up the drive?" cried Mrs. Grant suddenly. "So early, too, and she told me she could not come to-day at all. I wonder what has happened?"

Ivor turned sharply round, but not so sharply that the change in his face could escape the notice of the watchful eyes of the Count Savona. The very faintest shadow of a smile crossed his thin lips.

"So—that is it," he said softly to himself. "I see now why I am not welcome. There is a woman in the case. Well, so much the better. Another puppet in the show. I shall see her, and draw my own conclusions. A friend of yours, madame," he said aloud, "the lady coming up the drive?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Grant briefly; "a friend from India."

"Interesting place, India," remarked the count. "Your friend—is she married?"

"Yes, but her husband is not here. She has two of the sweetest children, though."

"Those facts cannot possibly interest Count Savona, mother," said Ivor very coldly. "There is no necessity to inform him of them."

"On the contrary," said the count politely, "I am deeply interested. A lady, young, and, we will suppose, fair, and with two charming children, and a husband who has the good sense to remain in India—quite the elements of a romance, really."

"I fail to see it," said Ivor, turning round, his face one blaze of wrath, his eyes flashing such fire as only languid, sleepy eyes can flash when roused to anger or revolt.

"Possibly," said the count, still tranquil and unmoved. "My fancy unfortunately has a tendency to poetise."

"And mine a strong inclination to knock you down," thought Ivor savagely as he turned on his heel and left the room, leaving his mother to apologise for his lack of courtesy if she chose.

"Your son is not in the most amiable of moods, it seems to me," remarked the count, turning to Mrs. Grant. "He did not want me to come here just now. Why?"

"How can I tell?" she said evasively as with a sigh of weariness she resumed her seat. "Sometimes I think he suspects. You promised me there should be nothing in your conduct to create suspicion, and yet there is a great deal."

"Your own fault, madame. You are neglecting your part of the bargain."

"I have told you," she said, her voice trembling with suppressed passion, "that I cannot do more than I have done. It is cruel to ask it."

"You must put the screw on Sir Hector, then," he answered calmly. "Money I must have. When there is so much at stake you can surely make some small sacrifice."

"Sacrifice!" she almost sobbed. "Great Heaven! what has my life been but one long sacrifice since first I saw you? It is killing me!"

"Oh no, it is not," was the cool rejoinder. "Women of your nature can stand a great deal. But of course there is always one resource left—I can appeal to your son."

"If you did that," she said passionately, "you would lose everything. He is too honourable to buy your silence. He would care nothing for what he lost. It is only I who am weak and foolish enough to wish to hide it from him."

"I am not sure that he would be so self-sacrificing," said the count placidly. "I can read between the lines of his character better, perhaps, than you can. Mothers, you know, are proverbially blind. And who is Mrs. Marsden?" he added suddenly, and with such startling irrelevance, that Mrs. Grant looked at him with absolute fear in her eyes.

"I have told you—a friend of mine."

"And of Ivor's?"

"What do you mean?" she asked sharply. "Is your mind too evil to credit even friendship with innocence?"

"Between woman and woman—oh no; between a man and a woman—yes; more especially when both are young and one is not free, and there is a husband in—India."

Mrs. Grant smiled coldly.

"Beryl Marsden is a good woman," she said; "and, as I have told you before, you do not know Ivor."

"Ivor is pretty much the same as other men, I suppose," said the count coolly. "He has served his apprenticeship to the world, the flesh, and—here they are, I think."

He rose to his feet as the door opened and Ivor and Beryl Marsden entered the room together.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Which?

I DID not know you, when in early childhood  
You played and romped about your nursery floor;  
But here I keep the portrait that you gave me,  
That was my darling, when she was but four.  
Two round blue eyes, two lips, red-ripe for kisses,  
A little love to tease, and to adore.

I saw you first, a stately grown-up maiden,  
Gold locks brushed back to show your square white brow;  
The same blue eyes, but shyly glancing downward—  
A formal curtsy answered to my bow;  
A little smile when you and I got friendly,  
Then kisses came; sweetheart! I feel them now.

I see again the day when we were married,  
Your dear hand trembling slowly to my own;  
I hear once more your vows all lowly whispered,  
I hear, as then, the organ's joyful tone;  
I scent the orange-blossom in your bouquet,  
Though thrice ten years 'twixt then and now have flown.

And then, dear love, I see you with our children,  
Sedate and grave, some tears upon your cheek;  
Some grey hairs in the locks that were so golden;  
The step so swift, now tired, and slow, and weak;  
A head bowed low beneath the weight of living;  
A heart that held some words too sad to speak.

The last time that I saw you—ah, my darling!  
I cannot tell it; but I too am old;  
I shall not have much time to wait behind you—  
A few more years, then is my story told—  
A few more days, and then all will be ended,  
And Death's grey mist-clouds all away have rolled.

Yet do I wonder which will show me Heaven—  
The child, the maiden, bride, or tired wife?  
All are unlike, all lovely in their passing;  
But which contained the true strong germ of life?  
I cannot tell. What if this dread hereafter  
Holds nothing save the rest that ceases strife!

## Through No Fault of Hers.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER I.

MR. LEIGH was seated at table, his breakfast before him. Opposite him was his daughter Muriel, pouring out the coffee, and looking anxiously towards her father.

"Do begin your breakfast, papa," she pleaded. "You are letting it get quite cold."

Mr. Leigh started from the reverie into which he had fallen, and laying down a letter he held in his hand, mechanically took up a piece of toast.

"Yes, yes, my dear," he replied quickly; "I've lots of time, the carriage won't be ready for half an hour."

But the toast remained uneaten, though he carefully buttered it. However, he drank the coffee, and passed his cup up for a second supply.

"Aren't you well, papa?" enquired Muriel. "I wish you would see Dr. Felton on your way in. You have not been yourself for a fortnight, and every day you grow worse. You really must eat something."

Mr. Leigh pushed back his plate.

"I'm not well, my child; I've a great deal to worry me just now at the bank."

"I wish I could help you," murmured Muriel.

Mr. Leigh smiled his thanks.

"I'm afraid that's out of the question; I only wish I could help myself. That's what some of my fellow-directors have been doing rather freely," he added to himself sadly.

"When will it be all settled, papa?"

"I don't know, my dear; I wish I did."

He rose from the table, and threw himself into an armchair near the fire. Muriel joined him, sitting on a stool at his feet.

"I wish, my dear," he said, after a few moments' silence, "that you would go and visit your aunt for a few days. She very much wants to see you, and just now you can't find it very pleasant here with me coming home late and tired every night."

"Papa!" whispered Muriel reproachfully, "do you think I could leave you here ill? You know I would sooner be by your side than anywhere else. I only wish I could go into town with you."

"Be thankful you can't," responded Mr. Leigh earnestly; "I wish I had never been near it in my life."

"Is it so serious as that, papa?"

"Yes."

Muriel took his hand. "I can bear it, papa," she said; "tell me the worst."

"We will hope the worst won't come," was the reply, given with an attempt at cheerfulness. "We will not meet our troubles halfway; the storm may blow over. If it does not—"

"I shall be prepared for the worst, papa."

"It may be worse than you think, my child."

"I do not care how bad it may be," she exclaimed. "Whatever happens, I shall know it was not your fault, and I shall love you as much as ever."

"Muriel," said Mr. Leigh earnestly, taking her hands, "think of what you are saying. Do you really mean it?"

"Yes."

"That, come what may, you will still love me and believe in me?"

"Yes, papa. You have spent your life in trying to make mine happy. I am old enough now to know how good you are. If the time comes to prove my love, I will not fail."

"Bless you, my darling!" he exclaimed, clasping her to his breast. "May the time never come!"

He returned to the table and began to collect his correspondence, which consisted largely of telegrams, and letters marked "Immediate—Private and Confidential." He glanced through one or two, and then thrust the whole into his pocket as John entered the room to announce that the carriage was ready.

Kissing his daughter with more fervency than usual, he left the room.

Muriel wandered to the window and saw the brougham descend the drive. She felt more than usually lonely. Her father's words had raised vague fears in her mind, and she could not quiet them.

The hour arrived for her departure to the School of Art class which had recently been opened in the neighbourhood; but this morning she felt disinclined to go, so she endeavoured to find occupation at home.

She practised for a short time, but could not fix her attention on the notes. Never had she passed such an unhappy morning.

At last she heard wheels on the drive, and running to the window, peeped from behind a curtain to see who the visitor might be.

It was her aunt, Miss Leigh. She soon entered, scarcely giving the servant time to show her in.

"Where's Bob, Muriel?" was her first enquiry.

"Gone to town, auntie. Do you want to see him?"

"I don't suppose I should have driven over here if I hadn't," was the retort.

Miss Leigh was the exact opposite to her brother. She was curt and unsympathetic, and prided herself on not being like her brother Bob, whom she characterised as a "weak backboneless sort of creature."

However, she had the respect, if not the love, of her neighbours.

"I don't suppose Bob has told you anything about what's going on at the bank," continued Miss Leigh; "but things are in a bad way from all I can learn, and I keep my eyes open."

"Papa told me that he was very anxious just now."

"He'll be a good deal more anxious before he's done with it, and so will you. He's brought you up too easily, giving you everything you had a mind for before you spoke it. It'll be a great change to you if anything happens."

"Not greater than I can bear," replied Muriel. Then, to change the subject, she added: "I am sorry I can't come and stay with you as you wished, auntie."

"As I wished! What are you talking about?"

"Papa said you wanted me to stay with you for a few days."

"It's the first I've heard of it," was her aunt's reply; "and I wish Bob wouldn't give invitations he has no right to. Not but what you can come if you like."

"Thank you, auntie; but I can't leave papa. He isn't well."

"No, I should imagine not; he'll be worse before it's all over, you mark my words. Now I think I'll take my things off. It can't be far off lunch, and I'll stay to-day, I think."

"Oh, I'm so sorry, auntie; I quite forgot to ask you. Do stay."

"Yes, I mean to," was the reply.

Miss Leigh proceeded upstairs, stopping every now and then to glance at the decorations of the house. Apparently the prospect did not please her, for she ejaculated "Poor Bob!" several times before she reached her room.

The window commanded a view of the drive. As she stood before the glass untying her bonnet, she saw a carriage turn the corner. She recognised it in a moment as her brother's. But there was a strange man seated beside the driver.

She guessed the truth; it had been present to her mind for days, and now only came as a realisation of her worst fears.

"Muriel!" she shouted down the stairs.

"Coming, auntie!"

"Look here, child," said Miss Leigh kindly; "you promised to retrim this bonnet for me next time I came. I wish you'd have a turn at it to-day. Have you a bit of black silk anywhere?"

"I'll look, auntie," replied Muriel, going towards her room.

"Don't hurry," cried Miss Leigh after her; "I'm going down to the breakfast-room."

She rushed downstairs, and met Mr. Leigh as he descended from the carriage.

"What is it, Bob?" she asked anxiously.

"The worst! Where's Muriel?"

"Upstairs."

"That's right; keep her out of sight. Quick now, get me these things."

He scribbled a short list on a leaf of his pocket-book. One of the men who had accompanied him entered the house, and proceeded to the library.

In a few minutes a small portmanteau of necessities had been packed, and the detective intimated that they must now be off.

Mr. Leigh drew his sister aside. "Tell Muriel as gently as you can," he whispered, "or else it will kill her. And remind her of her promise."

"Bob," said Miss Leigh solemnly, "you thought two years ago when I drew my money out of the bank that I was playing you a mean trick. If I hadn't done so, we shouldn't have a penny now, and I saw it then. So try and think as well of me as you can."

Mr. Leigh pressed her hand and entered his carriage, fearful lest his daughter should have seen him.

A few minutes after, Muriel descended with the bonnet in her hand, to ask her aunt's opinion on some knotty point.

"Don't ask me, child, I can't think of a thing. I want to talk to you—no, not in there," she hastily added, as Muriel moved towards the library.

"Why not, auntie?"

"That's what I've got to explain to you, my poor child," said Miss Leigh, bursting into tears, and clasping her niece.

Before long Muriel knew that her father was arrested for malpractices whilst a director of the Leadcastle Banking Company, that the bank had stopped payment, and that it was not a limited liability company. Every shareholder was liable to the full extent of his means.

## CHAPTER II.

SOME eight months had elapsed since the arrest of Mr. Leigh. The trial was over, the sentences pronounced. Two years' imprisonment had been allotted to the miserable banker.

The house had been sold with all its contents; Muriel was left penniless. She found a shelter in her aunt's house, but that lady had been largely dependent for her income on her brother's generosity, and in consequence her resources were now narrow. Muriel had made up her mind that she would not remain a pensioner on her aunt's bounty, even if she had been able to endure her constant chatter.

Muriel believed thoroughly in her father's innocence of anything more than helpless connivance at the malpractices of his fellow-directors. Had he exposed them when he discovered their existence it would but have hastened the crash; by keeping silent and doing all in his power to remedy the evil, there was a hope of averting the catastrophe. But in the eyes of the law there was no difference between him and the original culprits; all were involved in a common ruin.

It was an immense relief to Muriel to receive a letter one day from Lady Pankhurst offering her the post of companion to her only daughter Constance. The letter ran as follows:

"DEAR MISS,

"Como Hall.

"My husband, Sir Joseph Pankhurst, of whom you've heard speak from someone whom I won't mention more particularly, has told me that you want a place, so if you like to come and be a companion to our Connie, we shall be very glad, and I've no doubt we shall get along very comfortably together. Let me have a line, and I'll tell them to send the carriage to meet you.

"Yours affectionately,

"SARAH PANKHURST."

It was a strange mixture of kindness and stupidity, eminently calculated to wound Muriel's feelings, but, as evidently, not intended to do so. Even the "someone whom I won't mention more particularly" was clearly alluded to in this vague manner with the idea of being considerate. Muriel read and re-read the letter, finally deciding to accept the offer.

Her father had told her in his last letter that he had some hope of obtaining something for her from his old friend Sir Joseph. Muriel remembered that once, when she was a little child, she had been taken to Como Hall for a day or two just after it had been built; she recollected very distinctly that she had been tormented by a rude boy, who was hopelessly spoilt. Her recollection was more dim of a little girl rather younger than herself, who possessed a doll of abnormal size and grandeur, which she would not let out of her hands.

Muriel would have preferred going to a house where she would have been an utter stranger, but that was almost impossible. She had made one or two attempts to obtain a situation, but enquiries had naturally been made, and when it was discovered who her father was, some excuse was found for breaking off the negotiations. Muriel began to feel what a terrible disgrace was attached to those who were connected with a felon. It was very hard to bear.

It must not be supposed that Sir Joseph and Lady Pankhurst wrote the letter of invitation to Muriel without due consideration. When Mr. Leigh's appeal to his kindness had reached the knight he hesitated some time before showing it to his wife.

"I say, Sarah," he remarked one evening as they sat alone, "you know poor Leigh has been put in gaol?"

"Yes, I read it in the paper. Poor dear man! I never thought he would come to this. It's lucky his wife died so long ago."

"She'd have made it harder for him—eh?" retorted Sir Joseph with a laugh at his own wit. Since he had been made a knight he had indulged rather freely in flashes of spontaneous merriment befitting the character he now had to fulfil of a hearty old-fashioned Englishman.

"Sir Joseph!" remonstrated her ladyship, "I'm surprised at you."

It was not the first time her husband had heard this form of words, and it had small effect on him.

"What I was going to say, my dear, is that poor Leigh has left a daughter who wants to get something to do—a place as governess or something of the sort."

"Well, Sir Joseph, I suppose you do not imagine Constance and Hugh require a governess?"

"Well, a companion then," suggested Sir Joseph.

"For which of them?" enquired Lady Pankhurst with more point than usual.

Sir Joseph laughed, but not so heartily as when he caused the merriment.

"I don't think we need find a companion for Hugh," he said; "young men pick up those for themselves fast enough, and Hugh's no exception."

"He picks up some companions he had much better let drop again," put in his mother; "a gambling, betting set, he can't get much good out of them."

"Young men will have their fling," pleaded his father; "you can't expect Hugh to be a steady old man like me yet a while. He's all right, don't you trouble about him; you look after Connie, I'll keep my eye on Master Hugh."

"Connie doesn't require much looking after," said Lady Pankhurst, "she's a dear good girl; I only wish she would make friends as easy as Hugh does, but she keeps herself alone too much a great deal."

"Hand over some of Hugh's betting friends to her," suggested Sir Joseph with a fresh laugh. "It's getting quite time she settled down with some one. Let's see, how old is she?"

"Nineteen last birthday."

"She looks about twenty-three. Hang it all, Sarah, we must let her move about a bit more; unless she sees some young fellows she can't make any impression on them. I must get Hugh to bring home someone with him occasionally."

"I hope you'll tell him to bring home someone respectable then, for those he brings here generally are the wrong sort for me; and as to Connie, she won't look at one of them."

"Well, Sarah, we're wandering from the point; how about this girl of Leigh's? Can you try her as a companion for Connie? You needn't keep her, you know, if you don't like her."

"I shouldn't think of doing so, of course. But I don't mind trying her if you like."

"I should like," acknowledged Sir Joseph heartily. "Leigh was a very good friend to me; and though we haven't seen much of each other for the last few years, I want to do him a good turn. I sold all my shares in the bank some time ago, and made a very good thing out of it, so I should like to pay him back somehow, and I'm sure he'd sooner know that Muriel is settled than anything else."

Lady Pankhurst listened to her husband's oration; but at its close, began to regret she had given her promise so easily. It was a risky thing to have in the house a young person whose father was in prison. She said as much to her husband.

"Oh, nonsense, Sarah; nobody thinks much the worse of Leigh about this business; everybody does it, but he's been found out. Anyhow, you don't imagine that Muriel had anything to do with it, I suppose?"

"But everyone who comes here will find out about it."

"Let 'em; we shall get the credit of doing a very kind action. If she's as nice a girl as she was when I last saw her, she'll be cheap at any price, and I shouldn't offer her a high one if I were you."

Lady Pankhurst still hesitated. There was a fear in her heart which she scarcely liked to put into words, in dread of calling down on herself the loud ridicule of her lord.

"Joseph," she ventured to say at last, "do you think she is a very attractive young person?"

"Why?" queried Sir Joseph.

"There's Hugh, you know, who——"

She was interrupted by a more than usually boisterous shout of laughter.

"Hugh!" exclaimed her husband, "why Hugh has been brought up to business, and knows what's what; do you think he'd be fool enough to fall in love with a penniless girl, whose father's in prison? No, no, wife; Miss Leigh's the safest girl we could have in the house."

After this decided set-down, Lady Pankhurst dared not venture on any further remonstrance, but wrote the same evening to offer Muriel the situation of companion to her daughter. Connie was not



even informed of it until the letter had gone. Sir Joseph had fine old English notions about keeping young girls in their place, and Connie's wishes were of very secondary consideration in Como Hall.

Muriel resolved not to mention the matter to her aunt till she had written to accept the situation offered her. But Miss Leigh kept so close a watch over all her movements, that it was with difficulty she slipped out in the afternoon and posted her letter.

As she neared the house on her return, she saw her aunt's face peering over the wire blind.

"She saw me go out," thought Muriel; "now for it."

Directly she was in the room, Miss Leigh began to question her. Muriel had nothing to conceal now, so told her the whole affair.

"Why did you not tell me before?" demanded Miss Leigh. "Do you think my advice worth nothing?"

"I was afraid, auntie, you might insist on my staying here, and I feel I have been living on you too long already. I must do something for myself."

"Well, as you've done it, it's no good saying anything about it; and if you prefer going to live in a house where they'll treat you rather worse than the servants, it's not my fault."

"Why should you think they will be unkind, auntie?"

"Haven't they made their money, and aren't those kind of people always glad to have a chance of sitting on people who are higher up than they are?"

Muriel smiled at the incongruous images that her aunt's feelings led her to adopt. She had not smiled often during the last few months.

"We will hope for the best, auntie," was her reply.

"And prepare for the worst. How much salary are they going to give you?"

Muriel gave a slight start.

"I—I don't quite know, auntie," she stammered.

"Merciful Heavens! does the child mean to tell me that she has taken the place without knowing how much she's going to be paid for it?"

"I suppose Lady Pankhurst forgot to put it in her letter, and I forgot all about it too. But it doesn't matter, auntie, it isn't as if I had a choice of places; that's the only one, so I must accept it, even if they don't give any pay at all. And they are sure to give some."

"Let me see the letter."

Muriel obeyed. Her aunt rapidly scanned it.

"You won't have much difficulty with this woman," was her comment; "flatter her a little, and she will be all right. Who else are in the house?"

"I don't know, auntie, any more than you do. That letter is all I have had, but I know that Sir Joseph was a friend of papa's, and I think I am very fortunate."

"Very well, I only hope it may prove so," retorted Miss Leigh in a tone implying that the chances were against it.

However, she helped Muriel to the full extent of her power in preparing her wardrobe. This was a matter of selection merely, for she still possessed her former personal belongings, and as they were in a style much above that which she imagined companions generally wore, she chose the plainest and neatest, putting in her boxes two dresses only that could possibly excite the envy of her employer.

It was not a very long journey to Como Hall. Short as it was, it did not pass without incident. At the Leadcastle station, a young man, in a light suit, with a terrier at his heels, stopped suddenly in front of her boxes, which were directed to Como Hall in Miss Leigh's bold hand. A glance showed him that Muriel was the owner.

He saw her enter a second-class carriage, and then disappeared. A minute afterwards he returned, minus his dog, but carrying a small armful of papers and magazines.

Miss Leigh looked suspiciously at him as he entered Muriel's compartment, but it was of course impossible for her to object, and there was no time to change. The whistle sounded, aunt and niece exchanged a final kiss, and the train started.

The young gentleman did not lose time. There was an old clergyman seated in the farther corner, so Muriel did not feel alarmed when the stranger offered her *Punch*, which he had industriously cut with his ticket.

"Thank you," said Muriel, accepting it.

But instead of allowing her to read it in peace, the young stranger soon interrupted her.

"Will you forgive my rudeness in introducing myself to you?" he said; "my name is Norman—Lewis Norman."

Muriel looked up; the name brought no recollection to her mind.

"I happened to observe," he continued, "the address on your luggage. May I ask if you are acquainted with Miss Pankhurst?"

"I saw her many years ago," was Muriel's reply. She began to wonder what Mr. Norman was driving at. She knew she ought not to encourage his advances, but his tone and manner showed that he was not trying to force his acquaintance on her to amuse himself for half an hour, taking advantage of her lack of escort.

"I am going to say something very rude," said Mr. Norman, "so I ask your forgiveness beforehand. Miss Pankhurst is to have a companion from Leadcastle; she was to reach Como Hall to-day. Am I right in—?"

"You are quite right," interrupted Muriel. "You seem so well informed as regards me that I will forgive what you called your rudeness."

"I am delighted to have met you," said Norman, "and thank you very much for not taking offence at my forward conduct. Before very long we shall, I hope, be formally introduced, but may I suppose that the ceremony has already taken place, and talk to you without constraint?"

"I see no reason against it," replied Muriel. "Of course you will not object to my mentioning to Lady Pankhurst that you introduced yourself to me."

"Unfortunately, I do object, and strongly," was his unexpected reply. "I am in a peculiar position as regards Lady Pankhurst. Will you let me confide in you? I think you may take it as a compliment that a stranger is so ready to do so."

"Does that mean you wish me to render you a service?" asked Muriel with a smile.

She was surprised to find herself talking so freely; it was the first time for some months that she had spoken to anyone of her own age and station who was ignorant of her disgrace. She felt her old vivacity returning, and gave not a second thought to what her aunt might think of the impropriety of her conduct.

"It does," replied Norman frankly and earnestly. "You can do me the greatest service. I have no right to ask it, I know, but I must tell you that it is not to me alone you would be doing a kindness, but also to Miss Pankhurst, and she can claim kindness from everyone; it is her natural due."

"I must warn you before you say more," said Muriel, "that you must remember that Lady Pankhurst, and not her daughter, is my employer."

Norman hesitated. But the tone in which Muriel warned him seemed to encourage him, for he continued:

"I am sure I can safely leave my confidences in your hands. To put it shortly, Miss Pankhurst and I are engaged, unfortunately without the consent of her parents—in fact, without their knowledge."

"And against their wish?"

"In spite of Sir Joseph's prohibition. Lady Pankhurst was less obstructive."

"May I ask the reason of his refusal?"

"Certainly; it is my profession. I am an artist. Sir Joseph, as I dare say you know, is a business man; he gained his money in trade. He has the greatest contempt for artists of all sorts; he is one of the last survivors of the race of men who seem to imagine that those who enrich the world, or try to do so, should be objects of contempt to those who enrich themselves."

Norman spoke rather bitterly. Muriel felt very sorry for him and her face expressed as much.

"You see how it is," said Norman. "You will forgive my talking of myself for a minute or two. I am not rich, though I am tolerably well-to-do; I am of better family than the Pankhursts, but since he got his title, Sir Joseph thinks nothing of anyone under his own rank. My only chance is to make a name that will compel recognition. That I am rapidly accomplishing, I am happy to say. Then, at the worst, in two years Constance will be her own mistress."

Muriel listened attentively and with great interest. If only Miss Pankhurst should turn out to be really as nice as Norman imagined, there would be all the pleasures of confidences to be enjoyed, they would have sympathy with each other, and life at Como Hall might prove, after all, far from as miserable as she had anticipated.

"It seems to me," said Muriel, "that you are doing a very bold thing in confiding in me. If I wished to curry favour with Lady Pankhurst I am under no obligation to conceal all this from her."

"You will be when you have seen Connie," said Norman; "I am not afraid of your turning traitor. I am going to show you that I trust you implicitly."

He tore a leaf from a pocket-book and scribbled a hasty note.

"I am going to ask you to give this to Connie," he said. "She is forbidden to write to me, and I only occasionally have a chance of writing to her, as all her letters are scrutinised before they are given her."

"Do you mean to say they open her letters?"

"Oh no; but she has to open them in her mother's presence and tell her from whom they are, and, of course, that fixes her unless I can get a letter delivered 'unbeknown.' Isn't it a dastardly state of things?"

"It does seem hard," assented Muriel. "However, you must remember that her parents have the right to exercise their authority, and I am very doubtful if I am doing right in taking advantage of my position in the house to help Miss Pankhurst in setting her mother's authority at defiance."

"I sha'n't have the chance of asking you again for a long time," pleaded Norman; "I'm going to Devonshire to paint for three months. I don't want to go without letting her have a word."

He handed her the note, which Muriel hesitatingly took.

"A thousand thanks," he said. "You may be sure that you will be happy with Connie, she will be immensely grateful. She is the most charming girl. Ah, I wish I were you, going to live in the same house with her."

Muriel smiled, but rather sadly; going to Como Hall was not her idea of happiness.

Not long after the train stopped. Norman excused himself from coming out to assist her as the servants would recognise him and be sure to report. He once more thanked Muriel for her kindness and then hid himself behind a paper.

Half an hour after, Muriel entered her new home. As the carriage drew up Connie appeared at the window, and a moment afterwards on the steps. She gave an anxious glance at Muriel's face, and then threw her arms round her neck and kissed her.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said; "I'm quite sure I shall like you, and I hope you will try and like me."

"I am sure I shall," replied Muriel warmly.

At this moment a door opened and a tall young man appeared.

"This is my brother Hugh," said Miss Pankhurst.

"How d'ye do?" was his greeting. He turned to his sister, and Muriel heard him whisper: "What the mischief did you want to kiss her for?"

(To be continued.)

## The Editor's Note Book.

GENERAL GORDON'S mission to the Soudan is so far satisfactory that it proves that the Government is aware of the fact that we have duties to fulfil in Egypt, but it would be still more to the purpose if we knew what it has been decided to do in the event of the General's failure to attain his object by diplomacy. If our words are disregarded, are we to follow them up by blows. Or, if the Mahdi proves more proficient than ourselves at the game of brag, are we to retire and give up the game?

It is generally expected that answers to this question, as well as to many others of equal or greater interest, will be extracted from Ministers very soon after the meeting of Parliament next week; but, having regard to the infinite resources of Parliamentary evasion and procrastination, this seems rather a sanguine view.

MR. HENRY GEORGE does not appear to be very successful in his efforts to convert the people of this country to his peculiar views, and has received little, if any, practical support even among extreme Radicals. A letter in the *Times* last week, signed B., completely and tersely exposes the fallacies and absurdities of Mr. George's views as to the ownership of land, and no better answer to them can possibly be wanted.

IF M. de Lesseps thought that the agreement at which he arrived last autumn with the English shipowners had effectually smoothed the path of the Suez Canal Company, he was counting his chickens a little too soon. The London Chamber of Commerce has urged the Government not to "commit this country to this so-called settlement with the shipowners, as covering the whole ground in dispute," and it is understood that many other influential commercial bodies take a similar view of the situation.

THIS is satisfactory as showing that, as so many different interests are involved, nothing is likely to be settled precipitately, or until the question has been thoroughly threshed out. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the cost of transit through the Canal has to be paid at last by the consumers—that is to say, by the nation at large—and that any Government which attempts to settle the question must look at it from the broadest possible point of view.

ONE of the reforms which have been for some time overdue, and urgently call for the attention of the Government, is that of Private Bill legislation and of Parliamentary Committees as judicial tribunals. It is necessary, no doubt, that promoters of companies which seek compulsory powers for the establishment of profitable monopolies, should, in the interest of the public, have their claims keenly criticised by a competent independent tribunal.

UNFORTUNATELY a Parliamentary Committee on a Private Bill is not always competent, and, sometimes even, not absolutely independent, while the expense and waste of money necessitated by the present system are simply scandalous. In the old days of railway construction, it is stated in the *Times*, "the Great Western spent three-quarters of a million, and the Great Northern close on half a million before a

spade was put into the ground," and although things are not quite so bad now, recent parliamentary returns disclose the fact that railway, gas, water, canal, tramway, and dock companies have spent in the last ten years five millions of money in parliamentary litigation, which has benefited nobody except a comparatively limited circle of agents, solicitors, and barristers.

A WEEK or two ago I instanced the Revenue returns and the subscriptions to the Colonial Loans as arguments going to prove that the state of trade in the country must be better than we are generally led to believe, and, since then, the dividends declared by the Joint Stock Banks of the metropolis have told the same story. With a very low rate of discount, and speculation slack, banks cannot make large profits unless the amount of business done is very large, and, judging by this test, there can be no doubt that the turn-over of the country last year must have been immense.

A UNIVERSAL cry of dismay has gone up from the ratepayers of London at the news that the School Board rate is to be again increased, and there is no doubt that eightpence in the pound is a very serious matter. The worst part of the business is, not only that the total cost of the Board Schools increases, but that the cost per child grows also. If the expenses increased simply because more children were being educated, there might be some excuse for the rapid and portentous rise in the rate, but, when we find that even the children we had to educate last year are to cost us more this, it becomes evident that the proceedings of the London School Board call imperatively for enquiry with a view to reform.

WHY it should be worth anybody's while to place half-a-dozen paper bags of dynamite in the Primrose Hill Tunnel, in such a way that they could not by any possibility do any harm to the train in which the Prince of Wales was travelling, is not at first sight apparent. Probably, however, they were the stock-in-trade of nobody of more importance than one of the extremely silly people who find pleasure in the imbecilities known as practical jokes.

THE first stone of the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings in Petticoat Square has just been laid by the Chairman of the City Commissioners of Sewers, and brilliant hopes are held out that this block, and others which are to follow, will do much to relieve the overcrowding for which the neighbourhood has long had an evil name. Judging by previous experience, the chances are that these anticipations will only be partly justified by the result. In all probability the people who have been cleared out will wander off to some other overcrowded district, and the new buildings will, as in the case of the Peabody houses, be occupied by persons of a class much superior to that for which they were primarily intended.

MR. CHARLES READE is nothing if not thorough, and his letter in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 24th of January is an excellent example of the direct, plain, and forcible manner in which he argues out a point on which he feels deeply. His championship of the jury in the Belt Case is vigorous and generous, and will do good service by reminding people that jurymen, who have the opportunity of closely watching the demeanour of witnesses under examination and cross-examination, are much more likely to estimate their evidence at its true value than judges who have afterwards to form their opinion of the case from reports and the interested comments of the counsel alone.

MR. READE concludes by inviting the jurors to give the public, through the medium of the *Daily Telegraph*, all the reasons which induced them to arrive at the verdict which they delivered. If I remember rightly, they, or some of them, did take the public a good deal into their confidence immediately after the trial. It seems to me, however, that there are manifest inconveniences in the course suggested by Mr. Reade. Surely the duty of a jurymen ought to be at an end when the verdict is recorded, even apart from the consideration that twelve men may arrive at the same conclusion by several widely different trains of reasoning.

As an instance of the possible difficulties in such cases, the letter of the jurymen after the abortive Explosives' trial may be cited. Here the statement that eleven of the jury were of one way of thinking was clearly calculated to prejudice the jury by whom the case will have to be tried again, and, similarly, if the judges were to order a new trial in the Belt Case, it is impossible to suppose that a number of letters from the first jury could fail to prejudice the result.

It is stated that the authorities of Scotland Yard have come to the conclusion that the Stoke Newington Mystery was a case of suicide and not of outrage, and that no further efforts are to be made to find the person or persons unknown whom the coroner's jury declared guilty of wilful murder. No doubt this decision has not been arrived at without careful consideration of evidence, and probably of facts of which the public know nothing, but it seems rather a strong measure to set aside the verdict of a jury and the distinct evidence of the medical witnesses without explaining the reasons why. It certainly seems desirable that such a decision should not be arrived at without publication of the fullest particulars.

THERE has lately been a good deal of talk about overwork and under-pay at some of the Stores. Although it is extremely difficult to arrive at a fair judgment in the face of the diametrically opposing and wholly irreconcilable statements which are made on both sides in a newspaper controversy such as this, there seems no reason to doubt that the managers, to put it mildly, do not err on the side of over-liberality.

THIS is undoubtedly a mistake. The profits of the shareholders in the principal Stores are very large, and the position of the businesses themselves so peculiar, that something more than the ordinary law of supply and demand ought to be considered. Possibly, also, the extensive robberies, which were not long ago discovered at one of these gigantic shops, may be taken as a proof that, from the point of view of economy alone, it is very judicious to give people who are employed in positions of trust adequate pay.

MESSRS. BARNUM, BAILEY, AND HUTCHINSON and the Zoological Society of London are, no doubt, greatly obliged to the scientific gentlemen who have got up an animated discussion about the cause of the peculiar marks on the animal which is absurdly called a white elephant. That the experts should be found taking the most opposite views on the subject is only in accordance with the custom in such cases, and will surprise no one, while the ingenuity with which somebody connected with the speculation manages to stir up the controversy afresh, when it begins to languish, is quite in accordance with the traditions of the greatest days of the astute Barnum.

C. D.

## Jacky Jacky.

A VERY considerable proportion of the graves in Norfolk Island, once the receptacle of our most dangerous class of convicts, but since 1856 the abode of a very different and orderly community, the descendants of the mutineers of the *Bounty*, was due to the frequent attempts of the convicts at revolt, attempts which could only be quelled by the most energetic and determined measures. In 1834, a conspiracy was formed, the aim of which was to destroy the military inhabitants by poisoning the wells, and then to take possession of the island. That was defeated, and thirty-one of the revolvers suffered the penalty of death. The last outbreak occurred in 1846. The object on that occasion was to destroy some of the overseers who had, by bringing men to frequent punishment, made themselves the objects of wild and savage hate. The leader was a certain William Westwood, commonly called Jacky Jacky, that name having been given to him by the natives of New South Wales, when he was leading a reckless and lawless life in that colony. By one of the convicts, who was this man's close companion, I was favoured with a Newgate Calendar of details. Like many such details, black and repulsive in the mass, they show here and there, through the mist, a glimmer of that true light of humanity which might have brightened the man's life, and changed his career.

There was, indeed, some good mixed with the evil deed that had brought Jacky Jacky into Norfolk Island. Bent upon plunder, he with his associates had one night visited a settler's house, during the absence of its master. Having secured the servants, they proceeded to the best room, in which the lady of the house and a young lady, her friend, were preparing the children for bed. Jacky Jacky briefly stated the object of his visit, and having left an unaccustomed confederate in charge of the affrighted women, went upstairs. The report of a gun, followed by screams, soon called him down again, when he found the lady of the house lying on the floor, surrounded by her screaming children, and bleeding profusely from a gun-shot wound, which had divided the femoral artery. Jacky Jacky promptly called the whole house to his aid, bound up the wound as tightly as he could, ordered the settler's horse to be put to the gig, and, as soon as the lady had recovered consciousness, had her carefully placed on cushions at the bottom of the vehicle. Then taking the reins himself, he quitted his plunder, drove with the utmost speed to the nearest township, and knocking up the doctor, committed the wounded lady to his care. Then returning to his followers, he called them off, forbidding them to remove an atom from the premises. Upon the information of the wretch who had fired the gun, according to his own statement, Jacky Jacky and his gang were soon afterwards taken in the bush. Many crimes having been proved against them, they were condemned to death; but by the earnest representation of the lady, who gratefully remembered Jacky Jacky's considerate distinction between bush-ranging and murder, the sentence was commuted to transportation for life to Norfolk Island. But he was not destined to die in his bed. He headed, as already said, the conspiracy of 1846.

Obnoxious overseers and constables were to be destroyed, and the island seized. One morning, immediately after inspection, as the various gangs were being marched to their work, the revolt was opened by a simultaneous rush, and the convicts scattered themselves over the settlement in search of their victims—certain constables who lived in detached cottages near the beach. Those who had been on duty the preceding night were in one cottage, and were barbarously

murdered in their sleep. The military, after great exertion, got the greater number of the convicts back within the gaol; but some were still at large among the hills, and three or four had seized a boat upon the beach, and made their escape to Philip Island. This island is a lonely rock, lying about six miles from the settlement, inhabited by goats and rabbits, by sea-birds, and by a peculiar kind of green parrot. It used to be occasionally visited by officers of the convict garrison, for a day's shooting. On Philip Island, these three or four men for a long time were able to elude the vigilance of those sent in pursuit; at length, however, all but one were taken or had thought it prudent to surrender. For eighteen months that one man, hunted by his fellows, lived on in his desolation, and escaped from every one of the many searching-parties sent out to capture him. At length his lair was discovered. The desperate man then climbed swiftly to the highest pinnacle of rock in the small island. There he quietly waited his pursuers. With much toil they had nearly scaled the height on which he stood. Then he gave them a wild look of hatred and defiance, covered his head with his jacket, and leaped down, rebounding from rock to rock, and falling a shattered mass into the sea.

For this outbreak, seventy convicts were put upon their trial; and of these, thirteen, including Jacky Jacky, were condemned to death. They lie together in one grave, upon unconsecrated ground outside the cemetery, close to the rocky shore where the waves beat upon the coral reef. They were tried by a commission sent from Sydney. Until then, all persons charged with capital offences had been sent to Sydney for trial; but that practice was discontinued, in order that there might no longer exist a motive which had been a strange and frequent source of crime. The old hardened convicts used to amuse themselves by urging the new comers into violent conflict with each other, and inciting them to murder their companions, in order that they—the instigators—might have evidence to give, and thus for a time relieve the awful monotony of their lives by a voyage to Sydney, in the character of witnesses.

One tombstone in the old cemetery of Norfolk Island deserves record. It is sacred to the memory of Thomas Salisbury Wright, who was transported from Sydney at the age of one hundred and three for the term of his natural life. So there he died, having completed his one hundred and fifth year. To be sure he was a young man when he committed the forgery for which he was transported. That occurred when he was only eighty-three years old, and it was not discovered until twenty years after.

## The Family Doctor.

### THE HYGIENE OF ENTERTAINMENTS.

FEW of us will deny that we too often take our enjoyment—we mean what is called our “innocent enjoyment”—in a very unhealthy way. Our recreation is in no sense a renewing or making over again, but rather a bewitching and insidious form of destruction. By our ignorance and inadvertence we more than neutralise the benefits we gain from change of scene and from amusement.

EVERYBODY knows the stifling atmosphere which usually pervades well-filled theatres and halls. It is not only that the heat is oppressive—but there is a sense of closeness, of airlessness, which affects some people at the moment, and these probably suffer least from it, because they are obliged to flee; while others, who seem to tolerate it better, remain, and perhaps fail to connect it with the sick headache or the depression of spirits from which they suffer on the following day. It is a proof of the peculiar quality of this atmosphere, that people from tropical climates, and therefore accustomed to great natural heat, but also to free ventilation, suffer in it more perceptibly than we do, who are more accustomed to shut-in chambers. In fact, the air of a crowded and ill-ventilated building is tainted—is simply poisonous. And yet people, who carefully filter their water, and who would put aside any dubious article of food, seem content to go on breathing it.

LET us look into the matter. A large public building is usually well lighted, and the flame which gives the light at the same time uses up the air, converting it into gases, which are not only useless, but absolutely harmful to human beings. We and our neighbours in the assembly are also engaged in using up the air, and in breathing out the same harmful gas that the flame produces, as well as a small portion of a gas which is not only suffocating but poisonous. In addition to this, we breathe out certain poisonous animal exhalations from our lungs, which, in reality, give the sense of closeness which is so familiar to us all.

OF course, the remedy for these evils lies in the hands of architects and sanitary engineers. They must ever be attempting to solve the problem of how to produce the maximum of ventilation with the minimum of draught or chill. But demand creates supply; and as public intelligence on these points increases, so will the care and skill of these purveyors for public convenience. We shall find no more windows with immovable sashes; no more buildings, or corners of buildings, through which a full current of fresh air cannot be sent.

when it is desired. People educated to the value of ventilation will rather put on an extra wrap than insist on the closing of a door or a window. Those who are too delicate to bear the least stream of fresh air will understand that it is their duty to stay at home rather than to poison a whole assembly, and leave them with enfeebled bodies and irritated nerves for days to come.

THE attendants at every place of public assemblage should be rigidly instructed to set open every avenue for fresh air the moment the people depart. We fear this is often neglected, especially, if we may be permitted to say it, in churches, and on Sunday, when one service follows another in rapid succession. We shall never forget an experience of this sort we once underwent in the farthest Highlands of Scotland. The little church stood on the margin of a wide loch, sheltered by mighty pine-clad mountains. Summer was breathing out her purest and softest airs. The greater part of the neighbouring population was Gaelic-speaking, and a Gaelic service was held in the forenoon, followed by an English one for the benefit of a few residents and visitors. There was only an interval of a few minutes between the departure of the plaid-wrapped shepherds and white-mutched matrons and the ingoing of the lairds' people and the tourists, who were welcomed by a blast of hot, heavy, evil-smelling atmosphere, the legacy of the crowded congregation which had preceded them. And those who would have scorned to put on a second-hand garment, sat nodding, faint and stupefied, in a furnace of second-hand air! We carried away our own share of fretful mood and sick headache; and, during the subsequent Sundays of our stay, contented ourselves with the ministrations of Dr. Hillside. We may well ask, is not the preservation of health and strength, for the fit and cheerful discharge of our duties in life, a distinct though much-neglected part of Christian duty?

IN evening assemblies it is to be hoped that the electric light will give help in the right direction. With some form of closed electric lamp we get all the light we want, and yet the air is not rendered in the least impure or uncomfortably hot.

WHILE we guard against cold on leaving assemblies, by starting on our homeward way slowly, with closed mouths, or with the windows of our conveyance duly drawn, yet we must not forget that these precautions need not be unduly protracted, once we have habituated ourselves to the change of atmosphere. To breathe freely and somewhat largely of fresh air before going home and to bed is really important, since the fresh air is the best possible antidote to the bad or poisoned air. This, coupled with the good practice (if you can get used to it) of keeping your bedroom window open a little at top and bottom, will do much to remove the ill effects of the tainted atmosphere in which the evening has been passed, and may avert the feeling of headache, *malaise*, and weariness which too often results. Simple precautions of this kind are worth much, because Nature is very simple. She never demands from us hard and complicated tasks in order to preserve our health, and her behests, like those of the ancient prophet when he commanded the Syrian noble to wash in Jordan, are often despised from their very simplicity. If health be lost, however, her bearing towards us often changes instantly, and becomes relentless and exacting.

THERE are further complications in the hygiene of entertainments or social gatherings in our own houses, for there we have not only to consider what air we give our guests to breathe, but what food we set before them. Let us say, however, at the outset, that it should be regarded as a positive insult on the part of a host to invite more guests than the number which can breathe and move freely in the rooms where he receives them. To do so is only a part of the vulgar affectation and pretence which prevails in some sections of society, and those who aspire to be well-bred should study to avoid it. Sometimes a huge assembly is given as a means of paying off one's "social obligations." People have no right to incur social obligations which they can only repay in such fashion. The theory of entertainment is to give pleasure to our friends, not to drag them as victims at the chariot-wheels of our vanity.

IN some houses it seems as if it were treason to open the windows; they might all be nailed up for any use to which they are put. This is strongly to be deprecated, for a little management—the use of a curtain or a screen—will secure all the blessings of fresh air without any injurious draught. In every house, when a party is given, it should be somebody's business to see to these things. We should not leave our guests to complain of discomfort on this score; and it is astonishing how people get accustomed to bad air, and do not notice they are in it till they leave it and return to it.

THE atmosphere, when tainted, can be rapidly improved by pouring a little dilute oil of vitriol over some permanganate of potash. Ozone is at once given off, which is a powerful air-purifier. The only drawback to this expedient is that oil of vitriol is a powerful acid, and must be handled with great care.

OF the food supplied at entertainments it is difficult to say much, since it opens up the whole subject of dietetics. Of course, each guest can decide what he takes himself; but a wise latitude of choice should

be allowed him. At some houses a guest has either to take unwholesome viands or nothing. Whatever is likely to disagree with the human frame at any time is sure to do so in a hot and crowded room. Many dishes usually thought "dainty," levy a severe tax on the digestive powers. There is an important nerve called the "pneumogastric nerve," which presides largely over the digestion. A certain learned professor, before dismissing his students for the Christmas vacation, always added to his seasonable good wishes the warning: "Be sure you take care of your pneumogastric nerve." It is advice which should be remembered at all entertainments.

HAM, lobster, sherry, and highly spiced or sickly-sweet dishes are not the most appropriate for such gatherings. Have a few simple, harmless dishes for the delicate and the elderly, and it is probable you will find that these will be the most popular with all. Keep beautiful goblets of water well in sight, and also provide some aerated waters. Do not compel your guests to drink wine because they grow thirsty and there is nothing else to drink. Let the wine you do provide be thoroughly good; it need not be of an expensive kind, but let it be good of its kind. Let the guests beware of resorting to wine to relieve them from the depressing influences of ill ventilation and crowded confusion. These make stimulants welcome, but they only add to the evil consequences. At dinners, wine often enables people to eat twice as much as is good for them, thus entailing on them all sorts of evil consequences, which are not always traced to their true cause.

LATE hours should be avoided. We want recreation that we may pursue our work, not dissipation to unfit us for it. Dancing-parties are almost invariably too prolonged. What should be a pleasant exercise is converted into an exhausting labour, and under such circumstances those who have any real work in life do well to avoid them. The butterfly of fashion, male or female, makes up for ante-midnight revelry by morning lounging, but the working bees must be up and doing, and to resume work with a jaded feeling is thoroughly unwholesome. The fashionable "Cinderella" dances, closing sharply at the hour of twelve, mark a step in the right direction. Bad customs can only be changed by individuals coming to the conclusion that they are harmful and wrong, and then resolutely resolving each to set his own face against them.

GREAT physical good results from wise enjoyment. The mind has a most powerful influence on the body, an influence we can scarcely over-estimate. Relaxation is a necessity to the over-worked or over-worried mind. Many serious diseases might be avoided if this was duly attended to. One finds a hundred people ready and eager to swallow any quantity of mixtures, tonics, and pills, for one who seeks how to provide fit relaxation and refreshment for himself and his household. A healthy mind, clear, calm, and cheerful, is the best bulwark of a healthy body.

## An Address by Artemus Ward.

ARTEMUS WARD, after delivering a lecture once in New London, Conn., was asked by the principal of a young ladies' high school in the place to pay a visit to her institution the next day. He went like "an amosin cuss," and made the girls a speech. While walking to the academy a street runaway occurred. A terrified horse went tearing over the pavement, with what Artemus called the "fore-quarters" of a waggon clattering at his heels. This incident Artemus ingeniously utilised in his address. Said he: "The vehicular elopement which has just taken place, young ladies, has furnished us with a timely topic of discourse. Young ladies' seminaries are ever exposed to runaways. Once, when travelling with my show, I came upon a female institute. There were ladders, and lads too, as to that, at every window. Many perpendiculars carrying fainting horizontals to the ground. 'Fire!' I shouted. 'None of that,' replied a solemn voice from the orchard. 'There ain't no fire; these are only young fellows running off with their sweethearts.' There is moral entertainment for man and beast in this runaway. No horse, if attached to a waggon, that is, if sincerely attached to it, will run away with it; but the more a young man is attached to a young woman, the more he will run away with her, leaving no trace, in fact, none of the harness behind. Young ladies, since I have stood before your beautiful faces I have lost something, and if you or the boy that sweeps out should find a red object looking like a coral breastpin that has been stepped on, you may know it is my poor busted heart."

## Low Spirits.

OF all the distressing things in this wearisome world low spirits are at once the most trying and the most inexplicable. They do not depend upon any external circumstances, there is no forewarning sign to herald their approach. They appear to be purely constitutional—a sort of horrible legacy with which some people are born, and neither wealth, or health, or any form of success, can save a predestined person from becoming their prey.



At the most unexpected moments, in the midst of the gayest scenes, Melancholy taps us on the shoulder, and we find him waiting like the Ancient Mariner at the marriage-feast, and insisting on being heard. In a moment, at the waving of the wand of this bad enchanter, life appears at its worst. A black cloud drops over everything, our path appears lost in mist. We seem to have been doing nothing but make mistakes ever since we were born; our parents brought us up badly; our life is a series of miseries. It is a question whether in the midst of a crowd of apparent affection we have one friend who really loves us, certainly not one that understands us. For low spirits, as they increase, make us become more and more egotistical, more alone, and from our lonely rock of despair we are only too apt to look on the mass of mankind before us as little better than a group of grinning idiots.

THERE can be no doubt that this state of things is very trying while it lasts. We can have nothing but pity for the person whose melancholy eyes, looking straight forward, can see nothing good in the present or future; whose laugh is hollow, and not the result of merriment; who is enduring in his solitary breast exquisite tortures of weariness and despair; who thinks he has solved the conundrum concerning life being worth living, and can give the most decided answer possible in the negative—we cannot but pity him, although we know that his despair will be as evanescent as it now seems real, that to-morrow's sun will see him lively, and that suddenly, in an instant, he will have forgotten his woes, and life will appear to him as rose-coloured as before. We pity this man—nay, if he keeps his sorrows to himself, we can respect him, knowing that his is one of the sensitive, highly-strung natures that are liable to alternations of rapture and despair; but if he indulges himself with a confidant, and does everything he can to foster his morbidness, why, then our sympathy is wholly reserved for his wife.

WE say "his wife," for such a man is invariably married, unless, indeed, he has a peculiarly unselfish sister who will spoil him by listening to his woes. It is easy to pick out of a crowd the wife of the low-spirited man. If we see one of those sweet, smiling creatures whose faces are as bright as the sun, and who have a disposition to make the very best of things written in every dimple of their cheeks and glance of their eye, in one moment we could stake our existence on the assumption that that is the wife of a low-spirited man. "Poor innocent creature," we say to ourselves, "what have you done—what fearful crime did you commit in some former state of existence, that you should be tied for life to the companionship of this depressed and depressing person—one who comes again and again to gather honey from your sweet store of comforting sayings; who warms his miserable wings in the sunshine of your radiance, carping at you all the time, and grudging you that cheerfulness which is in his eyes the sign of an inferior disposition?"

WHAT is to be done with such a man? The more he is indulged the worse he gets; the longer he continues, the stronger hold will his fit take of him. He must clearly be roused, if you love him well enough to undertake it, but it is indeed a thankless task. You exhaust yourself with entertaining him, firing off funny story after funny story for his benefit; you take all the ancient proverbs of cheery import out of your wallet, and present him with them one after another. "It is a long lane that has no turning," you remark, trying by dint of a smile and a cheery expression to give an air of freshness to that well-worn aphorism; and, if that fails in its effect, you find yourself trying to give a startling original reading of the fact that there is a silver lining to every cloud. You ransack your memory for every ludicrous incident you have ever heard of—old family stories, plays you have seen, anything so that your hearer would but laugh. No circus performer jumping through his hoops, or leaping with stagey smiles from bar to bar, works harder than you, as you take spasmodic jumps from one subject to another in the hope of enlivening your difficult audience.

AND now comes the hardest part of all—the recipient of your care treats you with the greatest ungratefulness. Ten to one but he rather resents your good spirits, as being the fruits of a thoughtless and insensible nature. You may laugh, he says; you do not see the state of things as clearly as he does. You have no sympathy—he has seen that long ago. Either your birth, or your education, or some strange want in your nature, prevents you from taking part in the sorrows of his sensitive soul. This invariable remark of his is certainly hard to bear; indeed, there is something in the idea of his resenting the high spirits in which you are indulging for his benefit, which would be painful if it were not so ludicrous. To be taunted with being over-sanguine at the very minute when your cheerful disposition is being so severely tasked on his behalf is certainly trying, to say the least of it, but the devoted comforter will bear even this with patience whilst looking forward anxiously for the first smile which, like the break in the clouds on a rainy day, will tell her she has succeeded in her task, and that the demon of low spirits is gone.

WE have spoken throughout as though the complainer were of the masculine sex—the consoler of the feminine. It very often is so, but

there are heaps of cases where the contrary holds good, where it is the woman who wails, and the man who tries to comfort her in vain: Mrs. Gummidge, who regards the smoking of the potatoes as her own particular grievance, and Daniel Peggotty who tries to cheer her up. But of whichever sex you may be, sad indeed is your case when you have once allowed yourself to become the recipient of these dolorous confidences. The self-made martyrs will return to you again and again; like the daughter of the horse-leech forever crying "Give!" they will tie on your back all the burden of their bad spirits, departing lightened, but leaving you weary. Happy is it for you if they do not enfeeble all your powers of bearing that burden of your own whose existence they so selfishly ignore, as the vampire in old legends drank the life-blood of his victim that he might go on his own way refreshed.

## Brillat Savarin.

M. CHARLES MONSELET, in his amusing essay on Brillat Savarin in the translation of his celebrated work, "A Handbook of Gastronomy," just published, says:

"It is certain that Brillat Savarin never concealed his passion for good cookery, and he upset the feelings of his colleagues in the Court of Cassation by the smell of game, which he carried in his pockets that it might get high. Once, while he was President of the Civil Court of l'Ain, Brillat Savarin was sorely tried between his duty as a judge and his inclinations as a *bon vivant*. A market-gardener had brought an action to restrain a neighbour from planting trees in such a position that their shadows would be thrown on a wall where peaches of a peculiar lusciousness were grown. Brillat asked to taste one of these peaches, and the gardener came into court with a fruit of lovely appearance, which he cut into quarters with a silver knife. Handing up the first quarter, he said: "Taste, sir, for the flesh." When the judge had eaten, the second quarter came up with the request: "Now for the juice." At the third quarter the gardener said, "Now for the perfume;" then proffering the last quarter, amid a religious silence in court, he exclaimed: "And now for the *tout ensemble*." Brillat Savarin felt bound to give judgment for the neighbour, but he ejaculated almost with tears in his eyes: "These peaches are works of art, and that man with his trees is a savage."

## How to Mount Microscopic Objects.

### PART I.

TO all those who have any taste for natural history, microscopic research affords an inexhaustible mine of interest, while even the most unscientific can occasionally find an hour's amusement, leading, perhaps, to something better, in the examination of a few of the wonders which are scattered broadcast in our path. But, in order to appreciate Nature's handiwork, the mere possession of even the most powerful microscope is not the only requisite, for it must be borne in mind that comparatively few objects can be properly examined unless they have undergone careful prior preparation. Moreover, it is scarcely satisfactory to view an interesting object, and then to be obliged to throw it away for lack of some means of preserving it in a fit condition for future inspection. If carefully mounted, however, the adage that "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever" finds an excellent illustration, for there the specimens are, ready to be examined at any time when an opportunity may present itself.

OF course, mounted objects may always be procured of the various opticians who make a speciality of microscopic work, and who have generally a large stock on hand from which selections may be made. But this proceeding involves considerable expense, for not even the most simple specimen can as a rule be procured for less than one shilling, while the more elaborate preparations can seldom be purchased for five times that sum. Moreover, there is not the same satisfaction in examining these as in inspecting the fruits of one's own labours, so that from all points of view, excepting, perhaps, that of the optician, it is as well that every microscopist should be able to mount his own objects.

THE requisites for so doing are few and simple. In the first place, a number of glass slides must be procured, the dimensions of which must be three inches in length by one in breadth. These must be of the purest glass, without a flaw or an air-bubble in any part, while the edges must be carefully rounded off by means of sand-paper, so that no projecting edge be left which might cause a nasty cut. These slides may be procured at any of the dealers in microscopic apparatus, but any glass-cutter should be able to furnish them at a far cheaper rate, and of equal perfection. Only let it be thoroughly understood that the glass must be of the very best quality, and that the appointed measurements must be accurately adhered to, and even the most unintelligent of workmen can scarcely make a mistake.



IN the next place, a corresponding number of glass covers, as they are called, will be required, these consisting of squares or circles of the very thinnest and purest glass, with which the objects are to be covered in order to protect them from dust and injury. These covers must be procured of an optician, for their manufacture is of far too delicate a character for ordinary workmen, and demands special tools and the greatest care and experience in their use. They are sold by weight, at so much an ounce according to their quality, and are rather expensive. But, on the other hand, it must be taken into account that a very large number go to make up an ounce, for they are of so delicate a nature that the weight of each individual cover is scarcely appreciable.

A SMALL bottle of the purest Canada Balsam will also be necessary, and this may be procured of any druggist. A little purified gum tragacanth will also be useful in mounting certain opaque objects, and may be obtained of the same tradesman, who will furnish it in the form of small flakes. These flakes, when soaked in water, swell to a most wonderful extent, two or three small fragments being quite sufficient to fill a two-ounce bottle with mucilage of the proper consistency. Add the water by degrees, a little at a time, until the mixture is of such a character that it flows with difficulty even if the bottle containing it be held upside down. A camel's-hair pencil or two will of course be necessary, together with a few simple tools formed of fine needles furnished with handles. These last are easily made by thrusting the needles, eye foremost, into ordinary lucifer-matches, until only about one-third of their length remains exposed. Some operators recommend that one or two of these needles should be curved by heating them in the flame of a spirit-lamp, bending them to the required angle by the aid of forceps, and finally plunging them while still hot into cold water in order to harden them. This, however, I think is totally unnecessary. Curved needles are far more difficult to work with than straight, and their aid is seldom or never really required.

A PAIR of fine dissecting-forceps is invaluable, and these will not cost very much. Unlike the needles, however, they are most useful when curved, but a little practice will be necessary before they can be properly used. This practice is, after all, the chief requisite in every branch of microscopic mounting. The first few attempts must be more or less failures, and it is not until some experience has been gained that the student will be enabled to mount the simplest object correctly. He may read whole books of instructions, and may be theoretically perfect in the art, but when he descends to practice he will find that the rules upon which he is to work can only point out the manner of proceeding which is most likely to lead to success, and that all the little details which are so important can be learnt by personal experience alone.

PRACTICE and patience, however, in this as in other things, will do wonders, and each attempt of a careful worker will be an improvement upon the preceding, until he finds that he has fairly mastered all the difficulties which at first beset him. Before proceeding farther, therefore, I wish it to be understood that in the following remarks I make no pretence of completeness, but merely point out the lines upon which the delicate operation of mounting microscopic objects is best conducted.

SUPPOSING objects, balsam, needles, brushes, forceps, and all the other necessities to be duly laid out in readiness for use, the first thing to do is to find the exact centre of the slide. Nothing looks worse than a slide in which this precaution has not been observed, the appearance of even the most careful mounting being quite spoiled by failure in this respect. The centre may be easily found in the following manner: Mark out upon a piece of white paper a parallelogram of the exact dimensions of the slide, and connect the opposite angles by two straight lines. The point at which these lines cut one another will be the centre. Place the slide upon the ruled space, and allow a single drop of the melted balsam to fall upon the centre. In this drop, without loss of time, place the object, whatever it may be, and lay one of the thin glass covers upon it, pressing it gently downwards, so that the balsam may spread evenly in all parts. Do not press too hard, or the cover may break and spoil the object; and take especial care that no bubbles of air remain in the balsam. These air-bubbles are a terrible nuisance sometimes, and give a great deal of trouble before they can be eradicated, which is best done by touching them with a red-hot needle before the cover is laid in its place. Heat the needle in a spirit-lamp; if an ordinary flame be employed soot will be deposited upon it, and so transferred to the balsam, utterly ruining the slide. See that the glass cover is quite free from dirt before placing it upon the balsam, for if it is not perfectly clear the view of the object will be greatly obscured when it is placed beneath the microscope.

THIS part of the process satisfactorily completed, label the slide carefully, and put it away for at least a week in order to dry, taking care to place it in some receptacle to which dust can find no access. A word or two as to the label may, perhaps, not be out of place. Let this be as complete as possible, giving the name of the object, an outline description, if necessary, and the focus of the object-glass—one inch, half-inch, or quarter-inch—through which it can be most

suitably viewed. Eschew such vague labels as "mouth of beetle," "scales of butterfly," "pollen of flower," etc. There is as much variety in the mouths and scales of insects, or the pollen of flowers, as there is in the insects and flowers themselves, and slides labelled in so vague a manner are as nearly useless as it is possible for them to be. There is no difficulty nowadays in finding out the name of any insect or plant, for, if no collection be available with which comparison can be made, there are several scientific journals, such as "Science Gossip," which undertake the nomenclature of objects sent to them for that purpose, so that there is no reason whatever why the slides should not be labelled with accuracy.

OPINIONS are rather divided as to the exact manner in which the balsam should be used. Some operators place the drop upon the slide first, as above suggested, and then lay the object upon it. Others reverse this order of proceeding, and place the object upon the dry slide, allowing the balsam to fall upon it. Some, again, use their balsam undiluted, while others thin it by a judicious admixture of chloroform, until its consistency is of much the same character as that of very thin treacle. Unless the very greatest care be taken, however, this last method is not to be recommended, for the balsam, if thinned in too great a degree, is very apt to spread beyond its proper limits, while the glass-cover is less easily fixed in its place. It is as well to warm the slide before using it, as the balsam then takes longer to set, and allows more time for the manipulation of the object.

WHEN thoroughly dry, the slides may undergo the final process, which consists of the application of a ring of cement, or varnish, round the glass-cover. This process is not absolutely necessary, but adds greatly to the neatness of the slide, a moderately broad black ring giving it a very finished appearance. When quite completed and dry, the slides should be placed in a kind of rack, so that they may stand upon their edges without coming into contact with one another. They should never be placed flat, or allowed to touch each other, for fear of their receiving some injury which would spoil their value.

## John Knox's Courtship.

JOHN KNOX, before the light of the Reformation broke up, travelled among several honest families in the west of Scotland, who were converts to the Protestant religion. Particularly he visited off Lord Ochiltree's family, preaching the Gospel privately to those who were willing to receive it. The lady and some of her family were converts. Her ladyship had a room, table, stool, and candlestick for him, and one night about supper-time said to him: "Mr. Knox, I think you are at a loss by want of a wife?"

To which he said: "Madam, I think nobody will take such a wanderer as I."

To which she replied: "Sir, if that be your objection I will make an enquiry to find an answer against our next meeting."

The lady accordingly addressed herself to her eldest daughter, telling her that she might be very happy if she could marry Mr. Knox, who would be a great reformer and a credit to the Church, but she despised the proposal, hoping that her ladyship wished her better than to marry a poor wanderer. The lady addressed the second daughter, who answered as the eldest. Then she spoke to the third daughter, about nineteen years of age, who very fairly said: "Madam, I'll be very willing to marry him, but I fear he'll not take me."

To which the lady replied: "If that be your objection I'll soon get an answer."

Next night at supper the lady said: "Sir, I have been considering on a wife for you, and find one very willing."

To which Knox replied: "Who is it, madam?"

She answered: "My young daughter, sitting by your side at the table."

Then, addressing himself to the young lady, he said: "My bird, are you willing to marry me?"

She answered: "Yes, sir; only I fear you will not be willing to take me."

He said: "My bird, if you be willing to take me you must take your venture of God's providence, as I do. I go through the country sometimes on foot, with a wallet on my arm and a Bible in it. You may put some things for yourself, but if I bid you take the wallet you must do it, and go where I go, and lodge where I lodge."

"Sir," she said, "I'll do all this."

"Will you be as good as your word?"

"Yes, I will."

Upon which the marriage was concluded. She went with him to Geneva. And as he was ascending a hill, she got up to the top of it before him, and took the wallet on her arm, and, sitting down, said: "Now, good man, am I not as good as my word?"

## Household Gardening.

ONE of the mildest winters on record has had the natural effect of exciting vegetation before its time. Fruit buds were swelling, and Roses starting into growth with the opening of the year, and the cold weather which followed in certain districts gave the greater check to trees, shrubs, and flowers that had been summoned into activity at an unseasonable period. The very early budding of the occupants of gardens is not an encouraging sign of future productiveness; for it is almost certain that, sooner or later, sharp frosts occur, the effects of which are felt throughout the year. Mild winters and cold springs are usually the precursors of fruitless summers.

### RETARDING GROWTH.

Many persons seeing young growths push from the extremities of Roses and fruit-trees endeavour to stop the dangerously forward movement by pruning. They imagine that removing the early portions by shortening the shoots checks the flow of sap, and so retards the blossoming of the trees. This is a mistake. It is quite true they check the growth towards the extremities of the shoots; but in doing so, they divert the sap into the lower buds, causing these, which are by far the more important, to start before their time. Avoid early pruning therefore, but rather defer it the longer when the growths at the ends of the shoots are too early, as these will attract the sap from the lower fruit and flower producing buds, allowing them to rest until the approach of spring.

### ROOT PRUNING.

This is a retarding process, and often directly conducive to fruitfulness in the case of over-vigorous young Apple, Pear, and other fruit-trees. While we advise a postponement of pruning the branches of trees under the circumstances above indicated, checking such trees that can be operated on safely by pruning their roots, cannot be commenced too soon.

Root-pruning is a very simple process. It simply means digging a tree up and planting it again immediately. This cannot be done without severing many roots, thus decidedly checking the flow of sap by cutting off the supply.

This practice can only be advantageously adopted with young and luxuriant trees, and those that make long and strong growths, yet produce few blossoms; trees that grow fairly strong, without being exuberant, may be half dug up, taking out a trench round one side, and cutting the roots with a sharp spade; but weakly examples must not have their roots disturbed.

A tree may be regarded as very strong when it produced shoots last year upwards of two and a half feet long; moderately strong when they exceed eighteen inches, and too weak for root-pruning when they have not extended more than a foot. The matter will now be rendered sufficiently clear for all practical purposes.

The distance at which the trench should be cut from the stem of the tree is the next question the inexperienced will require answered. It is not easy to give an answer equally applicable to all cases; but few will err by taking the height of the tree as the guide, and taking half the height as the distance to commence digging around the stem.

If a young pyramid or bush tree is only three feet high, the roots may be cut through about eighteen inches from the stem; if four feet high sever them at two feet, and if six feet let the trench be opened at three feet from the bole of the tree. These distances are quite safe for checking an over-vigorous tree by disturbing the roots, and this will often—indeed, nearly always—result in the production of fruit-blossoms.

### ORNAMENTAL APPLE TREES.

Everybody will admit the chaste beauty of apple-blossom, but the majority of persons have not observed the different character of the flowers of different varieties.

The blossom of some sorts is small, papery-white, and comparatively inconspicuous, while others have large delicately-flaked or deep rosy flowers, the well-laden trees in many being exceeded in beauty by few ornamental trees, and surpassed by none.

Half-a-dozen Apples having blossoms that entitle them to a place in any shrubby border or pleasure-ground will be named, and the varieties will not be the less acceptable, since the blossom is followed by excellent fruit.

Gravenstein, blossoms large with round petals, the outside of which is deep rose flaked with white. The buds just before expansion are very beautiful, and clusters are often thinned out from the trees for drawing-room decoration, more than sufficient being left for a full crop of fruit, which is of large size, good for dessert, and excellent for culinary purposes.

Worcester Pearmain, flowers not quite so large as the above, but very charming, by their silvery-white colour, streaked and pencilled with delicate pink veins. The fruit of this variety is also extremely rich in colour, which renders it one of the most handsome of medium-sized dessert Apples, and a general favourite. It is being largely planted, and should be represented in every garden.

Scarlet Nonpareil. The blossom of this always attracts attention in spring, as its handsome small rich red fruit does on the dessert-table in winter. The flowers are blush, with rose-coloured veins, shading to white, very lovely, and a tree should be included in the most select collections.

Lady Henniker, blossoms very large, often one inch and a half in

diameter, the buds, when nearly ready for expansion, are of a glowing rosy-pink colour, afterwards changing to white, faintly suffused with rose. The fruit is large and valuable for culinary purposes.

Cox's Pomona, flowers large and highly effective, white flaked, and veined with rose. The fruit is also extremely handsome, pale-red, with dark crimson streaks, and is useful for cooking. The tree is also a free bearer, and the variety is being largely grown.

Lord Derby, blossoms large, rich, and beautiful, being bright rosy-pink in colour, the petals being deep pink just before expansion. The tree is one of the most attractive, and the fruit grand in size; one of the most imposing of culinary Apples, and trees in great demand for planting.

As combining beauty with utility the varieties named may be planted with confidence by all who have room for half-a-dozen trees, and they are as worthy of a place in the front-garden amongst Roses and Evergreens as in the enclosure usually devoted to the culture of vegetables.

Nor do the trees occupy much space if obtained on the dwarf paradise stock; they may, in fact, be made to blossom and bear fruit when not more than three feet high if required, and as much larger as may be preferred, their size and shape depending on the treatment to which they are subjected. If pigmies are coveted they must be transplanted frequently, and they will make little growth, but cover themselves with blossoms, and, weather permitting, eventually with fruit.

Some other fruits suitable for small gardens will be recommended, as there is still time for planting, but it is particularly important at this season of the year that the roots are not allowed to become dry during transit from a nursery.

### BULBOUS PLANTS.

Early Hyacinths will now be fading. When they cease being attractive the flower-spikes should be at once cut off, and the plants be placed in a cool but very light position to develop their foliage. To this end they must be watered the same as hitherto. On the excellence of the foliage this year depends the quality of the flowers another season. The same remarks apply to Tulips, Narcissuses, Crocuses—indeed, to all bulbs that are grown and flowered in pots. The plants, after flowering, are quite as well in a frame as a greenhouse, and better in the frame than in the window of a dwelling. They need no artificial heat, but should be protected from frost.

## The Liberty of the Press.

AN American newspaper gives the following account of the troubles of one of its reporters:

"We haven't any further need of your services," said the managing editor of a city daily to a reporter who had been at work only a week.

"That's rather sudden, ain't it?" replied the startled reporter.

"Haven't I done all I had to do?"

"You have done the work, but not properly, sir."

"What's wrong?"

"Well, you wrote up Mrs. Parvenu's ball, and there wasn't a word about its being a brilliant affair."

"That's just what it wasn't."

"The lady, sir, takes several copies of this paper, and her husband has his printing done in our office, and ordinary common-sense should teach you to understand your duties under the circumstances."

"But—"

"No excuse is necessary, sir. Then you brought in an article on the arrest of young Mr. Fresh for drunkenness. His father is one of our patrons, and we have a sufficient independence to disregard the wishes of the curious public to get an item of news when our patrons are interested in its suppression."

"I understand—"

"No, you don't, for you wrote Mr. Jones's obituary without saying he was a distinguished citizen, of large influence, and a man of great goodness of heart."

"I thought he was another kind of—"

"You mustn't think. The independent spirit of the press is not to be governed by reportorial thought, sir. Did you think when you wrote of Miss Angeline Shoddy's departure to the seaside without referring to her as the charming and accomplished daughter of one of our most select families?"

"Who said she was the—?"

"Do you have to hear what other people say in order to know your business? Who told you that Mr. Bottle, the councilman, was a rough? Don't you know his influence is worth money to the paper?"

"I wasn't aware that—"

"Of course you were not aware of anything. If you were, you might be useful to us. No, sir; you are not the kind of a man we need. We want a man not to know what he knows, and know what he does not know. The liberty of the press is not to be trifled with by irresponsible reporters who think, nor is its freedom to be restricted by young men who let the actual facts in a case interfere with the requirements of the occasion. You can get your pay, sir, by calling at the office."

# Odds and Ends.

THE following curious legal decision, which is almost as absurd as some that have emanated from the bench in this country, is recorded on the archives of a court in India: "Four men, partners in business, bought some cotton bales. That the rats might not destroy the cotton, they purchased a cat. They agreed that each of the four should own a particular leg of the cat; and each adorned with beads and other ornaments the leg thus apportioned to him. The cat, by an accident, injured one of its legs. The owner of that member wound about it a rag soaked in oil. The cat going too near the fire set the rag on fire, and, being in great pain, rushed in among the cotton bales where she was accustomed to hunt rats. The cotton thereby took fire and was burned up. It was a total loss. The three other partners brought a suit, to recover the value of the cotton, against the fourth partner who owned the particular leg of the cat. The judge examined the case and decided thus: 'The leg that had the oil rag on it was hurt; the cat could not use that leg; in fact, it held up that leg, and ran with the other three legs. The three unhurt legs, therefore, carried the fire to the cotton, and are alone culpable. The injured leg is not to be blamed. The three partners who owned the three legs with which the cat ran to the cotton will pay the whole value of the bales to the partner who was the proprietor of the injured leg.'

"ACCORDING to the testimony of the witnesses, you were caught just as you were getting out of the window, with the contents of the till in your pocket. Now, what excuse have you got?" And the magistrate leaned back in his chair very complacently. "I know it, your honour, and I shall always be grateful to the man who caught me. When I have these somnambulist fits I am in danger of falling out of windows and hurting myself." "That idea never occurred to me," remarked the magistrate pensively. "It has often occurred to me," remarked the prisoner with unconscious humour. "That being the case, I will direct the governor—" "To turn me loose?" "No, but to have an extra bar across your cell window for fear you may fall out."

A LONDONER went to stay with the Rev. Jack Russell, of Black Torrington, for a week, in order to have a spin or two with the well-known Devon and Somerset. On the morning of the first meet it rained as it can rain only on Exmoor, and the visitor looked out of the rectory windows in dismay, loudly proclaiming his disappointment, and declaring that no one could possibly turn out in such weather. The reply of the old hunting parson was: "Young man, you have life before you, but I am seventy-five years of age, and I cannot afford to waste a single day's hunting. Get ready as soon as possible, for we must be off in ten minutes!"

"THAT gentleman at the piano is Professor Keymasher," said Mrs. C. to the lady sitting next to her, in response to an enquiry while at a public rehearsal of the Philaccordeon Society last week. "Well, I can't say that I think much of his playing," replied the lady frankly. "Why?" exclaimed the surprised Mrs. C.; "he is one of the finest performers in our society, and, besides, he is a composer." "A what?" interrogated the stranger. "A composer," replied Mrs. C. "Well, all I have to say is that it would take better playing than that to compose me. It makes me frantic."

THEY have funny ideas on the Continent as to the social manners and customs of the English people. When an Italian adaptation of "Our Boys," called "I Nostri Bimbi," was produced in Venice, it was noticed that in order to appear true Englishwomen, all the actresses wore eyeglasses, and that hot punch was the staple beverage at a luncheon which took place upon the stage. When the punch had been consumed, glasses of gin were handed round—after the British fashion, of course—with indiscriminate and lavish liberality.

WHILE a small sloop belonging to a port in Fife was entering the Firth of Forth, one night, a gale came on, which necessitated the shortening of sail. The ship was not much above the tonnage of an ordinary herring-boat. The skipper alone was on deck, and at the helm—in fact, he constituted the watch. When the gale increased he left his post, went forward to the forecabin, and called down the hatchway: "All hands ahoy! Come up, Jamie and the laddie, and bring up the wee jibby under yer airin."

A SHARP student was called up by the worthy professor of a celebrated college, and asked the question: "Can a man see without eyes?" "Yes, sir," was the prompt reply. "How, sir," cried the astonished professor, "can a man see without eyes? Pray, sir, how do you make that out?" "He can see with one, sir," replied the ready-witted youth. And the whole class shouted with delight at the triumph over metaphysics.

A MAN who never has money enough on hand to pay his bills, bought a pair of boots on credit. "How much are they?" "Seven-and-six if you buy on credit, as usual, but fifteen if you pay cash down." "How is that?" "Vell, you see," said the simple-minded shoemaker, "ven I sells on credit I know it's a dead loss, so I makes the loss as small as possible."

"MOTHER, what's a bookworm?" "One who loves to read, study, and collect books, my dear." The next evening visitors were assembled. Miss Edith, who wears rings innumerable, was present. "Oh, mother, look at Miss Edith's rings! Is she not a ringworm?"

It is said that "out of every one hundred and nine female school-teachers, seven marry every year." How awful it must be for those seven women to marry every year.

A SEASIDE visitor went to the circulating library and asked if they had the "Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle." She received the reply: "You will get 'em at the post-office."

"SEE here now, darlint. It's a stranger I'll be afther introducing to ye—a wonderful man—spakes sivin languages, and all of 'em foreign."

THE most absent-minded of men is the professor who, when he hears himself knocking the ashes out of his pipe, will call out, "Come in."

SOME men are so lacking in hospitality that they will not even entertain an idea.

THE girl with the big hat seems to be all head until you talk to her.

SOMNAMBULISM is believed to be an unconscious trance-action.

THE tradition that Eginhard married Charlemagne's daughter Emma has been satisfactorily disproved, but the story is so romantic that French ladies will continue to believe in it, and men will wish that it were true. According to the legend, Eginhard paid visits to the Princess Emma after dark, while the snow lay thick on the ground; but as he might have been detected by his footprints in the snow, the courageous young lady used to meet him at the garden gate, carry him to her abode in her strong arms, and then back again by-and-by. A spy caught her in the very act, and reported her to the emperor, who summoned his twelve peers to decide what should be done with the young man who had used his king's daughter as a beast of burden. Eleven of the peers showed sycophantic souls by making horrid proposals for torturing poor Eginhard, but Roland, the bravest of the brave, said simply, "Let them be married;" and Charlemagne, with a laugh, exclaimed: "I think, Roland, thou hast named the best punishment after all."

A TELEGRAM that frightened a gentleman's family terribly, who were staying at a country residence, was once received by his coachman, who had been instructed by letter to be at the station and await his arrival on a certain day. While waiting, the coachman received the following despatch: "Accident. Mr. B. remains comes next train." In consequence of the lack of a comma after "remains," Mr. B., on his arrival, found an undertaker and his assistants waiting at the station to convey his "remains" to his bereaved family.

AN American newspaper reports that "Gerald Massey, an English poet, has come to this country to lecture. He brought a portion of the title of his lecture with him, and the remainder will arrive on another vessel. His lecture is called, 'Man in Search of His Soul During Fifty Thousand Years, as Witnessed by the Evidence of Bone Caves, and How He Finds It.' If man wants to find his soul during the next six thousand years, he should not stop to read the title of Massey's discourse."

"I CAN'T live without her," he said to a friendly adviser, "and I am sure that away down in her heart she has a little feeling for me. I am going to test her." He pulled out a pistol, saying: "I am going to her with this and say: 'Here, shoot me down; I cannot live without you.' 'You had better not,' said the friend; 'she might pull the trigger.' 'I don't care for that,' replied the heart-broken lover; 'I don't care for that; I have filled the weapon with blank cartridges.'"

ONE of the French prisoners in Berlin, during the last war between France and Prussia, who was earning some money by making shoes, was a very good-natured fellow, and, like Mark Tapley, seemed determined to make the most of the situation. When taunted by a Prussian for being a captive, and asked what had become of French boasting now, he undauntedly replied: "French boasting, indeed! We said we should be in Berlin in three weeks, and here we are!"

A DISTINGUISHED wit was amusing himself at a dinner-party by making puns upon the names of his neighbours. A censorious Scotch lawyer, desirous to stop these personal jokes, addressed him thus: "I think, sir, that I rejoice in a name upon which you will not be able to make a pun." "Indeed!" said the wit. "Please tell me your name?" "My name, sir, is Dunlop." "Then," retorted the wit, "you have only to lop off the end and it is Dun" (done).

A WHITE man not long since sued a black in one of our courts, and while the trial was before the judge, the litigants came to an amicable settlement, and so the counsel stated to the court. "A verbal settlement will not answer," replied the judge; "it must be in writing." "Here is the agreement in black and white," responded the counsel, pointing to the reconciled parties. "Pray what does your honour want more than this?"

If you dream you are crossing the English Channel, it is a warning to discontinue heavy suppers. If you dream you are in church, most likely your next-door neighbour is receiving a certain lecture. If you dream that somebody loves you, dream as long as you can. And if you don't dream at all, it means that you are in sound health and have nothing on your mind.

"I UNDERSTAND that you referred to me as a pig, sir," remarked a pompous elderly gentleman to a young man who had spoken disparagingly of him to a third person. "You have been misinformed, sir," replied the young man; "I hope that I know better than to refer to a person of your advanced age as a pig."

TWO servants of a coquette are discussing the visitors of the house. "It seems to me," says the first, "that nowadays we never see Monsieur—Monsieur—what is his name?—the straw-coloured beard?" "Ah yes. The Deluge." "Why do you call him the Deluge?" "Because he reigned forty days."

A YORKSHIREMAN being solicited to give a certificate of character respecting a man who had applied elsewhere for a situation, kept within the confines of truth by saying: "He is as honest as most other people; has been known to speak the truth occasionally, and is frequently sober."

A MAN fished a rich old gentleman out of a millpond, and refused the offer of 2s. from the rescued miser. "Oh, that's too much!" exclaimed he; "taint worth it;" and he handed back 1s. 11d., saying calmly, as he pocketed the penny: "That's about right."

A COUNTRY paper has this personal item: "Those who know old Mr. Wilson of this place personally, will regret to hear that he was assaulted in a brutal manner last week, but was not killed."

THE young woman who had many suitors, and from the time she was sixteen until she was twenty-one rejected them all, referred in her later life to that period as her declining years.

WIFE: "But, my dear, I shall catch cold coming down so late to let you in." Husband: "Oh no, my love; I'll rap you up well before you come down."

A LADY says that the difference between a cotton and a satin dress is material; but that's all stuff.

A BACHELOR is a man who has lost the opportunity of making a woman miserable.

A YAWN in company generally indicates a gap in the conversation.

ONE has to drive a pen, but a pencil is lead.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## QUESTIONS.

A CONSTANT READER (who has neglected to observe Rule 3) will be much obliged if anyone will tell her where the following song is published, and what is the name of the author:

By the old oak tree I'm standing  
As I stood long years ago,  
And the sun's bright rays are falling  
On the tranquil scene below;  
Happy memories crowd upon me  
In this dear secluded place,  
For each lovely scene reminds me  
Of some old familiar face.

W. S. writes: "Can any of your musical readers inform me where a part-song, called, 'Come, silent evening, o'er us,' is to be procured? It is not published at Novello's or Boosey's, Chappell's or Cramer's."

## ANSWERS.

BRUSH.—You do not say whether you require a book treating of oil or water-colour painting. "Rowney's Manuals," 1s., or Vere Foster's Hand-books, 3d. and 6d., are most useful. "Leitch's Water-Colour Painting" (Cassell), 5s., is a good book for a beginner.

CUPID.—"Dot" kindly writes that "The Curfew Bell" will be found in "Bell's Modern Reader and Speaker" (Simpkin), 3s. 6d.

E. M. G.—The late Mark Lemon was only once married (to Miss Romer), and left a numerous family of sons and daughters. He died May 23rd, 1870, aged sixty-one years.

LENA.—If you will kindly send, addressed to the Editor, a copy of the poem, he will, if not too long, print it; if otherwise, forward it to the respondent enquiring for it.

IRONMONGER.—It is generally considered that the fence belongs to the owner of the house on whose side the nails are driven, but this rule is by no means absolute. When the origin of a fence separating adjoining property is unknown, it belongs to both owners of the land in equal moieties.

JUNIPER.—The lines are to be found in a farce entitled, "Tis well, it's no worse," by Bickerstaff:

When late I attempted your pity to move,  
Why seemed you so deaf to my prayers?  
Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,  
But—why did you kick me downstairs?

KISMET.—1. You had better advertise your zither in the *Exchange and Mart*, *The Queen*, or *Sylvia's Journal*. 2. If you apply to the manager of the "Smith American Organ Company," 157, New Bond Street, and of the Holborn Viaduct, you will get all information about the organs.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.—You will find a recipe for making "Shortbread in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 142. The following is Miss Acton's recipe for "Good Scottish Shortbread": "With one pound of flour mix two ounces of sifted sugar and one of candied orange-rind or citron, sliced small: make these into a paste with from eight to nine ounces of good butter, made sufficiently warm to be liquid; press the paste together with the hands, and mould it upon tins into large cakes nearly an inch thick, pinch the edges, and bake the shortbread in a moderate oven for twenty minutes, or longer, should it not be quite crisp, but do not allow it to become deeply coloured."

MISS MEGGS.—It would take up too much of our space to give you the consecutive order and date of publication of the late Charles Dickens's works. You will find this information in "The Bibliography of Dickens," by R. H. Shepherd, 3s. 6d., Messrs. H. Sotheran and Co., 36, Piccadilly.

NUBIAN.—If you look in the *Church Times* you will find people advertising for workers of church lace. At 22, Berners Street, there is a Society for the Employment of Ladies.

OLD CUSTOM.—The cutting of the "Baddeley Twelfth Cake" dates from 1794, when Robert Baddeley bequeathed in his will, among other curious provisions, the sum of one hundred pounds, invested in the Three per Cent. Consols, the interest to be laid out annually on Twelfth Night for cake, with wine and punch, to be presented in the green-room to the ladies and gentlemen engaged at Drury Lane Theatre. The prescribed form of cutting the cake is always observed with the formal toast of "The Memory of Robert Baddeley," although the founder's bequest is largely supplemented by private contribution. Mr. Augustus Harris this year gave the entertainment to more than two hundred guests after the pantomime on Monday, January 7th. Robert Baddeley was a popular actor of the last century, and the original representative of Moses in the "School for Scandal."

PAUL PRY.—Number Forty undoubtedly "takes the cake." The Editor's reasons are numerous, but interesting only, as he judges, to himself.

PERPLEXED HOUSEKEEPER.—1. It is a most difficult matter to get rid of such a plague of fleas. If a careful search every morning does not enable you to do so, the bedding must all be thoroughly cleansed, and it may be necessary to bake some portion of it. The room itself must be re-papered, painted, and whitewashed. No half-measures in such a case are of any use. 2. We do not know of any white or coloured enamel which would answer your purpose. Goodall's Brunswick Black both wears and looks well.

SINGLE STICK.—1. The penny is first mentioned as an English coin in the laws of Ina, the King of the West Saxons, who reigned A.D. 688, and its name was regarded as a diminutive of *pana*, or "little pledge," or token. In Saxon times the penny meant a silver coin of 24 grains (a dwt. or "pennyweight"), thirty of which, in the time of Ethelred, would purchase an ox and twelve sheep. The silver was "sterling," a term thought to be derived from the Easterlings, or men from the East, who had the English coinage in their charge. Though pennies in copper were so late, half-pennies had preceded them by one hundred and twenty years, and tokens of farthing, half-penny, and penny were issued by traders. 2. "Foreign Cage Birds," by C. W. Gidney, illustrated and containing full directions for successfully breeding, rearing, and managing foreign cage-birds, is publishing in parts (L. Upcott Gill), 6d. each. In Part II. you will find a description of the Beautiful or Paradisa Parrakeet.

THING OF BEAUTY.—1. It is early to predict what will be worn in the summer. Next month you should get "The Ladies' Gazette of Fashion," wherein you will probably find a shadow of coming things. 2. "Golden Macassar Oil" (Rowland's) is not the same article as "Rowland's Macassar Oil," and is especially designed for the use of fair-haired people and children. It is a delicate and very agreeable preparation, and is certainly superior to anything of the kind now in use. 3. Try French chalk; scrape it on to the grease spot, rub well in, and on brushing it off you will probably find the spot has disappeared.

VERITAS I.—The verse is the seventh of "Man was Made to Mourn," a dirge, by Burns:

Many and sharp the num'rous ills  
Inwoven with our frame!  
More pointed still we make ourselves,  
Regret, remorse, and shame!  
And man, whose heav'n-erected face  
The smiles of love adorn,  
Man's inhumanity to man  
Makes countless thousands mourn!

W. J. B.—1. The black spots which trouble you on your face are a very common complaint called *acne*, for which we are constantly asked to give a remedy. The following is our family doctor's advice: "Well steam the affected part every night, after which use plenty of friction with a soft tooth brush and warm soap and water, and then apply some sulphur ointment or a lotion of sulphur and alcohol. If the spots should be raised and indolent, they might be touched with a little acid—nitrate of mercury—taking care to use a glass brush for this purpose, and drying the part afterwards with blotting-paper. If W. J. B. should not be in perfect health, she had better consult a medical man, as possibly a course of medicine might materially help to relieve her of what appears to be so troublesome and annoying to her. 2. Why not try putting a little more oil to the wax? Probably oil of almonds would answer your purpose better than olive-oil. W. S.—1. The author of "Supernatural Religion" is not known. 2. We know of no book in which the teachings of Darwin have been efficiently controverted, but the non-Christian inferences derived therefrom have been combated very intelligently by Professor Wace, Dr. Sexton, and Dr. Lionel Beale.

## NOTICE.

NOW READY, PRICE SIXPENCE,  
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AND SOMETHING SUITABLE FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

## NOTICE.

The Fifth Volume of HOUSEHOLD WORDS, containing Nos. 106 to 131, bound in cloth, uniform with Vols. 1, 2, 3, and 4, can now be had, price 4s. 6d. Also Binding Cases (including Title and Index), price 1s. 6d. Title and Index may also be obtained separately, price 1d.

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All applications for Advertisements to be addressed to Mr. Joseph Smith, 24, Great New Street, E.C.



"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 146.]

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Anne Moroney.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

BALLINAKILL is a straggling, pretty town in the south of Ireland. It is built on a calm, even-flowing, willow-fringed river. It has a fine old church, a picturesque mill, a comfortable rectory.

There are a good many gentry in and about the village; people with good old families, and small rent-rolls, which grow smaller each year as discontent and disaffection spread through the country.

Driving into the town, down the crooked, hilly street that leads from the railway-station, the first building of any importance you must notice is a large, rambling, ivy-covered house, just over the bridge. The house proper is a square, comfortable, unpretentious block of an ancient tower, which are the pride and glory of Mr. Moroney's heart, and of which, if you have patience to listen to him, he will tell you many a thrilling story.

The Moroneys are the poorest, and far the proudest of all the county gentry. "One of their name" has lived from time immemorial in the old house by the river. Once on a time in the good old days great part of the village belonged to them, but those times are over for ever, and now everyone in Ballinakill knows that they have hard work to pay their way and make both ends meet.

The present Mrs. Moroney had been a Miss O'Brien, a great beauty without a penny of fortune, and Dennis Moroney, who had been cautioned times without end that if he wished to do any good for himself he must marry someone with money, had of course fallen wildly in love with her the very first time he had met her at a hunt-ball; had fallen in love with her and married her out of hand, in spite of everyone, and had, in spite of debts, and difficulties, and bitter poverty, never repented it. He was a loyal, true-hearted gentleman, easy-going, and good-tempered, and, having made his choice, he would abide by it; and indeed Kate Moroney was a good wife after her lights. Poor woman! hers was not an easy life.

Dennis, like every Moroney that ever lived, was extravagant. He had not the faintest idea of the value of money; all the pinching and scraping, the perpetual striving to join those two ends, that yet could never be induced comfortably to meet, fell on his wife.

She grew sharp, and worn, and middle-aged before her time. The beauty which had made her the toast of the county twenty years ago was now a thing of the past. She was a very proud woman, tenfold prouder than her husband. Had she had a son she would have schemed and planned to get him on in the world; having but a daughter, all her pride and all her ambition centred in her.

Her father's darling, and her mother's pride, who yet could never quite forgive her for not being a son, perhaps that is the best way to describe Anne Moroney at this time.

It was post-hour at Ballinakill, a delicious morning in late September. The sky was clear blue, between the yellowing boughs of the five tall poplars that skirted the garden on the riverside; the crisp bright sunshine was flooding all the shabby breakfast-parlour where Mrs. Moroney sat over her letters, a more than usual pucker on her high forehead.

"Any bad news, Kate?" Honest Dennis seldom had any letters; since he had been married he had let his wife manage all his correspondence.

Mrs. Moroney glanced towards the sunshiny window, where her daughter was standing looking out at the sparkling river, perfectly indifferent to her mother's correspondence; she knew by experience that there was seldom anything very interesting in these documents. "I have had a letter from Mrs. Hewson—Sarah Crowe that was."

"I remember her; a fine dashing girl she used to be," Dennis always had a great admiration for a fine woman.

His wife glanced at him rather repressively.

"She wants to know if I can spare Anne to her for a visit."

"Oh, mother!" Anne was all awake now. She turned from the window, a soft flush on her smooth cheeks, her eyes radiant, her fair hair shining in the sunlight. One forgot to notice how plain, even to shabbiness, was her old blue gown. Is it not Oliver Wendell Holmes who has said, and truly, "that almost anything will do to cover young and graceful curves"? and Anne's "curves" were simply delicious in their soft youthfulness. "Oh, mother!" she said, clasping her hands in a little ecstasy.

To the girl of eighteen, who never all her life had been more than five or six miles from Ballinakill, the prospect of a visit to Dublin was almost too delightful.

"You would like to go?" her mother said thoughtfully, but there was no need of an answer, no mistaking the radiant young face.

The mother sighed a little as she laid down her letters, and began to pour out tea. Was she remembering and regretting her own vanished youth?

"It is kind of her to ask you. She is your godmother, you know."

Anne did know, but the fact had not made much impression on her. She had never seen Mrs. Hewson, that she could remember.

"She and I were great friends once on a time," said her mother; "but—"

"Let me see," it was Mr. Moroney's turn to sigh now, "her husband was a very well-to-do man, wasn't he?"

"Yes," his wife answered; "he made his money in trade. We all thought it rather a come-down for Sarah Crowe to marry him; the Crowes have always been very respectable."

"I am not sure that we did not all make a mistake, my love. These ideas have quite gone out of the world."

"So much the worse for the world," Mrs. Moroney answered severely. "I should be sorry to see a child of mine marry into trade."

Before Mrs. Moroney's eyes rose a vivid picture of the man she would like her daughter to marry—a man of old family, of irreproachable name, with a fine old house, and, though this was a very secondary matter in her eyes, a good rent-roll. Such a man she had had in her eyes ever since Anne had left the schoolroom, and it was the thought of him that made her so averse to letting her daughter out of her sight.

"The child has never had a holiday," said her father. "We'll miss her; but I think she might go."

Anne was her father's darling, and, if it was a sacrifice to let her go, he was quite repaid when the girl came round, and put her fair arms round his neck, and kissed and stroked his grey hair.

"Yes, I suppose she may as well go," said her mother gloomily. And so it was settled, and the letter that decided Anne's fate was written and posted, and then arose the question of ways and means.

Mr. Moroney discovered that he had all along intended to sell a heifer just at this time, and so could supply some money for the necessary outfit.

It was too great an occasion to trust to the Ballinakill dress-maker who had always made Anne's dresses. A visit must be paid to the county town ten miles away. Frocks and bonnets, ribbons and gloves, must be chosen.

Mrs. Moroney was, as I have said, a proud woman. Since her daughter was to go, she should, as far as possible, have everything suitable to her position. What Mrs. Hewson thought of the sufficiency of this wonderful wardrobe afterwards is neither here nor there. Grafton Street and Ballinakill have different ways of looking at things.

"Just fancy, I am going away to-morrow for six whole weeks! Only think, Mr. Levers—six weeks!"

Anne Moroney was walking down by the river under the whispering poplars, "saying good-bye to it," as she said to her father before she came out.

It seemed to her that a great crisis had come in her little world. The old life was over, the first volume of her fair maidenhood closed up and put by on the shelf; and so she had come out to say good-bye to the calm, even-flowing river, with its black coal-barges gliding along under the wide arch of the bridge, its blue-grey willows, its stately poplars.

Anne knew and loved every inch of this river. There was a little wicket-gate leading out from the end of the garden on to the path, and here she often came out to dream her maiden dreams. Someone else, too, was fond of walking by the river-bank this summer. To be sure, it was a short cut from Levers Court to Ballinakill—at least, so John Levers would say. He had scarcely yet acknowledged, even to himself, that the hope of meeting a slim, blue-robed figure with eager, innocent eyes should have first suggested to him the advantage of saving half a mile of high-road.

John Levers was a tall, grave man of thirty-eight, or thereabouts, with stooping shoulders and kind grey eyes. When I say that he was Mrs. Moroney's ideal son-in-law, I have said enough for his position and social standing. He had been the great "catch" of Ballinakill any time these fifteen years, but he had never shown a moment's preference for any girl until at a Christmas party, last year, he had met Anne Moroney.

It was all up with him from that moment. He had vowed then that that slim, childish girl, and no other, should be his wife, mistress of the stately old Court, and lady of his heart.



He was anything but a conceited man, but he knew his own position, he knew how poor the little family at the Bridge House was, and he did not apprehend any great opposition, not at least when he was away from Anne; but when once he found himself in her sweet presence, all his confidence forsook him, he forgot all his own advantages, and saw himself as he was, grave, and grey, and middle-aged, and not apt at those pretty speeches girls like.

And now she was going away for six weeks! Poor John Levers! Like Anne, he thought anything may happen in six weeks, only his were all fears, hers all hopes.

"Just think, Mr. Levers," went on the girl's fresh voice, quite unconscious of the storm in her companion's breast, "I have never been away from home all my life."

"No," John answered lamely; "how they will miss you."

Should he speak now? he was wondering—should he

Put it to the touch, and win or lose it all?

"Yes," Anne was grave a moment. "Father will miss me; he likes to have me with him. You must go in sometimes, Mr. Levers, and cheer him up."

"I could not make up for you."

"No," said Anne candidly; "still, you would be better than no one."

And then her momentary gravity forsook her, and she chattered on of all she hoped to see and do in town.

"You are very glad to go?" said John.

If she had not been such a child, she must have heard the pain in the man's voice; but Anne would as soon have suspected the river, or the old grey bridge itself, of any feeling about her departure as John Levers.

"Of course I am glad; everyone likes to go away sometimes."

"And you don't think what we are to do without you all this time."

She looked up at him then, with bewildered grey eyes.

John stopped and stood in front of her. There was no one in sight, the last barge had just disappeared round the bend of the river. Now was his time. He stooped, and took the little hand in its shabby glove.

Anne remembered guiltily a hole in one of the fingers she had forgotten to mend. Would he see it?

She would not have been much comforted had she known that John saw the hole well enough, and vowed in his honest heart that his darling, if she would be his, should never more need to wear mended gloves.

"Anne, I can't let you go without a word, without a promise. Listen, dear. You are very young, I know; I meant to have waited a little before I spoke." He was still holding her hand, and Anne was looking up at him with wide, wondering grey eyes. "Anne, you are going away, and I must tell you now how I love you; how I have loved you ever since that Christmas party at Mrs. Odell's—you remember?"

Anne did remember that party, and how she had enjoyed it; but she could not say that she had any special recollection of John Levers; she had classed him with her father almost, at all events with the elderly people. Harry Odell home from Woolwich, with a word and a laugh for everyone, was much more in her line; but she was beginning to understand. The sweet colour flushed up in her cheeks, a look almost of fright came into her eyes.

"I love you so much, Anne, and I want you for my wife."

Now Anne was innocent, but she was not foolish; she knew quite well in what estimation Mr. Levers, of the Court, was held in the county, and she was quite capable of appreciating the honour he had done her, but yet—but yet—

"Don't look so frightened, Anne darling, there is nothing to be frightened at." John Levers's voice was very tender, his eyes were very kind, but the girl standing in front of him looked almost scared. "I know how much older I am than you, but, trust me, I will love you better than any young man. Anne, have you no word for me? Will you put your hand in mine, and say that you will love me and marry me?"

"Oh no, no, I cannot."

She shrank from him visibly, and John's face paled.

"Why not? Could you not manage to care a little for me?"

"But a little would not do."

Anne shook her fair head sagely. John smiled. He did not much believe in her refusal.

"I would be content with it at first, and it would grow to more," he said confidently; but Anne thought she knew better, and she shook her head again.

"Your father and mother would not, I think, disapprove of me."

She knew that too. How, indeed, was it possible they should disapprove? But after all was not she the principal person to be consulted? She had read a few novels, and she had dreamt a little,

as all girls do, of the Prince Charming who was to come for her some day. She was quite sure she was not, and never could be, in love with plain, middle-aged John Levers. And yet, if she had not been going away, it is more than probable that she would not have found it in her heart to say him "No!"

She was a soft, yielding girl, to whom it was horrible to have to give pain to anyone. But then there was that delightful visit, the balls and concerts, the rides and drives she had been promised. How was she to enjoy any one of these good things if her liberty were to be taken from her? Fancy if she were to go up to town engaged to be married to Mr. Levers! If, indeed—horrible thought!—under such circumstances her mother would allow her to go at all!

"Oh no, no, please, Mr. Levers," she cried, and John let go her hands, and turned away. Her refusal to love him was very bitter to him. He was not conceited, but he knew, could not have helped knowing, that there were very few girls in the county who would have said no to him. Why was it just this one on whom he must set his heart?

And yet he did not altogether despair; she was so young, she did not know her own mind, and he loved her so much. Surely—

"Please, Mr. Levers," she had said, laying her little hand on his arm, and John had turned back again.

"Don't cry," he had said. "Don't cry, it makes me feel like a brute; but, Anne, I can't take that answer all at once. You don't know how I love you. If you won't marry me, then I will marry no other woman; but at all events I will not give up hope yet, not till I hear of your being married to another man."

Anne flushed softly. She was not sure that she meant him to have no hope. She was frightened and bewildered, that was the principal feeling she was conscious of; bewildered as to the magnitude of this thing that had happened to her, frightened as to what her mother might have to say about it.

They had reached the little gate leading from the river walk by this, and John Levers felt it was time for him to say good-bye.

He had come down this walk this summer once too often for his peace of mind, if this was to be the end of it all.

He stopped and looked down at her.

"And I shall not see you again for six weeks?" he said sorrowfully, looking at her as if he must imprint every line of the sweet girlish face and figure on his memory.

"No," said Anne, with something very like a throb of joy.

"It will seem a long time. Will you forget us all down here?"

"No," she said again.

"And when you come home, Anne, I shall try my luck again."

"Are you—will you—?" Anne scarcely knew how to say what was in her mind. "Must you tell mother?" she blurted out at last with crimson cheeks.

Now John Levers knew well enough that between Anne and her mother was not that perfect union that is desirable between mother and daughter. He also knew that Anne was timid to a fault, and that Mrs. Moroney could be both harsh and severe where she conceived herself to have reason for being so. That she would consider her daughter's refusal of his very eligible self a good cause for anger he was afraid, and also that in her first wrath it would go hard with poor little Anne.

"Not unless you wish it," he answered. "It seems to me there is no use speaking. I am afraid she will be, perhaps—sorry."

"Yes," Anne knew that.

"Six weeks will soon be over, and then—why then I will try again. Good-bye now, my dear, Heaven bless you!"

John Levers's voice was scarcely quite steady as he pressed the little hands closely in his. Poor John! He was a good, true-hearted man. What a pity that he was grave, and grey, and middle-aged, or, rather, what a pity that foolish little girls of eighteen will always judge by the outside!

## CHAPTER II.

"My dear child, how pleased I am to see you." It was late on the September evening when the Ballinakill train got into Kingsbridge.

Anne was dazzled and bewildered with the lights, and the bustle, and the noise, but she had scarcely set her foot on the platform when she was seized in a comfortable grasp.

"I know you must be Anne Moroney. Now, then, for your luggage. Here, John! How glad I am to see you!" And amidst these voluble exclamations of delight, Anne was borne away to Mrs. Hewson's cosy brougham.

Mrs. Hewson was a stout, brisk, comfortable-looking woman, as good-natured and unaffected as it was possible to be. Her husband had been, as Mrs. Moroney expressed it, "in trade," and at his death had left her very well off indeed. She had a pretty house in a pleasant suburban road, had carriages and horses—everything the heart of woman could desire. She would have been immensely amused had she known the pity her old schoolfellow extended to her.

One drop of bitterness certainly there was in her cup, as there is in everyone's. In her case it was that she had no child to lavish all her love and care upon.

At first she had fretted a good deal over this, but she was not a woman to waste her time in useless repinings, and so, since Heaven had seen fit to deny her the blessing of real motherhood, why, she did the next best thing, and was second mother to all the young people of her acquaintance. Little children, boys and girls home from school, come-out young ladies, young men at college, one and all loved "dear Mrs. Hewson." She was never tired of planning pleasures and surprises for them, and she had her reward.

One great failing, it must be confessed, she had. She was apt to forget, or, at least, to lose sight of, people if they were not just in her way. And so it had come to pass that for so many years she had almost forgotten the existence of her little country god-daughter, but she was resolved to make up for it now.

"You darling child!" she said in a little comfortable rapture that evening, as they sat over their tea in the pretty drawing-room; "it shall not be my fault if you do not enjoy yourself."

"Positively the prettiest girl I ever saw in my life. Kate Carew is nothing to her," declared Mrs. Sandilands, Mrs. Hewson's bosom friend, some time later. "That little air of simplicity she has is so delightful."

"But it is not an air," said Mrs. Hewson; "it is quite genuine. I don't believe she has an idea how charmingly pretty she is; she is the most absolutely simple girl I ever came across."

"That won't do her any harm. She'll learn soon enough. All the young men are raving about her. I rather think," and Mrs. Sandilands nodded her head sagaciously, "that young Brookes—"

Mrs. Hewson looked wise and said nothing. Like most good-natured, motherly women, she was a great matchmaker, and if fortune had indeed favoured Anne so far as to bring such a prize as young Brookes to her feet, why, she was a lucky girl; but Mrs. Hewson was too wise to commit herself yet.

"He is a nice, pleasant, unaffected young fellow," she said cautiously.

"And with more money than he knows what to do with. They are doing a tremendous business."

"I don't know if the old couple would like Anne's going to live in London."

"Pshaw! my dear Mrs. Hewson, how could they help liking it? She's a pretty girl, but then such men as Richard Brookes don't drop into girls' mouths every day," which was true enough, if somewhat coarse.

This little conversation took place when Anne had been about three weeks in Dublin.

Three golden, beautiful weeks they had seemed to the child. To say she was happy is to say nothing. Everything was so new, and fresh, and delightful to her. Her letters home were simply ecstatic.

Mrs. Hewson was so good, so kind.

The girl had no notion of the benevolent plans and projects towards herself which occupied her godmother's thoughts; but she had all a pretty girl's pleasure in pretty things, and she honestly enjoyed and was grateful for the pretty new gowns, the dainty gloves, and odds and ends Mrs. Hewson showered upon her, and the like of which she had never possessed in all her life.

Sometimes, but not often, when she first came up, the remembrance of John Levers's grave, kind face would come to her as they had parted that day under the poplars.

Poor Mr. Levers! she was very sorry for him; and then she would remember guiltily that he was to come to her again when she went home; but that was a long time off yet. And then, after the first few days, she ceased to think of him at all, for Richard Brookes came, and the world was changed for Anne.

He was so different from anyone she had ever seen before—this rich young fellow, with his fair, handsome face and careless, debonaire ways.

"By Jove! she is the greatest beauty I ever saw in my life," he had cried the first night he saw her. "Who is she?"

He had lost no time in getting an introduction to her, and from that very first moment had devoted himself to her in an unmistakable manner.

His friends had shrugged their shoulders, and wondered if Dick was in earnest, and if so, what old Brookes would say to his son and heir throwing himself away on a girl without a penny?

But little cared Dick what anyone said or thought. If ever any young man was in earnest, he was. He had always had his own way, and he meant to have it now. What was the use of all his money if it could not win him what he wanted? Of course the governor would be a bit cut up at first, but when he saw Anne he would forget all that.

Handsome Dick was a "brave wooer." They were a pretty sight these lovers in the shortening October days. Anne lived in a

dream of happiness; Dick used to think sometimes it was good to stay away, to see the soft colour flush up in her cheeks when he came—the glad, welcoming light in her grey eyes.

He was her hero, her prince among men; she looked on to no future; she had no thought of home or mother, or of her half-promise to John Levers.

Nothing asked, nothing granted. Just two hearts perfectly happy in the consciousness of each other's love, indifferent to aught else beside. Many people will tell you this is the perfect time of love, but all perfection must come to an end, and so did this.

"I have to go back to London to-morrow," said young Brookes gloomily one afternoon. Mrs. Hewson was not in from her drive. Anne had a slight cold, and so had been left at home.

Very cosy and pretty the drawing-room looked. The firelight danced over the crimson tea-service, all in readiness for its mistress, over pictures and flowers, and dainty odds and ends, over Anne's bright head as she lay back in a deep armchair.

"I must go back to London."

"Go back to London!" the girl repeated vaguely, all the soft colour flushing up in her cheeks. Had he told her the sun would cease to shine to-morrow, and the world be in darkness, it could not have been more awful to her.

"Yes, properly speaking, I ought to have gone last week. I came over on business, and it's been done long ago; and my father is writing for me. Anne darling"—Dick Brookes had left his chair somehow, and was kneeling on the soft rug, his handsome head on a level with the girl's—"Anne darling, do you know how I love you? Will you tell me that you will try to love me well enough to marry me?"

Try to love him! It seemed to Anne as he kissed her lips, that she must have loved him all her life.

And Mrs. Hewson, coming in half an hour later, found them still there, sitting in the firelight, with happy faces that told their own tale, even if Dick had not at once come to meet her, saying in his bright boyish way:

"Mrs. Hewson, Anne has promised to marry me. Her own mother is not here, so you must wish us joy for her."

And Mrs. Hewson, even as she kissed the girl's sweet, shy face, was conscious of a little undefinable pang of something—was it fear, or was it only great love and tenderness for these two young things setting out on their journey of life?

"What do you think your father will say? I suppose it will be all right." It was next morning. Dick had called in directly after breakfast. He was leaving by the night-boat, and Anne had gone upstairs to put on her things for a walk. Mrs. Hewson seized the opportunity for a little talk. "He will be quite satisfied, you think?"

Dick reddened a little.

"Well, to tell the truth, Mrs. Hewson, I am afraid he won't."

"You think he will object?"

"I know if he could once see Anne it would be all right," said the young lover confidently; "but the fact of it is my father thinks a great deal of money."

"And Anne has not a penny," put in Mrs. Hewson.

"And does not want it," answered Dick promptly. "I know quite well that she is a thousand times too good for me."

"I don't say that, but she is a darling. It's a pity; but I suppose you are independent of your father?"

"No, that's just it; unfortunately I am not. I have my salary like the others, and he makes me a good allowance. Of course, if I were to marry, he has always given me to understand that he would do something for me."

"That is, if you marry someone whom he approves of?"

"Just so; but, dear Mrs. Hewson, don't look so melancholy. He'll cut up rough about it at first, but he'll grow reconciled to it, and when he sees Anne he must fall in love with her; no one could resist her."

Yes, that was all very fine, and she was very charming, Mrs. Hewson thought, as the girl came in dressed for her walk, in her plain, tight-fitting serge gown and fur cape, all the bright little tendrils of hair curling under her black hat, the soft, loving light in her grey eyes. Few men could be hard-hearted enough to resist her; but then old Mr. Brookes had never seen her, and Mrs. Hewson was beginning to be afraid that a penniless Irish girl would scarcely be an acceptable daughter-in-law to the wealthy merchant. But at all events, she consoled herself by thinking, Anne's people must be pleased. Dick had lost no time in writing to Mrs. Moroney, Anne sitting by him, her bright head against his shoulder as he wrote, certainly not thereby helping much in the composition.

But Dick wrote his letter with very few misgivings. He loved Anne, she loved him. His father would be brought in time to give his consent. This was the substance of it.

He was very thoroughly in love, and he was not more conceited than young fellows of his age usually are; but he had always had what he wanted, and he meant to have it now.

"Good-bye, my darling, good-bye. You will not forget me; you have got my address, and you will write. I shall let you know about my father at once; and, Anne love, I shall come over to Ballinakill for Christmas, if you will have me. Why, Anne, Anne," for the girl was clinging to him, holding him as if she could never let him go again. She had not thought it would be so hard to say good-bye. It seemed to her that she could not realise her life without him now. Dick was more moved and touched than he could say by her sweet sorrow. What had he done, he asked himself for the hundredth time, to deserve such love?

He was not a specially religious young fellow, but he did vow that night, as he walked back to his club, that with Heaven's help she should never repent her sweet trust.

"Come home at once; your father will meet the four o'clock train on Friday. Let there be no mistake."

Such was Mrs. Moroney's telegram, received on Thursday night, the same night that was carrying Dick Brookes away from Dublin.

Anne grew a little white as she read this, and a bewildered look came into her eyes. There was not, as I have said, much sympathy between her and her mother; but now at such a time, when she had told her all about Dick, surely she might have found some word to say.

"What does it mean?" Anne asked of Mrs. Hewson. "Do you think she is angry?"

"Angry! how could she be angry?" good Mrs. Hewson answered, with all the more decision because she did not feel quite sure. "I told her all about Mr. Brookes myself. As you met him here I am in a measure responsible, and Dick wrote—"

"Yes; oh, Mrs. Hewson, you don't think she could say no?"

"You foolish child!"—Mrs. Hewson kissed the sweet, wistful face—"there is absolutely nothing against it. Young Brookes is, or will be, very well off, and he is a gentleman in every sense of the word. There is no reason, unless, indeed, there was some one else."

Anne flushed guiltily under her friend's enquiring eye. She had forgotten all about John Levers.

"Then there is some one, Anne?"

"He did ask me if I would marry him, the day before I came up, but I could not; I told him so."

"Does your mother approve of him?"

"I think she is very fond of him. He said she would be sorry. He is old," pursued Anne irrelevantly, "almost as old as father."

"And what did she say when she heard you had refused him?"

Again Anne flushed redly.

"I did not tell her. He said it was no matter, and it was only the night before I came here. Oh, Mrs. Hewson, you don't think it was wrong?" and the tears came into the girl's eyes.

"Girls ought to have no secrets from their mothers," said Mrs. Hewson with a little rebuke in her voice.

What kind of woman, she wondered much, must Kate O'Brien have grown into to have failed, as she so evidently had, to win her daughter's trust and confidence.

If Heaven had blessed her with such a daughter, the childless woman thought, would it not have broken her heart to feel that she had secrets from her?

And so Anne was driven to the station next day, in the dull November morning.

It was scarcely six weeks since she had come up, looking out with bright, bewildered eyes at the new world opening before her.

Scarcely six weeks, and what experiences had been hers; what a prospect had opened before her! She was going back to her old home blessed and crowned, as it seemed to her, above all other women, with Dick's love, chosen by him out of all the world.

How she clung to motherly Mrs. Hewson as she said good-bye! It was in her house she had been so happy. She was the last link with Dick.

"I could not have believed I would miss the child so much," that good woman thought, sitting the same afternoon over her solitary cup of tea. "I wish—I wish I could be sure."

### CHAPTER III.

"AND NOW, pray, what is the meaning of all this?"

Mrs. Moroney stood over her daughter in the little shabby sitting-room. She had received her frigidly, she had made no demonstration of pleasure at having her home. Anne knew that she was judged and condemned in her mother's eyes, and under their cold scrutiny she felt a child again, shrinking, and shy, and silent.

It was just so her mother had looked at her when she had been convicted of some childish misdemeanour. Life here in the old house, with the visible signs of poverty at every turn, was a different

thing from life in Mrs. Hewson's daintily-furnished, softly-coloured rooms. It was only a few hours since she had left town, but already beauty, and light, and brightness seemed to have slipped away from her, leaving nothing but the cold, bare realities of life.

Poor little Anne! she was but eighteen; she had been repressed all her life; she was tired, and weary, and disappointed. What would she not have given to have thrown herself into her mother's arms, and from that safe shelter to have told her everything! But how could she speak of Dick under those cold, searching eyes? And there was no help to be looked for from her father, she knew. He had kissed her almost guiltily, and had hurried away to shut himself up in his study. Dennis was but a broken reed for anyone to lean on.

"What is this nonsense, Anne? Don't look at me in that way, child; I suppose you can speak, and tell me all about it."

"Oh, mother, we do care for each other so much!"

"So you think," said Mrs. Moroney grimly. "I must say I trusted to Mrs. Hewson to take better care of you. How long have you known this young man, Anne?"

"Three weeks," faltered the girl.

"Three weeks! Truly you must have a large acquaintance with each other's characters. He has written to me, or to your father—it's all the same. I wrote to him last night."

"Oh, mother!"

All the colour had left Anne's cheeks now—she gazed at her mother with piteous eyes.

"Yes," went on that lady composedly. She did not mean to be cruel; she was acting for the best as she understood it; "he asked for an early answer; it was better he should be told at once."

"What did you tell him?"

"Can you have a doubt? I told him I could not possibly sanction such an engagement, that your father and I had other views for you. It will be a surprise to him, I dare say," and Mrs. Moroney's thin lips curled. "He does not seem to have much doubt as to his reception, although he candidly acknowledges that he may have some difficulty in reconciling his father to his choice; I think I have as much right to be particular about a husband for my daughter as Mr. Brookes, be he ever so wealthy, about a wife for his son. A tea-merchant!" It is impossible to describe the intonation of Mrs. Moroney's voice as she uttered these three words. "I have made no secret of my feelings, Anne. I have often said no child of mine should marry into trade—vulgar, purse-proud city folk, and the young man writes with such assurance. He has nothing of his own, he is quite dependent on his father, who, forsooth, may not approve of his choice."

"Oh, mother, mother!" Anne rose and stretched out her arms to the implacable figure. "Mother, I love him so; you will not send him away!"

"You must allow me to judge, Anne; you think you love him now. In six months you will have forgotten his very existence. I did think a daughter of mine would have more pride than to wish to go into any family where she is disapproved of."

"But he said he could win his father round in time."

"Yes, and we are to wait until his lordship chooses to signify his consent. No, Anne, the refusal ought always to come from the lady's side, and so it has."

Much more to this effect said Mrs. Moroney, while Anne sat before her, white, and tearless, and miserable.

She did not yet realise the edict that had gone forth against her; she had never resisted her mother all her life, and she did not know how to begin to do so now.

She lay awake all that night in wide-eyed misery, but in the morning, as she dressed herself, a little light of hope came to her. There would be a letter from Dick. He would not suffer himself to be sent away like that, he loved her too well; and she smiled reassuringly at her own pale face in the glass. And even as she smiled, the post had come in downstairs, and Mrs. Moroney was laying a letter directed in a bold, dashing, man's hand to Anne on the fire.

Have we not all known at some time of our lives the sickness of suspense, of watching for something that does not come, that fell upon this poor child's heart now?

She had trusted Dick so utterly. All her whole heart's love had gone out to him, and now was this to be the end of it all? To rise every morning with hope growing fainter, to go to bed every night with that sickening, dull sense of disappointment, of nothing left in life worth living for.

Even Mrs. Moroney, convinced as she was that she was acting for the best, sometimes felt a little pang of pity, but it was quickly quenched in anger that a child of hers could be so wanting in pride.

It was about ten days after Anne's home-coming, that her mother came into the old schoolroom, where the girl was sitting crouching over a fragment of fire.

"I have heard from Mr. Brookes, Anne," she said with almost a radiant expression of countenance. Had the woman a heart of stone that she could be unmoved by the sudden light that shone in the poor child's face? "A most satisfactory letter. He quite agrees with me that everything is best at an end; he cannot marry without his father's consent, you cannot without yours. I am glad he takes it so sensibly."

Anne opened her lips to speak, but no words came forth. She half stretched out her hand for the letter. How could she believe that Dick—her Dick—had forsaken her, if she could not read his own words, but it was no part of Mrs. Moroney's tactics to let her have that letter. There were sundry expressions in it which it would not do for Anne to read.

She folded it up, and put it in her pocket, and then came and kissed her daughter cheerfully.

"So now, Anne, that is all over, and we'll forget all about it. After all, he could not have cared much about you when he could give you up so easily. It is really Mrs. Hewson I blame for not taking better care of you."

"He could not have cared much, or he would not have given her up so easily." How those words rang in Anne's ears!

Ah, was it not true? She would not have given him up; she could not tell that that first letter, which had been laid on the red embers, had been followed by a second and a third, and that it was only when wounded, outraged, stung to the quick by her apparent willingness to forget, that Dick had written that bitter letter of renunciation.

And so it was all over! That one beautiful, perfect love-dream. What was left to her now for the rest of her life? the child thought drearily, as she went about the shabby house with a weary, listless step. Her father was more tender than ever to her, but he made no attempt to oppose his wife's will; he was nervously anxious to avoid all allusion to her visit, and what had happened there. It seemed to him that if no one spoke of it she must forget soon, not knowing, foolish man, that it is the things we do not speak of that eat into our very heart's core, that suck out our very life-blood.

And so the dreary winter days slipped by, and scarcely a day passed that John Levers did not find his way up to the Bridge House, to talk to Mr. Moroney, to look at Anne with gravely adoring eyes. It was the old story:

My mither pressed me sair, my feyther did na speak,  
But he looked in my face and my heart was like to break.

What did it matter—what did anything matter? Anne thought, when John Levers came again at Christmas, and asked her to marry him.

I fear that a great many strong-minded young ladies will despise my poor heroine, will say that having once loved, she ought to have loved for ever. No doubt that is true, and were I writing a story, as children say, "out of my head," Anne should be as constant and devoted as heart could wish; but this is a true sketch, and I must draw her as she was, a soft, tender, timid girl, who, if she had but known that Dick remembered her, that he loved her through everything, could have been very strong, and true, and devoted, but who, failing that, had neither courage or strength left her for anything.

If it would make John Levers happy, if it would please her father, what right had she to hold back? What did it matter? Married or single, Dick was as far away from her.

People said that Miss Moroney looked more like a ghost than a living girl, the morning she was married—a bleak, chill, February morning, with a threatening of snow in the air.

The little ivy-covered church was crammed to see this marriage; girls wondered, and their mothers shook their heads.

There was something wrong about it, they said. But at all events, whatever might be thought of the bride's looks, there was no doubt of the satisfaction in her mother's face, the pride and adoring tenderness in her bridegroom's. Poor John Levers, and poor Anne!

#### CHAPTER IV.

A STILL, sweet, April morning, the whole air full of the perfume of pale starry primroses, of violets, of the budding fir-trees, for which Levers Court is famed.

Through the wood, walking noiselessly on the thick carpet of brown fir-needles, a girl is coming, tall and slim and fair, looking the very spirit of the woods in her light spring gown, with her colourless face and pathetic, sorrowful eyes.

A young man, coming quickly round the corner, the bright sunshine full on his fair, handsome face, gives a muttered exclamation of horror as he sees her.

She has not lifted her eyes. He has come quite close before she hears him; and then all at once light, and hope, and colour leap back to her face, and as he opens his arms, she goes into them straight as a tired child to its mother, and they stand there

together at last under the trees, forgetful of everything but each other.

It is Anne who remembers first all that has come and gone since then, and who draws herself back with a shudder as she lifts a piteous face to him—her handsome young lover.

"Oh, Dick, Dick," she cries despairingly, "why did you not come before? Why did you not write?"

"I wrote so often, three or four times, and got no answer; and then I had a letter from your mother, written, she said, with your full consent, saying that everything was at an end between us. Oh, Anne, how could you have given me up so easily?"

"I never heard from you, never once," the girl breathed rather than spoke.

Dick Brookes's face grew very dark for a moment, and then immediately cleared.

"Then you did not forget me! Oh, Anne darling, it is not too late!"

But Anne gave a great cry, and slipped away from him down on the damp earth.

"Not too late! Oh, Dick, did you not know? I am married—I was married two months ago."

The soft April wind sighed on through the fir-tree tops, while the girl lay there, stricken to the earth, and the young man stood above her pale and stern.

"Married!" he said at last, breaking the silence.

"Yes. Oh, Dick, Dick, forgive me; I thought you had forgotten, you never wrote, and it did not seem worth while. But it will be soon over now; I do not think I shall live much longer. Look," and she stood up before him, pushing back her sleeve and showing her fair, wasted arm; "I think I shall be glad to die."

Dick set his teeth hard.

"Is he—is he kind to you?" he said.

"Kind—yes, he is kind, too kind. Poor John!"

"Oh, Anne, if you had waited. If you had trusted me. My love, my darling, how can I leave you like this?"

Something very like a sob broke from the strong man. For one wild moment a temptation came to Dick Brookes. Why should he not take her away—anywhere? She belonged to him first, and he was a free agent now; his father was dead; this marriage of hers was a mockery. He would take her away somewhere, what did it matter so long as they were together?

But the pale purity of the gentle face raised to his rebuked that thought. No, come what might, no breath of wrong should touch her.

"Dick, you have not said yet that you forgive me; and then it must be good-bye. They told me——"

"Heaven forgive them!" muttered Dick. "Yes, I forgive you, my darling, if there is anything to forgive."

"Then it must be good-bye, Dick. I cannot bear much more. Dick, you will say good-bye to me and go."

He took her in his arms, and their lips met in one long last kiss. Surely even Mrs. Moroney, could she have seen the white misery of those two young faces, would have rued her work.

"Mother, what have you done with the letters Dick wrote to me here last November—three letters?"

Young Mrs. Levers stood before her mother, looking in the spring twilight like some beautiful, pale ghost. There was not a vestige of colour in her cheeks; her eyes were blazing darkly.

Mrs. Moroney shivered as she looked up at her.

Times were changed now. She had recognised long since that she had no longer any authority over her daughter. Since that day, five months ago now, a wall of ice had been raised between them. The greatest stranger had more of a welcome at Levers Court than the woman who had so schemed and planned to put her child there.

"I met him to-day, mother. His father is dead; he had come here to marry me; he never gave me up. Mother, what did you do with those letters?"

She could not lie to those blazing eyes. The woman raised a deprecating hand.

"I did it for the best, Anne."

"Did you burn them?"

"Yes, Anne. It was for your sake."

"Mother, look at me." The girl came close, and stood before her. She had grown since her marriage. There was a new dignity and beauty in her despair, different from the crushed, heart-broken girl of five months before. "Look at me, mother. You have broken my heart; you have spoiled my life. Are you satisfied with your work? It is not your fault that I did not go with Dick to-day. When I die, you may know it is your doing. No, don't touch me; don't come near me. I am going now."

The lilacs were blossoming about Levers Court, and the May was

white in the hedges, while the young mistress, who was scarcely more than a bride, lay a-dying.

Everything was done for her that money or love could suggest.

"There is a curious failure of vital power," said the grave town doctor, who had been summoned to her bedside.

The case baffled his experience. So young, so wealthy, and apparently so beloved! Had she not everything to make life precious?

"Has she not got a mother or any near relation to be with her?" he asked compassionately.

But Anne had shaken her head, and had grown so excited when her mother was mentioned, that no one had dared bring her.

Poor Dennis sat with her hour after hour, trying to persuade himself that she was better. Poor man! he had never quite understood it all, but he blamed himself now for not having taken better care of his darling.

"Anne, my dearest, you will not leave me?" grave, cold John Levers prayed as he sat by his wife's bed, patient, devoted, unwearingly.

And Anne did not shrink from him now as she used. She seemed quieter, more at rest when he was near her.

"John," she said to him one evening, "you have been very good to me."

"My darling, who could not be good to you? You have not known how I love you."

"And I have nearly hated you sometimes. Oh, John, I ought never to have married you, but I did not care then. May I tell you? If you could hold me up a little—I am so tired."

And then in her weak, dying voice she told him what she had never breathed before, the story of Dick Brookes.

"I loved him so," she said dreamily; "I wonder if you care as much for me. I think my heart died then, nothing seemed to matter. John, I have tried to bear it, but I was not strong enough. John, you are not angry with me?"

"Angry, my darling! If you had only told me!"

"I think I might have come to care for you, John, if I had stayed at home that time, if I had never seen him. You are so good, but I could not forget him. I did try, and that day I met him in the wood, my poor Dick! He did not know I was married. I knew then I had not forgotten, and so it is better for me to die. Lay me down now, John. You won't go away?"

She was quiet for a few minutes, and then she spoke again.

"Give my love, my dear love, to father, and tell mother that I forgive her now. She did not mean it. I am so tired, I think now I will go to sleep. You do forgive me, John?"

And so she dropped asleep, gently, quietly, peacefully, as a little child sinks to sleep, to waken no more in this weary world.

And this is sweet Anne Moroney's true story. No heroine, you see, just a weak, simple, loving girl, who, when her love failed her, felt all else fail her too.

If you go down to Ballinakill, the old sexton will show you a grave which, summer or winter, is never without a few flowers, and he will tell all about young Mrs. Levers, and what a beauty she was, and how she died soon after her marriage. If you encourage his gossip, he will tell you, too, of how once a young gentleman came down, "as handsome a young gentleman as ever was seen," and how he had knelt down by her grave, and cried just like a child.

"I mind the day she was married as if it were yesterday," old Bryan says. "'Twas thought a grand match for her, for the Moroneys were poor, broken-down gentry, and for all he was old enough to be her father, they said Mr. Levers worshipped the very ground she trod on. There was a sight of folk to see them married, but she looked more like a corpse than a bride. 'Twas queer, too, she never had her own mother with her all the time she was sick. Consumption, the doctors said it was, but my missus she always held 'twas a broken heart. There's a many dies of complaints the doctors has got no names for."

## To My Betrothed.

I KNOW, my sweet, how kind your heart, although  
Some people say that you are proud and cold;  
They know you not; 'tis but to me you show  
What hidden fire your secret heart can hold.

Why of all others do I have the joy  
Of winning that for which all others pine?  
They equal skill and art with mine employ,  
By what strange fortune have I made you mine?

Ah, my beloved! ere another week  
Has passed away (too slowly will it run),  
In church the magic words "I will" you'll speak,  
Then even in our names we shall be one.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOILETTA," "DAME BURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book II.

#### CHAPTER VIII. "WHAT THE ANGELS TELL LITTLE CHILDREN."

THE first glance Ivor had given at Beryl's face as he met her in the hall, told him her fears had been realised.

She had come alone. The little lads were not with her, a fact unusual in itself.

"Do not laugh at presentiments again," she said, trying to speak more bravely than her white face and quivering lips allowed as possible. "Mine are more than realised."

He had taken her hand, and stood looking down on her with sad and troubled eyes.

"And when do you go?" he asked.

She started.

"I? Oh, I was not thinking of that. It is about the children. Next month they are to go. I—I came to see your mother at once. There are so many things to be done—arranged."

Her voice broke. She turned aside to conceal her weakness, being woman enough to know how the sight of tears tries even the strongest man.

"Has your visitor arrived?" she asked presently when the momentary weakness had been struggled with and suppressed.

"Yes," he answered somewhat constrainedly; "he is with my mother now."

"Then perhaps I shall be intruding——"

"On the contrary," he interrupted, "I am sure she will gladly welcome your presence. I don't think she cares very much for Count Savona's companionship."

"Then we will go to her," said Beryl somewhat absently.

She was thinking it was a little odd that neither mother nor son cared for the presence of this man, and yet received him as a guest beneath their roof. However, her heart was too sore and troubled to concern itself much about anything save its own grief, and in silence she went with Ivor to his mother's room.

"So that is the mysterious count," she thought, seeing only a tall, pale-faced man, with a singularly graceful presence, who rose and bowed low at her entrance. "Nothing very sinister or melodramatic about him."

"It is possible, perhaps, that the ladies may have matters to talk about which the rough and prosaic mind of man may not sufficiently appreciate," said the count after a slight interval of desultory talk. "I propose, my dear Captain Grant, that we go and smoke our cigarettes on the terrace till luncheon."

Ivor, only too thankful to take that baleful presence and those basilisk, admiring eyes from the presence of Beryl Marsden, agreed at once.

The two women were left alone.

"And has the ill news come?" asked Mrs. Grant as the door closed.

"Yes," said Beryl despairingly. "I was only hoping against hope. I—— Good Heavens!" she said in horror. "Mrs. Grant—dear friend—what is it?"

For Mrs. Grant had suddenly sunk back with a faint moan, and lay there to all appearance lifeless.

"And so that is your friend Mrs. Marsden?" the Count Savona was saying to Ivor Grant as they slowly paced the terrace together. "A pretty woman!"

"Do you think so?" answered Ivor, suppressing a strong inclination to knock down this insolent commentator on the divine looks and graces of his goddess.

"Yes, I do, and a woman with character, I should say. None of your pink-and-white sawdust dolls. A woman," he added musingly, "worth loving, suffering, sinning for. There are not many."

"You appear to have studied Mrs. Marsden very closely in your brief interview," said Ivor coldly, though a raging anger boiled in his heart at the man's insolence.

The count shrugged his shoulders.

"Life has two guiding stars—expediency and tact. Following them, one can do a great deal—can command almost any fate; so I have found. I am a close observer of human nature. It is surprising how it is alike, and yet different in likeness. Men and women interest me, and I have learned to read them pretty accurately. Perhaps you would be surprised to hear that in this 'brief interview,' as you call it, I have learnt a great deal of Mrs. Marsden. I will give you my deductions, if you care to hear them."

"Well?" said Ivor briefly.

"In the first place," said the count coolly, "she is not a happy



woman—her face tells me that; but she is a woman who under different circumstances would have been perfectly content, and, by force of that content, commonplace. Next: she does not care for her husband, though she is the sort of woman to idolise children. I prophesy, for her future, storms of whose strength she is utterly unaware, and against which she may battle successfully. I don't say she will."

There was a moment's silence; then Ivor turned abruptly to his companion.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that you have never seen or heard anything of Mrs. Marsden till you met her in my mother's room just now?"

"Assuredly," he answered in cool surprise. "Do you think I have read her correctly?"

"How can I tell?" said Ivor bitterly. "What have I to do with her future?"

"A great deal, I fancy," said the count very quietly. "I am something of a seer, you know, and I prophesy—"

"Hold!" interrupted Ivor passionately; "I have no desire to hear more, and you have no possible title to discuss Mrs. Marsden's affairs or mine."

"You are impetuous, my young friend," said the count airily, as he puffed a little cloud of smoke from his cigarette. "It is an error of youth—a fatal one sometimes. You ought to have listened to me. Forewarned is forearmed, you know."

The quiet meaning of his tone seemed to carry the subject out of that region of insolence and interference which Ivor had been so ready to resent. It was a tone which spoke of conviction, and which they were aimed. That mark was Ivor's own heart, and the arrow of truth struck home with the force of an intolerable pain and a deadly sense of fear.

"I am at a loss to understand your words," he said huskily. "And excuse me if I say I am in no mood for playing Faust to Mephistopheles, as you seem to hint. I like plain-speaking."

"On the present occasion?" asked the count, taking the cigarette from his mouth and knocking off the loose ash. "Well, prophecy is always an unthankful office. I won't tell you anything more—yet. How is Sir Hector?"

The abrupt change was almost as insolent as the spoken words had been. A sense of positive hatred for this man seemed to seize Ivor Grant in that moment.

"Perhaps you would like to judge for yourself," he said coolly. "You will find him in the library;" and slightly raising his hat he walked off and entered the house.

An evil smile crossed the Count Savona's thin lips.

"The iron has gone home," he said to himself. "What trans-insolence though!" he muttered savagely. "If I could afford myself the luxury of revenge he should suffer for it. But as to hurt him is to hurt myself I must make the sacrifice. I think I will take his advice, and pay my respects to Sir Hector."

Meanwhile Ivor had returned to the house with a very fever of wrath burning in his veins. A few cool words, a meaning smile, had stripped the bandage from his eyes, and shown him the sea of danger into which he had heedlessly drifted.

"Yet, how could I have helped it?" he asked himself despairingly. "To know her is to love her. Ah—"

The object of his thoughts was there before him, flying across the old oak hall with a face of terror.

"Oh, Mr. Grant!" she cried wildly, "I have been looking for you everywhere. Do come to your mother's room. She is so ill. She has gone from one fainting-fit into another, and we cannot bring her round."

Her voice and her words calmed that raging fever. Without any reply, save that one hastily-suppressed exclamation, he followed Beryl into his mother's presence.

"Some more of the handiwork of that infernal count," he muttered savagely between his clenched teeth, as he saw that senseless, stricken figure.

It was a long time before Mrs. Grant recovered, and then she was so weak and exhausted that she had to go to bed, though she still persisted in her refusal to have medical advice. Beryl remained beside her till late in the afternoon, totally unable to resist the poor lady's piteous appeals and beseeching gaze. She, too, was wearied and unstrung, and her heart was longing for the presence of the little brothers, and picturing Jack's wistful face and anxious eyes as he would keep looking out for "mummy."

Every moment of their company was precious now, and already this day was half over. She had refused to go to the dining-room for luncheon, and had taken it in Mrs. Grant's room instead.

About four o'clock she saw the poor invalid's eyes drooping in very weariness and languor. Gradually the quiet and stillness of

the room seemed to soothe her long restlessness. Her eyes closed in sleep, and Beryl felt she was free to return home.

She crept noiselessly into the boudoir, gave a few parting instructions to the maid, then put on her hat, and left the Count with an unusual eagerness.

She saw nothing of Ivor as she hurried homewards, and for once the fact lost its sting of regret. One yearning desire to be with her treasures was all she felt. Soon—only too soon—would her heart ache, and her empty arms stretch themselves forth in vain—in vain! So she sped over the meadows and under the drooping apple-boughs, yet with her ears closed to the rhythm of sound filling the sweet spring air, but drowned now by the tread of her hurrying feet and the wild, stormy beats of her longing heart.

Eager eyes were watching her speeding along, light as a shadow, quick as a falling sunbeam.

"I seed mummy first," said little Jack. "Seed her longer way than you, Cyrrie."

Ivor Grant was leaning over the rectory-gate, with Jack perched on his shoulder, and Cyril astride of the topmost bar. All three had been keeping watch there for a long time—a time that would have been still longer had not those whimsical fancies and stories of their grown-up friend kept the little lads from too anxious a suspense.

"You came here? How good of you!" cried Beryl, releasing the boys from that warm embrace into which they had sprung as she reached the gate.

She had sunk on her knees on the soft grass the better to submit to those "smothering" caresses which Jack loved to lavish upon her, and she knelt there still, looking up to Ivor's face with her own all flushed and radiant, utterly unconscious of the pang that smote his heart—of the knowledge that, dear as she had become to him, she never seemed so dear as in moments of inexplicable pathos and sacredness such as these.

"I came here because I feared they would miss you," he said, speaking constrainedly, because it was such an effort to speak at all. "One good turn deserves another, you know, and you have given up nearly your whole day to my mother."

"She is better now," said Beryl, rising to her feet, and smoothing back the ruffled rings of hair about her brow. "She was asleep. I thought I might leave her at last to the care of Woods and Mrs. Bretton."

"Oos been such a long time away. Did 'oo know zat, mummy?" asked Jack plaintively.

"Yes, darling; but I could not help it. I won't be so long away again."

"Me wanted to do to 'oo," he continued eagerly; "me knows the way 'tite well, and Cyrrie wouldn't let me; said mummy didn't say nuffin' 'bout we was to go."

"I found him in great distress," said Ivor, smiling gravely, as he held open the gate for "mummy" and her sweetheart. "He was inclined to look upon me as an ogre, and the Count as a fortress. I don't believe he's left this gate since his dinner."

"Mis'r captain is a kind mans," said little Jack thoughtfully; "him's played lots of games wid us, and told us lots of stories. But it was a vewy long times, mummy!" he added with a half-pale again.

Beryl sighed. She was thinking of how the little faithful heart would suffer in future "long times," when neither cry nor prayer could reach "mummy's" ears, or bring her to his side.

Ivor noticed the shadow on her face and read its meaning. "Come," he said, "we are all going to have tea. Mrs. Bretton sent down a basket this morning for 'Master Jack.' I wonder what was in it. Have you any idea, little man?"

"Me tinks so," said the little fellow, his face losing its gravity, and the bright colour which excitement always brought into his cheeks, passing like flame into its clear, creamy pallor; "me tinks dare was a pwum-cakes, and anoder cakes, and—and— What was it, Cyrrie, in 'tittle pots?"

"Preserves," said his brother loftily. "No," said Jack with emphasis, "me tinks somefin else. Oh, jam!" he went on delightedly. "Pots of jam!"

"Well, it's the same thing," said Cyril. "Tain't the same thing," said Jack authoritatively. "Jams is jams—eh, mummy? and pwe—pwe— Me tarn't say dat. Me knows it's not nice."

Cyril regarded him compassionately. "I dare say you'll think it nice enough when you taste it," he said, "and believe it's the same, too."

"And now 'away dull care!'" cried Ivor Grant, snatching the little fellow and tossing him up in his arms; "let us all enjoy ourselves, and eat plum-cake, and 'jams,' and all the other good things that Master Jack is going to treat us with, till—we can't eat any more—eh, Jack."

"Dat would be berry geedy," said the young philosopher gravely, "and me would like some pwum-cakes for to-morrow, by-m-by."

"Provident sage," laughed Ivor. "Well, we will be sparing in our onslaughts, like the ants, you know, who always lay by a store for the winter."

"Me doesn't want to keep my pwum-cakes till so long as then," remarked Jack. "Don't tink dat's at all nice."

"What have you been doing all the morning?" asked Beryl, at last. "No mischief, I hope?"

"Cyrrie put his foot in ze duck-pond," said Jack eagerly. "Me taught a 'tittle duck, and kept it a long times; but it skeeked, and skeeked, and skeeked, and it said, 'Me want do to my mummy,' so me let it do."

"Jack tells stories," said Cyril in his usual corrective fashion. "How could the duck say that, when they can't speak at all?"

"Vevverrysing speaks," said little Jack solemnly. "Fowers, and birds, and cows, and horses, and ze butterflies, and ze wind, too. Me talks to ze wind ofens and ofens."

"What strange fancies he has!" said Ivor, looking at Beryl across the little rapt face lifted heavenwards. "I can't think how such a baby can get hold of such ideas."

"Mummy tells us a story—such a pwetty story," resumed Jack, still gazing thoughtfully up at the deep mysterious blue of the sky. "'Bout 'tittle children, and how they does to seep, and when they're aseep the angels tum right away down from the sky-ladders, and they tum to the 'tittle children's beds, and whisper sings to them. Sometimes they 'member them when they wakes up. I tink I 'member them."

"He told me the other day that the wind goes right away up to Heaven," said Cyril. "And that if we whisper something to it, it takes it along with it, and blows it through holes in the sky. Does it, mother?"

"Mummy doesn't know nuffin 'bout dat," cried Jack eagerly, "for she's grown up. Isn't 'oo, mummy?" patting her cheek with a little velvet hand, as he leant forward from Ivor's shoulder. "And when people's grown up they don't hear what the angels tell the 'tittle children."

"Would to Heaven we did!" cried Ivor, with a strange choked sensation in his throat, and Beryl, meeting his eyes with two pained and tearful ones, echoed the words in the depths of her own aching heart.

#### CHAPTER IX. "I CAN'T CARE FOR OTHER WOMEN."

WHAT a merry, happy tea that was in the quaint old rectory-parlour! How, in after years, every memory of its simple innocent gaiety used to come to Ivor Grant's heart with sad and tender wistfulness! How often he pictured that scene—the beautiful face bending over the cups, the eager eyes of the little lads, the brave cheerfulness with which the mother hid her own pain, though every word and sentence from the childish lips smote her heart afresh.

As for Ivor himself, with that full and terrible consciousness of his own folly ever in his mind, he yet kept it too well concealed for Beryl's eyes to detect. The joy of her presence was now turned to fear—fear of self-betrayal; fear that this long heart-hunger might tear down the feeble barriers he had erected, and so shame him for ever in her eyes as in his own.

But during this pleasant meal, bright with the children's quaint fancies and ceaseless chatter, he kept himself well under restraint. He talked, and laughed, and jested as if he had not a care in the world; he tried all the cakes, and indulged in "pweserves," to little Jack's intense delight—he, by some mode of reasoning peculiarly his own, having constituted himself the giver of the feast—probably as the housekeeper from the Court had sent that basket to her special favourite.

Listening to his quaint talk, looking at his eager face, watching the pleasant ways that ministered to the children's pleasure so unweariedly and so unselfishly, Beryl found herself again and again drifting into that old wonder how she could have so misunderstood him, or attributed only languor, self-conceit, and indolence to a nature at once so genial and unselfish.

"I hope he will never know," she thought with a pang of compunction. "I do not think he can."

Just at that moment he looked at her across Jack's dusky head, and a shadow seemed to fall across his eyes and hide their hopeful light. But the pain was growing familiar now, and at his heart a voice seemed always whispering:

"Not for long—not for very long. When she has left—when she has gone out of your life it will be time enough to give the rein to suffering."

No word had been spoken to Jack as yet of the ordeal in store for him. His mother had cautioned Cyril not to say anything about the coming separation, and the boy had kept his word, though a hundred times the secret had struggled to his lips.

Beryl wondered how she should ever find courage to tell him, knowing that the bare suggestion of "mummy's" leaving him would go well-nigh to break the little loving heart.

"Not to-day, at all events," she told herself as the merry meal at last came to an end. "We shall have one happy evening more."

The glow of sunset was still upon the sky when they sauntered out into the rectory-garden. The air was soft and warm, and full of that strange hush and sweetness which crowns the close of day.

The children ran off to their swing, which was fixed under the branches of an old elm-tree, the rector's special pride, and Beryl and Ivor followed them more slowly.

"What will your guest say to your deserting him in this fashion?" she asked at last. "Yesterday you agreed we were not to see anything of each other, and yet—"

"It is easier to make resolutions than to keep them," said Ivor with a smile that had very little mirth in it. "And my 'guest,' as you call him, does not deserve much consideration at my hands. I hate the fellow. I wish I had never set eyes upon him!"

Beryl looked at him in surprise.

"Why?" she asked innocently. "I—I beg your pardon," she continued, colouring softly. "Of course I have no right to ask. He looks a strange man—not one to be quite trusted, I fancy."

"Do not let us waste words in discussing him," said Ivor coldly; "I have had no opportunity to-day to ask you of your arrangements. When—do they go?"

He nodded in the direction of the swing, where Jack was perched, while Cyril's sturdy arms sent him flying to and fro among the green and gold of leaves and sunlight.

Beryl told him the arrangements which had been made for the boys, in a few hurried words.

"Of course I shall go and see this Miss Crawley," she said in conclusion. "I hope she may be better than my fears paint her. I have a horror of learned women."

"Yet you managed to secure a fair amount of learning yourself," said Ivor. "You have told me many things that would do credit to a 'girl-graduate' of the most blue-stocking type."

"My father educated me himself," she said as if in half apology for the knowledge she possessed, "and I have always been passionately fond of reading; but you know the type of woman I mean; and I don't want Jack's delicate little frame to combat with strong brain-pressure. I have let him learn nothing except just what he chose up to now."

"He doesn't need much teaching," said Ivor thoughtfully. "His brain is active enough as it is—too much so I often fancy for his years."

Beryl sighed.

"If I might only remain a year, just to look after them—to see how the system agreed with them, I should not mind so much. It is the leaving them to a life so new and different that I dread."

"Well, I will look them up as often as I possibly can," said Ivor with forced cheerfulness. "Woodford is not very far from here, and they shall always spend their holidays at the Court, and if you will allow me, I will write you exhaustive accounts of all their doings and sayings every mail."

"Will you—will you really?" she cried with an eagerness and delight that sprang from some subtle two-fold cause she could not pause to analyse. "Oh, how kind of you to promise that! Cyrrie is too young to write letters such as I should long to have, and Miss Crawley might not be able to enter into my anxieties; but you—you know what they are to me and I to them. I could trust you next to myself."

"Thank you," he said huskily, and a great dusky flush crept up to his brow as he stood there in the radiance of the dying sunlight. "That is a great compliment, but I will try to deserve it."

"But are you sure—sure I am not taxing your kindness too much?" she continued hurriedly. "My own great love blinds me, perhaps. My children, who are to me so much, may only seem to you as troublesome and objectionable as—as I have found those of other people."

He laughed.

"Set your mind at rest," he said. "I love the little lads for their own sakes. Besides," he continued sadly, "my life is after all rather an empty one. I shall be only too glad of an interest such as this."

"Why should it be empty?" she asked suddenly. "I have often wondered you are not married. Are you so hard to please?"

There was not a grain of coquetry in the question, or in the eyes whose frank, full light looked up to his.

He set his teeth hard, and for a moment was silent.

"Perhaps I am," he said at last; "one grows critical as years go on. I thought once I had found my ideal. But I found her—too late. Only two little words," he added with sudden bitterness, "but how they can change a man's whole life! However, I gave up romance and went in for prose. Only, somehow, I think I could

never ask any other woman to share what, in my heart, I had dedicated to—her.”

“She died?” questioned Beryl softly.

“To me,” he answered. “How or when it matters not. We have all to live through some such experience, you know. In life there seems to be so many ‘chances’ of happiness, so few cases.”

“Yes,” said Beryl, with a sudden catch in her breath like a sob suppressed; “it seems very easy to be miserable, doesn’t it? Is it only that we make ourselves so, or can’t recognise happiness in disguise?”

“Of course that we make ourselves so,” he answered with a bitterness altogether foreign to his voice. “We are such blind fools at best. Heaven help us!”

“But you, surely you are happy?” she said suddenly, and looked up at his face, sternly set now in the shadows of the sweeping boughs under which they paused.

He laughed, a tuneless laugh, and one which jarred upon her ear.

“Don’t ask me that,” he said hurriedly. “There are questions one cannot answer even to oneself. Perhaps I have turned coward, and, even if I am happy, dare not ask the cause.”

The meaning of those words went home to her heart with a sudden pang of fear, and set every nerve and fibre quivering like those of a frightened child.

The words that would have rushed from her lips without break or stay she crushed back in a sick and nameless horror. A silence as of death fell between them. The falling shadows seemed to have grown chill and dense as clouds, and all the golden west faded out as if a mighty hand had swept it into the blackened vaults of night.

For a moment everything was forgotten as in the stunning horror of a great shock. Something that her life had missed, rose and faced her with jeers and smiles of mockery. Something that his might have won, completing, ennobling, elevating all that was best in his nature or lacking in her own—all this swept over her in that second’s space of awaking, and she shrank affrighted from the picture upon which she gazed.

“Do not grieve for my troubles,” said that brave and kindly voice, hushed and solemn now, as if some purer hand had struck the chords of passion. “Lonely I may be, but no man is ever the worse for having loved a good woman.”

“And so she is—dead!” said Beryl brokenly. “But the dead are soon forgotten. And you will not be lonely always, I hope. There are so many other women.”

“Yes,” he said sadly, “but somehow I can’t care for—other women.”

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Devoted.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

ONCE upon a time men and women took vows of asceticism upon themselves, devoting themselves to the service of their fellows; one does not nowadays look upon this as the highest form of devotion.

Three people we have seen living devoted lives, but what did they think about the matter?

Just nothing at all.

Giacinta or ‘Cinta Idyane, the girl, certainly thought not one word about “devotion” or “sacrifice,” or indeed of anything with so grand a name to it.

Look at her! running through the long coarse grass of the fated region. Her brown feet and arms are bare, her head uncovered, although the women of the south do not stand in the mid-day sun uncovered if they are wise. Her face is brown, and with the delicately-chiselled, straight features which perhaps come from her unknown Greek ancestors, who in the dim past had landed on those shores; her raven hair is knotted on the crown of her head—you may see numbers of such girls’ heads if you look at an old frieze.

Her garments are poor, but they are not ragged; she has on a grey cotton skirt—very probably the cotton is a Manchester print, all the nations of the world use these things; she wears above this a loose, short-sleeved bodice of rich blue cotton, such as a man’s blouse is made of; tied round her throat is a kerchief of orange, and round her waist, with its soft ends trailing below the looseness of her bodice, is a wisp of scarlet stuff. This last is put on for finery, as a maiden of another class bedecks herself with jewels. The orange kerchief would be shading her head if the sun were shining, but, though it is mid-day, the girl’s head is bare.

But what a heat bears down upon the land! what a damp, murky, pestiferous fire seems to burn one up, to drag the very spirit of life from one’s limbs!

‘Cinta, running and springing through the grasses, stops, then

moves languidly her lazy feet. Is this some weariful, voluptuous, Eastern clime, where one dreams and sleeps the soft hours away? where it “is always afternoon”—where “all things always seem the same”—where there is not life, but some luscious, vague thing called existence?

Not at all.

It was once a famous land. Greek heroes trod its shores and reared mighty temples upon it. There they stand to-day, grey and silent, strangely perfect, rearing their carved pediments against the sunless fire of the blue sky. It is a cloudless sky, an airless region; pestilence walks along it unmasked, and miasma is one’s yoke-fellow and comrade all the days one passes there.

All about it is a level, marshy plain, whence fetid odours rise, and whose sole masters are herds of buffaloes which men call tame—they may be so. The plain is washed by the shining Neapolitan waters; across the Bay of Salerno stretches the marvellous beauty of the Amalfi coast. One may imagine round the cape the blue glory of the Bay of Naples. At Paestum the very sun in heaven is darkened and conquered by the living death of the place.

The temples must be guarded; they belong to the nation, and they have set a fence about them, and they exact a toll from sight-seers, and one man at least must be told off to do the work.

A soldier must fight for his country. What matter whether he fight against flesh and blood or against a poisoned air?

A year ago, Ludovico Idyane was chosen, from out the hundreds who filled the monster barracks of Salerno, to take the post.

A brave man thinks naught of danger. Duty was enough, but duty did not tell him to take his wife and ‘Cinta to Paestum with him. There was a house for him, and a soldier is handy. He could, as they say in another country, “fend for himself.” He issued his commands. Wife and child should stay on at Salerno, and he bade young Giovanni Peluso take heed to them.

Now, do women obey such commands? Not generally. The loyal sort do not, and Lucia was loyal to her husband, and young ‘Cinta—she was fifteen then—was loyal to father and mother.

A year went by, and ‘Cinta was tall. She ran lightly, but she as often wandered wearily. Ludovico, the man who admitted the tribes of tourists—he was tall, and straight, and soldierlike, but what a fire was in his dark eyes, how thin was his olive cheek, and what a scarlet patch burnt upon it!

The foe was conquering him.

But your Italian carries a light heart in his breast, and Ludovico, if he coughed huskily, hid it away under a bright word. Perhaps he should fight through. For the sake of wife and child he would be his strongest.

‘Cinta was running, as we have said, through the tangle of coarse grass that separates the Temple of Neptune from the farther ruins. Ludovico himself had come soberly along from his cottage into the vast weird avenues of columns that now make the roofless temple. A string of English people had just arrived; on the far side were a German bride and bridegroom; coming past ‘Cinta were three American tourists, young men with knapsacks, and opera-glasses, and the inevitable scarlet volume of Baedeker.

One English lady was unearthing what she possessed of misty Greek lore, and romanced about sacrificial rites and priestly functions and vestals.

“Can you fancy it possible?” she waved her hand round. “Was there a roof, do you think? I should say an awning would have been best, if the air then was like the air now. Dear me—the heat!” She was driven to fan herself, and she wiped the dew of faint heat from her upper lip. “There would not be this grass—”

A girl kicked at the uneven stones the grass hid.

“Certainly not, *tanta mia*,” cried she; “there is polished marble if you like to look for it, of course.”

“And processions of youths and maidens singing, perhaps dancing, and flowers, and incense, and—”

“Don’t particularise too much, dearest, or you’ll put us all in a fog. We shan’t know whether we are talking about a Greek festival in honour of Neptune, or a Roman *fiesta*—shall we, Dick?”

“I don’t know.” Dick was standing and sketching, or rather had been standing and sketching; just now he stood and pointed. “One of the natives, I suppose—Greek or Italian, aunt?” he lazily asked.

“Very probably of Greek origin.” For the nonce the aunt was absorbed by a worship of the Hellenic element.

“Gracious!” scorned the girl, Bessie, “she’s an Italian peasant; she’s very pretty.”

This referred to ‘Cinta.

“I’ll go and speak to her.”

The rest watched. As the English girl advanced, making signs of friendliness, the Italian girl retreated.

“Afraid, poor thing!” ejaculated the kindly aunt.

“Gammon!” responded Dick. “She’d let me paint her if I asked her.”

“Signora.”

The trim, blue-uniformed figure of Idyane had come close up to the party without being heard. The man touched his forage-cap, and again said :

"Signora——"

"Ah !"

"I have some photographs of the ruins ; we are allowed to sell them for ourselves ; the signor will buy ? Very good ones—by Sommer of Naples—the best, and true. See, signor !" and he held one aloft.

"It is good," one said, and soon all the photographs were being pulled about by one and another.

"You'll make your fortune out of us !" cried a younger edition of Dick.

Idyane shrugged his shoulders and shook his head with the good-humoured Italian smile.

"I do not understand, signor."

"No *Inglese*—no, no," Dick translated volubly and laughed. "We are wide awake," he added, or rather he gave some Italian words which very fitly copied that expression.

"No, no ; I make no fortune here," and as swiftly the face fell to melancholy.

"They pay you well ?" jerked the aunt, who had indulged in the Greek rhapsody.

"Enough." A stoical shrug of the shoulders and a spreading forth of lean brown hands answered. "I do not complain."

"They ought to pay a man double—treble for taking his life in his hand and sitting down here !"

The man laughed.

"The signora thinks much of the danger—what is it ? One may have fever anywhere, and they give us quinine—plenty."

"They do ?"

"Certainly, signora. We must die without the quinine ; we take it and drink the red wine—we should not drink good wine like that if we were not in the midst of the malaria."

"You are a single man—no wife, no child ?" The lady meant he ought to be.

"Signora, no," and he laughed. "No, no ; if I were alone I—I think the fever would be stronger than I am. Now I am stronger than the fever. Yes, yes, I am strong. Signora, that is my girl," he coughed a hollow, dry cough. "That is 'Cinta, signora," he panted. "She is a good girl."

'Cinta was nodding and gesticulating. Perhaps Dick was right, and she had no fear, but just the shyness of a creature who is half untainted.

The fair English girl, trim and dainty, and the picturesque, free grace of the Italian, made a good and pleasing contrast as they strolled along through the long grass.

"She ought not to be here," decided the lady.

Idyane looked frightened.

"She is not ill. What shall I be, what will Lucia be without our child ? Ah, she is good, signora ! she would not stay in Salerno ; she comes with us here. The time will not be long—a year has gone."

"And it has told upon you."

The man had coughed again.

"I fight the enemy, signora," he said cheerily, lifting his grey head, and straightening his tall figure. "And we will conquer, we are strong."

The photographs were bought, and Idyane's pockets filled, and very soon after everyone was strolling wearily along towards the gateway. No one dared stay long in that killing atmosphere, the dear life seemed dragged out of limbs which at home were used to the invigorating winds of the north. Bessie, the gay, declared she was quite "done up" when she had climbed the little outer staircase of 'Cinta's home, had talked with the mother Lucia, and had come down again. As for Dick, he must also have collapsed, for he talked not at all.

It was no more than two hours past mid-day, and they must go. Antiquities were very interesting to see, and the wonders of Greek art are alluring, but it was like drinking nectar from a poisoned cup—they must fly before the dews of the fading day should rise from the marshes.

Children, ragged, and dirty, and laughing, called for coppers ; pests of beggars, pests of curiosity vendors, besieged the carriages about the gate. What a wild, weird crew ! and what a wild, weird, and gloomy scene was all about ! Desolation and the perfection of art, squalor and the vision of the greatest voluptuousness the world has ever seen, a past which bore eternal life, and at the same moment a present which was a death in life.

The driver shouted to his horses and cracked his whip, the carriage rolled along. Ah, who was calling ? what was forgotten ?

'Cinta Idyane was running and calling. Bessie suddenly roused.

"I'll speak to her," said she.

"Mystery—eh ?"

"Signorina, it is one word—one word !"

But the girl's face was rosy red, and she fell silent.

Bessie leaned down over the side of the carriage. "I know," she said, in easy Italian, "it is a message for—for that friend you told me about. Say it quick, the horses want to fly."

"Signorina, the horses of Palco do not fly," laughed 'Cinta.

"Where shall I find him ?" Girls soon appropriate each other's secrets.

"Go to the big gate of the barracks and ask for Peluso—Giovanni Peluso."

"What then ?"

"He sent me a letter, and I have not written one to him ; say I am sorry and give this to him." She put a bunch of poppies into Bessie's hand, and then took a little silver cross from her bosom, kissed it, and gave that to Bessie. "Say it bears my kiss upon it, say that 'Cinta——"

"*Tchuh—tchuh !* The horses are wild, they are like fire, they tear my arms off !" cried the coachman.

'Cinta sprang down from the step of the carriage, and waving her hands gaily, ran off.

Summer came, and autumn and winter, and all the English people were away in northern homes. The busy town of Salerno went on with its merchandising, ships went and came, and trade kept all alive.

Regiments, too, quartered in the big new barracks were changed. So it is no soldier is long at one place. Amongst others Giovanni Peluso, 'Cinta's friend, had been drafted up to the north. He was on the heights above Genoa, from which city he had written her a letter. He did not know whether she ever received it, at any rate no friend had come his way to bring him poppies again, or to give him a silver cross. Ah, that silver cross ! He wore it always. Perhaps he should never see 'Cinta again ; perhaps she had forgotten him ? No, he did not believe that. He would pray, holding the little cross in his hand, that he might one day get sent again down Salerno way.

What was happening to 'Cinta ?

Peluso thought about her—the English girl, Bessie, thought and talked about her, wondered whether life brought as good a love to her as it did to some people.

Ah ! "Some people !" Prosperity and good days enlarge one's soul, widen one's sympathies, and open one's heart largely. Grim philosophers preach the contrary, and set on high the advantages of adversity ; have they themselves tried the dose ? No ; prosperity is the thing which sweetens life and action—for those souls, we mean, who have any inherent sweetness in them.

Bessie and Dick were cousins once, they were closer than cousins when a new year came in.

It was springtime again, and the honeymoon had lasted for three whole "moons." Dick was an artist, but he had wealth besides, and so he was taking pleasure and studying at the same time. It goes without saying that he and his wife were in Italy, and that lady being a person of some gay whims, carried her husband more than once away from the acknowledged schools of art to regions she fancied she would like to see.

"It is ridiculous going to Salerno," grumbled he, knee-deep in packing.

"Is it ?" pouted she. "Where is the picture you were once going to make, and to call 'Ancient and Modern'—did the hymn-book suggest the title, by-the-bye ?" She nodded at him, and then absorbed herself in the folding of a dress upon the bed.

"I have forgotten all about it ;" and he punched an obstinate boot into an already stuffed portmanteau. "Jog my memory."

"Pæstum—antiquities—two lovely girls—eh ? Now you remember ?" His wife looked up, pursing her lips, and setting up a would-be gravity.

"Ah yes. I remember a picturesque girl—one girl."

"Only one ? Indeed !"

"Perhaps your second made the foil for the first." He became all at once anxious. "Did you put my drab suit in the Gladstone, Bess ?"

"I did," said she. "Now, Dick, listen. Picture or no picture, my heart is set upon finding that girl again ; she ought to be married by this time."

"To the fellow you unearthed at the barracks ?"

"Of course—who else ?"

Two days after they were at Salerno, and Dick had gone out "prospecting." Bessie walked out by herself, sauntering along the shore. No, first she loitered in the fine public gardens, and she looked about for 'Cinta amongst the passers-by. After a while she got outside the town, and then she was by the shore. Women with gaily kerchiefed heads were washing at big oblong tubs ; other women and girls straggled out beyond these, washing in the sparkling waves of the blue sea as it broke on the sloping shore. Rubbing

and beating with stones, swishing and rinsing in the water, laughing and chattering—all went on together as the girls knelt and sat on their heels at work.

"Cinta !"

The exclamation was involuntary on Bessie's part.

A girl heard it, turned, sprang up, threw down her half-washed garment, and ran up crying: "*Signorina, signorina mia!*" She was laughing, and her face was alight. Alas! in a moment she burst into tears.

What was wrong?

Ah me! much was wrong.

Ludovico Idyane was dead. The fever had killed him when the damp miasma of the autumn came. Lucia, his wife, fell ill from sadness of heart, and when the heart is bowed down what power has a weak body to fight against poverty and weariness? The day was not far distant when 'Cinta would be alone.

Alone?

What of her lover—of Peluso?

No one knew certainly. 'Cinta knew naught. When people like these get separated, it becomes truly a separation. They do not fly to letter-writing at once. 'Cinta was truly a child of the people, and the learning she had was small. For her lover to go away meant—well, that he had gone, that she must wait, perhaps wait for all her life.

"That is all nonsense!" This ejaculation Bessie made aloud, but it was in English and unintelligible.

She went home at once, and, being a young person of energy and determination, set to work to solve the difficulty, and to find the missing man. She found, as people do who have the will to set a matter straight, that some friend of hers knew the Commandant of the troops in Genoa, and, to make a long story short, she found that Peluso was still in the barracks on the heights.

A week later 'Cinta was motherless as well as fatherless. Lucia, the brave wife, just slipped away, fainting out of life which had become to her an empty possession.

The girl 'Cinta must work. To keep life in her she must work, but down in the genial south one needs little, and she was young, and the older women about her nodded their kerchiefed heads over their washing and said: "Wait a while, she will mend, she will laugh again."

Another week went, and as yet there was no sign of their prophecy being fulfilled.

Bessie, the English lady, came and went, and said cheerful words; then one day she again strolled down to the shore, and her face was expectant and radiant.

Was there ever such a beautiful day? The sea rolled and tossed, playing grandly. In tiny circling bays were gems of sapphire-blue, all around fringing these dashed opal spray and froth; misty islands made vague forms in the distant hazy heat; above all blazed the sun in a golden radiance, while the white town and the masts of the shipping declared the business and the fulness of life.

'Cinta Idyane, with a scarlet handkerchief upon her dark head, saw a white lady and a huge white umbrella in the distance; she tossed down her washing, and she ran up the gentle slope of the shore.

"*La signora! La signora!*" she cried.

"'Cinta," began Bessie, "I have had a letter. Have you had one, too?"

"It is here, signora," and the girl pulled a big letter from her pocket; "shall I ever forgive myself?"

"What is wrong now?" asked her friend.

"No wrong, signora, but only so much good that I am ashamed. Was it not a sin in me to say that he was forgetting me? Surely it was for him to say that of me—of me who wept and who cried to *la madre* that Madonna was cruel. *Ahimè!* and *la madre* does not know now. Do you think she does, signora?" and 'Cinta clasped her brown hands fervently, and gazed at Bessie with shining eyes, as if her faith in her friend and her faith in Madonna were one and the same.

Bessie evaded the question.

"Do you know what is in my letter?"

"Ah, signora, what do I think of any letter but my own? I will go to Genoa—Giovanni will be glad—when I work some few days more. There will be enough money then. How much, signora, must I pay for the train?" Her head was set on one side, thinking, pondering in simple wonderment.

"Peluso sends me a letter, too!" cried Bessie.

"Ah!"

"He does. Yes, and there is money in it, 'Cinta;" and she drew the girl so that she might watch the unfolding of the letter. "He sends money enough to take you to Genoa, and you are to go the first day you can."

"Then I will go to-morrow, signora."

Bessie laughed softly.

"It is not wrong, signora?" puzzled the girl. "He asks me, he wants me, and do I not belong to him?"

## The Beck.

THE little beck foams fretting on its way,  
Chafes at a pebble, eddies round a root,  
Murmurs impatient at the old arch foot,  
And o'er the fern-frond splashes pretty spray;  
But as it broadens slowly, day by day,  
The deepening stream rolls on, serenely mute,  
As fain its growing strength and power to suit  
The ocean homage, that its end must pay.  
So youth will strain its fetters—laugh aloud,  
Or deluge petty ills with passionate tears,  
Slowly attaining grief or joy to shroud  
In the proud calmness of the growing years;  
Till age wins its serenity sublime,  
Ere in eternity it merges time.

## Through No Fault of Hers.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER III.

MURIEL received from each individual of the whole household a welcome after his or her peculiar manner. Sir Joseph was loud and hearty, Lady Pankhurst a mixture of cordiality and suspicion. Hugh scarcely noticed her; Connie was kindness itself. Muriel waited a day or two before she confided her adventure on the railway to Miss Pankhurst; but, at the end of that time, concluded that she was quite fit to be trusted. After all, she was hired to be her companion and not her governess.

And true companions they rapidly became. Their tastes were similar. Connie was either ignorant of any disgrace attaching to Muriel, or else acted as if unconscious of it; in every respect she treated her as an equal. Muriel was ignorant of the duties belonging to her position, and applied to Lady Pankhurst for instructions the day after her arrival. That worthy lady had frankly confessed she didn't know anything about it, and advised her to speak to Connie.

"You see, my dear," said her ladyship, "Connie is different from us in most things. Perhaps it's partly her bringing up, for we've given her the best education that money could buy. I think she'll be able to tell you best what she wants; but, anyhow, I hope you'll do pretty much as you like, and don't let Connie make you learn those outlandish things she always is studying if you'd sooner sit still and do a bit of fancy-work."

So Muriel applied to Connie accordingly. That young lady had very decided opinions on the subject.

"I want you to do just what you like," she said; "and as we like the same things, we shall be together a good deal, I hope. And you are so much cleverer than I am in nearly everything, that I'm going to learn a lot from you without your knowing anything about it, and so make you a governess as well. And I mean to tell you all my secrets, so that you see you will have plenty to do."

"Have you so many secrets, then?"

"Not very many; but they are important."

"I think I know one of them," said Muriel.

Connie looked at her in surprise.

"What is it?" she exclaimed. "Is it anything about——"

"About Mr. Norman? Yes."

"You know Lewis?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes, slightly. I heard all about you before I saw you. You can imagine the sort of description I received."

"You won't tell papa?" pleaded Connie.

"No—at least not yet; I'll wait to see how you behave. You see I shall be able to hold that threat over you."

"But I shall be able to threaten you, too. What do you think papa would say if he found you were abetting me in my disobedience?"

"You can try," retorted Muriel with a laugh. "I have something for you, but I don't think I shall give it you unless you withdraw your threat."

Connie entreated and promised until the note was delivered. She kissed it before reading it.

"Poor fellow!" she said, on finishing it; "he's going away."

"Does he tell you his address?"

"Yes, Post-office, Clovelly. Didn't you think he was splendid?"

"I thought him very nice; but I wish he had not chosen me as a messenger. However, this is the last time."

"Oh no, it isn't," said Connie, "and I'll do the same for you some day."

"You must wait till I have a lover," laughed Muriel.

"I sha'n't wait long, I think," said Connie; "in fact, I doubt if I need wait at all."



"You must, indeed," replied Muriel. "But don't let us waste time talking about what doesn't exist. Tell me more about Mr. Norman."

"Call him Lewis," said Connie.

"No one knows you are engaged to him?"

"Oh no; they think I've forgotten all about him, except, perhaps, Hugh, and he doesn't care much."

"Does he like Lewis?"

"Tolerably; but they didn't get on very well; Hugh's tastes lie in another direction. He is great on horses, and dogs, and things of that sort. He doesn't care much about art."

Connie spoke in rather a melancholy tone. It was evident there was not much sympathy between her and her brother.

"I don't quite know what to think of Hugh," she went on. "He spends a great deal of money, and I'm afraid he is in debt; but papa believes he is all right, and mamma is afraid to say anything. He has got into a fast set, and he plays cards a great deal, I'm afraid."

"That is unfortunate," assented Muriel.

"I only wish, Muriel, you could do something to take him away from all those men. He doesn't care for my influence, you know. I'm only a sister, and he doesn't get on with girls as a rule, I'm sorry to say."

"Does he try?"

"Yes, but they don't care about him. It's a pity, because it drives him to the society of people who don't do him any good. I wish, dear, you would pay him a little attention. I know he isn't quite what you would like, but you might sacrifice yourself sometimes."

"Of course I shall be happy to do what I can," said Muriel a trifle stiffly, for she remembered what had happened when she arrived. "But you see I am in rather a delicate position here. If I were to exercise those arts of fascination you so kindly credit me with, it might naturally be said, that—you can imagine what."

"I didn't think of that," said Connie reflectively. "But I don't think there's any danger."

"Thank you," laughed Muriel.

"I don't mean it in that way," quickly added Connie. "I mean that you can take care of yourself if he were to be foolish. At any rate, we will try and get him into the drawing-room after dinner to-night instead of letting him go out."

As the event proved, there was no difficulty about persuading the hope of the house of Pankhurst to abandon his usual evening pursuits in favour of those of the rest of the family. It was raining hard, and after a look at the weather, he gave a growl, and wandered to the drawing-room.

The growl was a sham one. He had quite made up his mind not to go out in any case; the weather gave him a good excuse for staying in.

Before Muriel's advent he had given it as his opinion that "No more petticoats were wanted about the house," and for the first day after her arrival he had acted accordingly. By the time he had met her at half-a-dozen meals he was reconciled to her presence, and something more.

In Muriel he saw a girl who was assuredly accomplished and clever enough for him, and who, in appearance, put most other girls in the shade. No one need know that any disgrace attached to her, although that fact would act favourably in making her willing to receive his little attentions with welcome. So he soon resolved to commence a mild flirtation with his sister's companion; no harm could come of it, for he would of course be very careful to say nothing to her which could be construed too seriously.

Lady Pankhurst looked up with surprise when her son entered the room.

"Are you going to stay with us to-night, my boy? Do, there's a dear."

"It's raining like thunder," was the gracious response.

"Well, never mind, I'll have a game of cribbage with you. It's a long time since we had a game together."

But this was too much for Hugh; another minute, and he would have fled, but Connie bravely stepped into the breach.

"I'll have a game with you, mamma," she said; "I don't think Hugh cares about it."

She bustled about and got out the cards, leaving Hugh to settle himself where he liked. He soon sat down near Muriel, sufficiently far away from the card-table to be out of earshot.

"I hope you don't find it dull here, Miss Leigh?" he began after a pause.

"Not at all," replied Muriel; "everyone is so kind."

"It's rather a slow sort of spot," remarked Mr. Pankhurst, "and when the governor takes it into his head to have some company, it's generally only a big dinner, which is worse than having nobody."

"I suppose it must be rather lonely for you, not having another man in the house."

"It is precious slow, I can tell you," was the fervent reply. Hugh was now on a subject about which he could wax eloquent.

He did so at some length, winding up with the remark: "'Pon my word of honour, Miss Leigh, I look upon your coming as a perfect godsend."

"Thank you very much," replied Muriel with a smile; "that is quite a compliment. I hope we shall get on better together than we did the last time we met."

"I didn't know we'd ever seen each other before."

"Oh yes, we have. I came here with my father when I was quite a little girl, and you bullied me most unmercifully."

"Did I?" exclaimed Hugh, much disconcerted. "'Pon my word, I'm awfully sorry, I am really."

"Oh, it doesn't much matter now."

"Are you quite sure you've forgiven me?"

"Quite; I'd almost forgotten it."

"I can't quite make it out," said Hugh in a confidential tone, "how it was that I'd forgotten seeing you. I shouldn't have thought it possible."

"It's clear I didn't make much of an impression on you."

"You've changed a good deal, you see," replied Hugh with meaning.

Muriel smiled, but turned the flow of his eloquence by asking: "What does it mean when Lady Pankhurst says 'Two for his heels'?"

"Don't you play cribbage?" asked Hugh.

"No."

"Would you like to learn?"

"I don't know; is it a nice game?"

"Not at all bad; would you let me teach you?"

"Really I don't like to give you so much trouble."

"'Twould be no trouble at all; 'twould be a pleasure," he exclaimed eagerly.

He soon collected a pack of cards, and in a few minutes Muriel was deep in the mysteries of the game, and rapidly mastering its details. Hugh enjoyed himself immensely; he could not have believed that it was possible to play cards with pleasure unless money was on the game.

When the ladies had finished their game, they came to Muriel's side and assisted the lesson, not altogether to Hugh's satisfaction. When it was over, Connie proposed a rubber at whist, which occupied them till half-past ten, when Sir Joseph entered the room, having had his usual evening nap.

"Hallo, Hugh! not gone out? You see, Miss Leigh, the force of your attraction."

"It was raining, sir," said Hugh.

"'Twould be a good thing if it rained a little oftener," remarked his father, as he settled himself in his armchair. "Connie, give us some music."

But this was the signal for Hugh's departure, and they saw him no more that night.

Four months have passed tranquilly by, and Muriel finds with each week that her position at Como Hall becomes still pleasanter. Connie proves to be not only a companion but a real friend, and the two girls form a close friendship. News comes at the end of about three months that Norman has returned from Devonshire, and is now staying in Eastcote, the nearest town to the Hall. He has not ventured to call, knowing that his presence would be unwelcome to Sir Joseph and Lady Pankhurst, but he has managed to communicate with Muriel, who has shown the letter to Connie.

However, Muriel, feeling that she was in a false position, has given him to understand that she would much prefer that he should not use her as a go-between any further, and in spite of Connie's strongly expressed wish she has been firm on this point—the only one on which the two girls do not agree.

Hugh has not been idle all this time; he has spent a good many evenings at home, and has succeeded in initiating Muriel into the mysteries of cribbage. He has also developed a decided taste for music, and does not seem to get easily tired of listening to her singing and playing; he has even gone so far as to take lessons himself, and manages to growl out occasionally a bass song with more or less success. All this is very welcome to Lady Pankhurst, who is delighted to find that her son is becoming more domesticated. Connie, too, is glad to find that her brother seems to be getting more steady, and that he has less liking for the companionship of those young men who had formerly led him into difficulties. On one occasion Hugh went so far as to purchase a rather expensive volume which he had heard Muriel say she wished to read. However, to his disappointment, she refused to accept it, although she thanked him very warmly for his kindness; but she did not decline to receive the book as a loan, and as Hugh refused to take it back again it lay about the house with a disputed ownership.

It happened one day that Sir Joseph picked up the volume, and as it was on a subject in which he felt some little interest, began its perusal. One evening he enquired in a casual way to whom it belonged.

"I think, papa, it belongs to Muriel," said Connie.

"Indeed!" said Sir Joseph. "I hope you don't object to my reading it?"

"It is not mine," responded Muriel. "I believe it belongs to Mr. Hugh."

Hugh was seated in a distant corner of the room. He generally found it advisable to vacate his seat next Muriel when his father was present.

"Why, Hugh," said Sir Joseph, "I didn't know you went in for this kind of thing."

Hugh muttered something about his having heard it was a good book to read, and then left the room, feeling that if enquiries were pushed any farther, an awkward explanation must necessarily follow. Sir Joseph said nothing more, but continued to read. However, the next day, after the ladies had retired from dinner, he turned to his son, and told him that he wished to speak to him.

"What is it, sir?" asked Hugh, fearing that something unpleasant was about to occur.

"Look here, my boy, I want to ask you a question or two. I cannot help seeing that during the last month or so you have been staying home a great deal more than you used to. It is not that I object to that—in fact, I am rather glad of it, for I don't altogether approve the sort of fellows you used to spend your evenings with. How is it, though, you have dropped them so much lately?"

"I don't know, sir, I am sure," replied his son; "the mater wants me to be at home in the evening occasionally, and Connie said something about it too, so I thought you would not object."

"Are you quite sure those are the only reasons?" asked his father.

"As far as I know, sir."

"All right, my boy; if this is all I have nothing more to say, but I cannot help fancying that there is some special reason for the change in your habits. Your mother and sister have wanted you to stay at home for the last two or three years, but you have not seen fit to comply with their wish. Has Miss Leigh's coming here anything to do with your spending so much time at home?"

Hugh looked slightly uncomfortable, but replied with tolerable complacency:

"Well, sir, you must acknowledge that she makes things livelier. Mother and Connie are not the gayest companions for a young fellow night after night."

"Well, my boy, you ought to know how to take care of yourself; you're old enough, and big enough too. But I must just give you a word of warning. You know who Miss Leigh is, you know what her father is. I have taken her here out of charity—out of kind feelings for her father; but you ought to look for a very different girl when you mean to settle down. It is not that I object to Miss Leigh; as a girl she is everything that could be desired; but, not to mention more than one point, you know she has not a penny in the world, and with your prospects you ought to marry well."

"But, my dear father," said Hugh, "you don't imagine I want to marry Miss Leigh?"

"Well, no, I scarcely thought you would be so stupid as that; still, sometimes young men do not know how easy it is to entangle themselves. Very possibly you may be raising ideas in Miss Leigh's mind which may cause her pain, and that you certainly have no right to do. You see you would be a great catch for her, and, seeing no other young man, she very likely may fix her affections on you without knowing it, and the kindness which you naturally show her—and which it is quite proper you should—she may interpret as a somewhat warmer feeling."

"Oh, nonsense, father," said Hugh, who nevertheless felt very much flattered. "You don't think I have only to show myself to a girl for her to fall in love with me."

"No," replied his father, thinking at the same time that he wished suitable girls showed more tendency to do so. "I shall be very glad to see you settled down, but I hope when you do make your choice that it will be some one whom we can welcome into our family, and not a penniless girl who has a disgrace attached to her."

"All right, father, you need not be afraid," responded Hugh reassuringly.

He rose as if to close the conversation, feeling that he had got out of his scrape a great deal more easily than he had expected.

"Wait a minute, my boy," said Sir Joseph; "there's another thing I want to speak to you about, and I may as well take this opportunity. How about Connie?"

"What about her, sir?"

"Well, you remember that stupid affair with young Norman last year. Do you think she has quite given up all idea of him?"

Hugh hesitated. He had never felt the overpowering objection to Norman that his father had—in fact, he thought him rather a nice fellow, although his tastes did not lie in the same direction as his own. His opinion was that if Connie wanted to marry him, why,

the best thing was to let her do so. He had a much greater opinion of his sister's firmness and constancy than her father had. Sir Joseph had been so accustomed to consider his will as absolute law that it was almost beyond him to imagine that it could be set aside by a girl of nineteen; but Hugh knew better. However, not wishing to anger his father, he temporised.

"Well, I really don't know, sir; girls think a great deal of their first romance, you know. However, they have not seen each other for an awful time, so I dare say she has forgotten all about him. Absence does not always make the heart grow fonder."

"No," said Sir Joseph; "but I shall never feel quite safe until we have Connie engaged to some other young fellow, but the worst of it is she has so few opportunities of seeing anyone; she is not like ordinary girls who are always running after the men, she sticks at home, going on with her painting and music, and seems quite content even if she does not go outside the grounds from one month's end to another, and it is all her mother can do to make her go with her when she makes her calls on the people around."

"Well, sir, what can I do?" asked Hugh. "I have brought fellows up to the house several times, but they don't seem to get on with Connie, nor Connie with them."

"No, they're the wrong sort," said his father; "is there not anyone else you can think of whom you can bring?"

Hugh reflected for a moment or two, and then mentioned one or two names which were utterly unknown to his father, who was therefore unable to judge concerning them.

"Lady Pankhurst has been mentioning to me that she thinks of giving a ball," continued Sir Joseph; "if she does, that would be a very good opportunity for you to bring up all the young men that you know; and then, if any one seems struck with Connie, or *vice versa*, it would be easy enough after that to invite him to the house."

"Very well, sir," assented Hugh; "I will do my best. It would be a great deal easier to get them to come to a dance than to bring them up to the house for nothing in particular."

"All right; then I will tell your mother to send cards to all those whom you mention to her. Who are these men you named?"

Hugh gave details regarding one or two, and amongst others mentioned Venables.

"Oh yes, I used to know his father," said Sir Joseph. "Ask him by all means. Does he live at Eastcote now?"

"He has only just returned from abroad, sir, but I believe he intends settling down here for the present at any rate."

"Very well; be sure you ask him. Theirs is a very good family, and if anything were to happen between Connie and him, I should think it a very lucky business."

This time Sir Joseph rose, and Hugh understood that the conference was at an end. With his father's permission, he mentioned to his sister that the ball was decided upon. Connie did not feel very much interested in the announcement. Still, it must not be supposed she was altogether averse to gaiety in which Norman could not join, whilst Muriel anticipated with some amount of excitement a change in her rather monotonous life. When the two girls were together, they had a long confabulation over the guests who were to be invited, Muriel wanting to know all particulars about the various visitors, and Connie entering into the necessary details with considerable animation.

"I declare, Connie," said Muriel, laughing, after a long list had been detailed, "it seems to me there is not a single pleasant person coming from your description."

"Well, I really don't think there is," said Connie decisively; "you see, we are in a very awkward position as regards people round here. The rich swells won't call on us because they know what papa was, and so we have to fall back upon those who, like ourselves, have risen from a humble beginning, and I am obliged to confess that very few of them are really interesting."

"Never mind," said Muriel, "I am quite sure some of them are better than their description. But why is Lady Pankhurst giving this ball? Do you give one every winter?"

"Oh no," said Connie; "I think I can guess the reason of this one—it is the old story, you know. Papa wants to get me married, and he will never be satisfied until I am turned off; he thinks I am still hankering after Lewis."

"That says a good deal for papa's penetration," rejoined Muriel.

"I wish he hadn't quite so much," returned Connie; "isn't it a shame that these people will be coming here, and will have a right to ask me to dance with them, whilst poor Lewis will be at Eastcote all the time, knowing that all his acquaintances will be able to spend the evening with me whilst he is kept at a distance."

"Yes, it is hard lines," assented Muriel; "however, it will come right some day."

During the evening Hugh made out a list of those whom he wished to invite, which was inspected by Lady Pankhurst, and approved. It was then handed to the girls to make out the

cards. Muriel looked down the list, and stopped when she came to the name of Venables.

"Who is this, Connie?" she asked.

"I don't know, I'm sure," was the reply. "I never heard the name; have you?"

"Papa used to know a Mr. Venables, but he did not live at Eastcote," replied Muriel carelessly.

She then passed on to the next name, and Connie forgot all about Mr. Venables.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE three weeks previous to the ball soon went by. Connie spent several mornings at Eastcote, deep in the pleasant trouble of choosing her dress. Muriel did not intend to have a new one; in the first place the expense would be too great, in the next place she wanted to wear one of the two she had brought from home. Connie did her best to make her have a new one at her expense, but Muriel refused, not wishing at all to put herself in rivalry with Miss Pankhurst.

The night before the ball Sir Joseph sent for his daughter.

"What is it, papa?" asked Connie, as she entered his room.

"Not much, my dear; I only wish to tell you that there is a gentleman coming to-morrow night to whom I wish you to be very civil. He is a friend of your brother, and the son of an old friend of mine."

"What is his name, papa?"

"Venables; he is a very nice young fellow," said Sir Joseph meaningly.

"Very well, papa; is there anything else you wish to say to me?"

Sir Joseph hesitated for a moment, and then said:

"You are growing up, you must remember, Connie, and it is almost time that you thought of getting settled."

"Are you in such a hurry for me to leave home, papa?"

"No, no, my child; I should be very glad if you could live here always, of course; but still we know what young girls are; they are always thinking about leaving their old home, and having one of their own."

Connie was silent. She could not deny that that had been her wish, and it was still a sore point that her father had so peremptorily forbidden her lover to become her husband.

"You know, Connie," resumed Sir Joseph hesitatingly, for he did not find it so easy to talk to his daughter as to his son, "you had a foolish little affair about a year ago, when you compelled me to act in a peremptory way. But you were a mere girl then, and could not know your own mind; and I am quite sure you have grown much wiser now, and forgotten all about that silliness. You must see that it will be much wiser to marry someone in your own station in life—one who is able to give you comforts to which you are accustomed."

"But, papa——" broke out Connie.

"Don't interrupt me, my child," said Sir Joseph somewhat stiffly; "I do not wish to hear a word from you on that point. You may return now to the drawing-room, and don't forget what I mentioned to you about Mr. Venables."

"Oh, Muriel!" cried Connie that night when they went to bed, "I am so unhappy."

"What is it?" enquired Muriel, putting her arm round Connie's neck.

"Papa has been talking to me again. He is just as determined about dear Lewis as ever; he won't even let me mention his name, and tells me I must forget all about him; and, worse than that, there is a man coming to-morrow night to whom he wants me to be very civil, and I know what that means—it means that he has found out that he is well off, and he wants me to marry him."

"Oh, come," said Muriel consolingly; "a stranger coming to a house is one thing, but his wanting to marry you is quite another, although for the matter of that I could not be surprised at anyone who saw you wanting to win you."

"Oh, I wish I was ugly," sobbed Connie, "or else very poor. Ever since papa has been made a knight I have been miserable with thinking that he never will let me marry anyone who is not rich. Now you must be kind to this man, and promise me one thing."

"What is it?" asked Muriel.

"Why, that when he comes to-morrow night you will do all you can to keep him away from me. I will introduce you to him early in the evening, and you must make yourself very charming to him; and I'm sure if you try he will forsake me and keep with you all the time, for no one is as charming as you when you try to make yourself so."

Muriel laughed. "But what will your papa say to me?" she said.

"Oh, he cannot say anything," returned Connie; "besides, I am going to be very rude to this man, and I expect when he finds he

cannot get on with me he will only be too glad to come across someone who is more flattering."

"Very well," replied Muriel, "I will see what I can do for you. Don't trouble yourself about it, at any rate; you must get a good night's rest, and be sure you don't cry, or else you will not be fit to be seen to-morrow night."

Next day the house was upset. A small army of extra servants from Eastcote invaded the Hall; the furniture was turned topsy-turvy, the rooms were cleared for dancing, the billiard-room turned into a supper-room, and a big marquee built out beyond the conservatory for those who preferred conversation in the cool air to dancing in a heated room. Hugh, who had not seen much of Muriel since his conversation with his father, had bought two enormous bouquets, one of which he presented to his sister, and the other to Muriel. He had hesitated some time before taking this step, but he had been far from contented with himself during the past fortnight, and had determined that, in spite of his father's wishes, he would renew his attentions to Miss Leigh. He did not see any harm in it; he only felt that Como Hall was a different place when he could talk freely with Muriel, or sit by her side hearing her sing or play, to what it was when he was constrained to absent himself from her society. "At all events," he argued to himself, "the governor could not object to my giving her a bouquet: that is mere civility. She ought to have one, and unless I give it her I don't see who is to."

Muriel received the bouquet somewhat graciously. She had noticed that Hugh had absented himself from her company for the last two or three weeks. She had not objected to this, for her sole object in making herself agreeable to him was to please Connie and Lady Pankhurst, who were delighted to find that he seemed to become more reconciled to spending his evenings at home. She thought that her acceptance of the bouquet would show that she was still ready to treat him on friendly terms, and she moreover fancied, if she refused it, it would seem more marked than if she accepted it.

"I hope, Miss Leigh," said Hugh, as he presented the flowers, "that you will be good enough to keep a couple of waltzes for me."

"I don't think it is necessary for you to ask for them now," laughed Muriel; "do you imagine that my programme will be so full as all that?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," responded Hugh; "but at all events I should like to make sure if you don't mind."

"Oh, by all means," said Muriel; "which would you like?"

"The first and the seventh dances, if you don't object."

"Very well; those will do as well as any others."

"I am afraid," continued Hugh, "that you won't know many of the fellows; but if you are hard up for partners at any time I hope you won't mind mentioning it, and I will introduce you to any number."

"Thank you very much," replied Muriel; "I don't mean to dance often—in fact, I did not think of dancing at all."

"Oh, don't say that," pleaded Hugh; "I really don't see any reason why you should not dance."

Muriel turned away with a look of pain on her face. It was evident to what Hugh alluded.

"I'm awfully sorry I said that," began Hugh; "I didn't mean to pain you, really."

"No, of course not," replied Muriel; "I'm quite sure you did not."

Hugh murmured some inarticulate consolation, but at that moment he heard his father's footstep along the corridor, so he judged it better to retire. Muriel went to her room, carrying her bouquet in her hand, wishing that Hugh had given it to his mother rather than to herself.

The guests began to arrive about half-past nine o'clock, and from then till midnight there was a more or less constant stream of comers. Sir Joseph was in his glory. He received everyone with an air more befitting that of a monarch receiving his court than of a retired tradesman receiving his guests, the majority of whom despised him. He was particularly cordial to Venables, who arrived very late, and informed him that he had had the honour of knowing his father—in fact, they had been intimate friends. This was somewhat of an exaggeration, but Venables was unable to contradict it, for his father had been dead many years. Connie was introduced to him with a word or two of commendation from her father. Venables, as in duty bound, asked her for a dance. He thought she was a very pleasant girl—in fact, she looked charming that evening, and had it not been for the fact that she was the daughter of the hostess, and as such would naturally be much in demand, he would have asked her for a second. He said as much to her in the interval after his waltz.

"Thanks," said Connie negligently, "but I don't think you need trouble to say so."

"May I enquire why?" said Venables.

"I think that if you had very much wanted another dance with me you would have asked for it, and not have paid much consideration as to whether I were much in demand or not."

"Then I will ask for another now," returned Venables.

"Thank you—after what I said a moment ago I do not consider your request a compliment."

"Then it only remains for me to express my regret at your refusal," said Venables.

"Wait one moment," said Connie, somewhat more eagerly; "there is a girl here—a very charming girl—that I want to introduce you to. You will find her a much pleasanter companion than I am, I'm quite sure. Will you give me your arm?"

Venables obeyed. They crossed the room and entered the conservatory. Muriel was seated on a low cane-chair, under a palm-tree, which was hung with Chinese lanterns, and Hugh was standing by her side.

"Hugh," said Connie, as they approached, "I wish you would try and find partners for the Wilsons; they are all sitting together in a row, and looking perfectly miserable."

Hugh darted a glance at his sister not expressive of much pleasure.

"Oh," continued Connie, as if in reply to his look, "I have brought a partner for Miss Leigh; you need not be afraid of leaving her for the present."

Hugh strode out of the conservatory, throwing a not very cordial nod of recognition to Venables.

"Muriel," said Connie, "will you let me introduce Mr. Venables to you? He has heard so much about you that he wants an introduction."

Venables stood for a moment surprised, and then advancing he held out his hand to Muriel, and turning to Connie, said:

"I don't think your introduction is needed in this case. Miss Leigh and I have met before."

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 145.)

## The Editor's Note Book.

THERE was a great deal in Lord Randolph Churchill's Blackpool speech from which none but prejudiced party politicians would be likely to dissent. The complaints that our public departments waste a shameful amount of money, that there is little to choose in the matter of extravagance between Liberals and Conservatives, and that Parliament devotes a great deal too much time to so-called legislation and a great deal too little to the transaction of useful business, are all perfectly just.

BUT Lord Randolph was less happy in that part of his speech which was practically devoted to a bitter denunciation of free-trade. All our industries, according to the speaker, are either dead or dying, and the floods of foreign silk, leather, wool, iron, and cotton goods, which are constantly coming into the country duty free, are hopelessly underselling our own products and driving our industrial population to emigration, to the workhouse, or to the prisons.

THESE statements are not strictly correct, seeing that the statistics of crime and pauperism show steady improvement, and, even if Lord Randolph's statements could be taken as strictly accurate, there arises the curious question, how does it happen that a people, so completely ruined as we are, can afford to pay for all the foreign iron and silk and all the rest of it?

OF course Lord Randolph was troubled with no doubts, and only paused to ask his hearers if they understood the reason of the deplorable state of things which he described, frankly confessing that he, for his part, did not. I wonder whether he is in any better position to explain why American speakers and writers are continually pouring forth similar Jeremiahs about the condition of the manufacturing industries of the United States—perhaps the most protectionist country in the world.

LORD WOLSELEY has told us that the Army—men and officers alike—is in all respects equal, if not superior, to any army of which the country has ever been able to boast. If this be so—and if anyone is competent to speak on the subject it is surely Lord Wolseley—debate on the subject of short against long service may as well be discontinued as mere waste of time.

ON one important point Lord Wolseley did not touch. The cost of this admirable little army was not, indeed, one of the branches of the subject on which he was expected to speak. But, now that our army is all that can be desired, it will be well for the experts to address themselves seriously to the question whether its enormous cost cannot fairly be reduced.

IT is curious to read, as a commentary on the history of British policy in South Africa, that Cetewayo, in attempting to escape from Ekowe, was recaptured by our troops. It appears, then, that, after all the indignant disclaimers of the Radical wing of the Government, the "sable monarch" is nothing more or less than our prisoner. Why,

then, should his prison be just in the very place where he must necessarily be the centre of disaffection and conspiracy? To the complexion of the Melbury Road we shall have to come again at last.

SIR SAMUEL BAKER has been at the pains of pointing out the danger which General Gordon runs in the attempt to make his way, almost unaccompanied, to Khartoum, and, indeed, his position, whether he has a large sum of money with him or not, must be critical in the extreme. Desperate cases require desperate remedies, and perhaps in the existing dead-lock the General's mission may be the best expedient that could have been devised, but it is to be hoped that, if he succeeds, the Government will not come to the conclusion that it is safe always to trust to a general with £40,000 for an army.

THE story of Fanny Jordan, who died the other day, after malingering and confining herself to her bed for twenty years, is at first sight an extraordinary one, but will be found on examination to be only one of many very similar cases which are recorded in the history of imposture. This unhappy creature's explanation was that she had kept up the deception because people called her "a great lazy," and that she thought she would do something to make herself "look bad." In all probability the thing originated with some form of hysteria, and was kept going because the contributions of the credulous and the benevolent made the speculation profitable.

MR. DAVIS, Mr. Barnum's agent, has now written to the papers to explain that the great merit of the so-called white elephant consists in the fact that it is not white, but that it has certain other peculiarities of marking. Mr. Davis further expresses himself so well satisfied with the animal that he is prepared to give £40,000 for another elephant exhibiting precisely the same characteristics; though it does not appear who is to decide whether the new comer (if he does come) fulfils Mr. Davis's requirements or not. Meanwhile the manager of the Zoological Gardens simply advertises the animal as the Burmese elephant, as he ought to have done from the beginning.

THE Belt jurymen have responded with alacrity to the invitation addressed to them by Mr. Charles Reade, and have addressed some half-a-dozen letters to the *Daily Telegraph* of varying degrees of argumentative and literary merit, but it cannot be said that they have thrown any appreciable amount of light on this apparently endless controversy.

THE only points which come out with any distinctness are that the majority of the jury had made up their minds before Mr. Baron Huddleston's summing-up; that they are very angry with Lord Chief Justice Coleridge; and that they had among their number at least one weak-minded individual, who regretted his verdict as soon as it was delivered, and who is a type of a class, one specimen of which at least is to be found in almost every jury-box.

IT is the fashion to extol the builders of ancient cathedrals and castles at the expense of their successors of to-day—with how much reason the description of the state of Peterborough Cathedral very clearly shows. It appears that the core of the great Norman piers is nothing but dust, and that their foundations are only small stones laid on loose gravel, although, if the builders had gone some three feet lower, they would have touched the solid rock. In truth, there is nothing new under the sun, not even the "jerry" builder.

THE man Copeland, who, when he was visited by the police, took a harlequin leap through an open window, was described as a notorious burglar, well-known to the police. It is one of the defects of our law that habitual criminals of this class should be allowed to follow their profession, until they are clumsy enough or unlucky enough to be found out in some particular crime. It is now a good many years since Lord Kimberley's Habitual Criminals' Bill was introduced and upset by the humanitarians. If it had been passed, we should be hearing a great deal less just now about gangs of professional thieves, notorious burglars, and the like.

A CHILD died the other day near Dudley, under circumstances which induced the medical man, who attended the case, to declare unhesitatingly that the poor little thing absolutely died of pressure on the brain, brought about by overwork in the board-school. To this the official defender of the "department," having had the inestimable advantage of not having seen the child and of knowing nothing of its symptoms, except from such inferences as he chose to draw from hearsay, stated that the unfortunate scholar might have died from disease, and that, therefore, there is "nothing in the evidence, beyond Dr. Bradley's dictum, that leads to the conclusion that 'over study' was the cause of the child's fatal illness."

PUTTING aside the fact that the evidence of a person who actually sees a thing is worth more than that of any number of people who do not, and admitting for a moment the validity of the plea of the official apologist, it still remains certain that reform in the management of the board-school at Pensnett, Dudley, is urgently called for. There

must be something wrong in a system, under which a poor child, suffering from a fatal disease, can be crammed by teachers up to almost the last hour of its miserable little life.

THE Proprietor, Secretary, Committee, and Members of the Park Club are evidently determined to give Mr. Howard Vincent as much trouble as possible. Mr. Poland and Mr. George Lewis are familiar figures in Bow Street, but, when the defendants add to these Mr. Charles Russell, Q.C., things are likely to be lively for Mr. Wontner on the other side. It is well that the point at issue should be raised, but it will cost somebody a good deal of money to get it finally settled.

WE have it on the authority of Ovid that the study of the liberal arts softens the manners and prevents ferocity, but it cannot be said that the same rule applies nowadays to journalism, more particularly to that branch of it which is conventionally known as dramatic "criticism." Let me take, as an example, the passage of arms which has taken place over Mr. Hamilton's "Our Regiment." The gentleman who writes the dramatic notices in the *Times* began by accusing Mr. Hamilton of all sorts of malpractices in connection with his play, averring at one and the same time, with no little inconsistency, that it was merely a copy from the German, and that it was taken bodily from an American play on the same subject. These statements, being entirely baseless, were answered and refuted by Mr. Hamilton with plenty of spirit and energy, but with a due regard to courtesy. This, however, did not satisfy the editor of the *World*, who took up the cudgels on behalf of Mr. Hamilton, and stigmatised the *Times* gentleman as an "uncooked Scotchman."

ON the whole there would seem to be something that requires immediate reform in the dramatic criticism of the day. The elements of private and personal likes and dislikes are allowed to have far too much influence; and actors, and especially actresses, are habitually judged, not so much on their own merits, as with reference to the interests of that other artist whose train the critic happens for the time being to swell.

A CASE in point, I think, is Miss Mary Anderson's performance of Clarice in Mr. Gilbert's new play—as to the merits of which, not having seen it, I can, of course, offer no personal opinion whatever. The first-night notices were almost all bad, and, as I have been assured by at least twenty thoroughly capable judges who were present on the occasion, altogether unfair. Certainly, to those who could read between the lines, the animus displayed in more than one paper was gross and palpable.

C. D.

## Cookery.

### PLAIN DINNERS.

#### A LEG OF MUTTON.

IT seems a pity that English people do not, as a rule, find themselves able to gratify their taste for "plain roast and boiled" without leaving on hand such a quantity of cold meat. Delicious as every one must admit a fine leg of mutton to be when roasted to a turn and served hot, it certainly is the reverse of this when cold. It has, probably, the appearance of being economical in the cold form, because, without an undue consumption of pickles, so little of it is eaten. But, in the long run, it cannot prove economical to give the family food which does not supply the highest amount of nourishment, and cold meat is allowed by all dietitians to be less nourishing than hot meat.

While we admit that many excellent dishes can be made of cold meat, we contend that it is a point of good management to have very little left over from each day's dinner, and very rarely to serve meat cold.

Let us suppose that a leg of mutton is in question, and see how we can have three hot dishes of freshly-cooked meat out of it instead of one. Get the butcher to saw off from the loin-end of the leg as many chops as will make an Irish stew; then have the middle cut for roasting one day, and the knuckle for stewing or boiling another. Should there be any left over from the last two dishes, it can be used as suggested in the last bill of fare, which is of the nature of a make-shift dinner, but very good if carefully managed, and decidedly cheap.

In choosing a leg of mutton, observe that it is plump in the middle and short at the knuckle. Inferior legs of mutton are often cut with a portion of the chump of the loin attached. The characteristics of good mutton are white fat, the lean somewhat dark in colour, the bones small, the legs short. Housekeepers of former generations always insisted on being supplied with mutton at least four years old, and they were right, for immature meat has neither the savour nor nourishment of that which has attained its proper age.

It is rarely now that mutton, even two years old, is to be found in the markets; and it is generally fatted too rapidly. In London a large proportion of the mutton sold is foreign, and is apt to be dry and

flavourless. It is more economical in the end to pay a good price for home-produce than to have this cheaper and less satisfactory meat.

### BILLS OF FARE.

- |                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| I.             | Lentil Pudding.         |
| Irish Stew.    | Rice Pudding.           |
| II.            | Bread Soup.             |
| Roast Mutton.  | Yorkshire Pudding.      |
|                | Boiled Apple Dumplings. |
| III.           | Stewed Macaroni.        |
| Boiled Mutton. | Caper Sauce.            |
|                | Sultana Pudding.        |
| IV.            | Mulligatawny Soup.      |
| Potato Hash.   | Boiled Cheese.          |

### DINNER I.

#### LENTIL PUDDING.

Wash half a pound of lentils, rubbing them with the hands, in several waters until the last is clear. Put the lentils to soak in three pints of cold water, with a bit of soda the size of a large pea. The next day boil the lentils in this water until tender, adding more water as required, but allowing it to dry up at the last. When the lentils are cooked enough beat them up as smoothly as possible; add an ounce of butter, pepper and salt; stir over the fire until mixed; then press the mass into a buttered mould or basin, and after it has stood a minute, turn out on a dish and serve.

#### IRISH STEW.

Fry the chops very quickly, just to brown the outside. Put them into a stewpan with sufficient hot water to cover them, salt, pepper, and four or five onions, sliced. Simmer gently for one hour, or until the meat is beginning to be tender, then drain off the gravy, from which remove every particle of fat. Put a layer of sliced potatoes at the bottom of the stewpan, then the cooked meat and onions, over this another layer of potatoes. Pour in the gravy, well seasoned with salt and pepper; cover the stewpan closely, and simmer until the potatoes are done, usually in about half an hour.

Many cooks parboil the potatoes before putting them into the stew, and they do this under the impression that potatoes contain some poisonous property, which is drawn into the liquid in which they are cooked. This may be described as a popular error, and Dr. Pavy says that "if there is any poison present, it must be either insignificant in amount, or be destroyed by the heat to which the potato is subjected before being sent to table." As the flavour is finer if the potato is put raw into the stew, it is as well to know that no harm can arise from so doing.

There can, however, be no doubt that Irish stew is too rich, and therefore indigestible for most people, when the potatoes are allowed to absorb all the fat of the meat. By freeing the gravy of grease as directed above before adding the potatoes, this objection to Irish stew will be obviated.

#### RICE PUDDING.

This recipe is for a good family pudding; the eggs can, if desired, be omitted.

Boil a quarter of a pound of rice until soft, drain it dry. Pour a pint of milk, whilst boiling, on two eggs well-beaten; sweeten with two ounces of raw sugar, and flavour with grated nutmeg or lemon-peel. Mix this custard with the rice, add an ounce of beef-suet shred very finely. Put the pudding into a tart-dish, and bake it in a slow oven for an hour.

If more convenient, the rice may be baked in water instead of being boiled, and the pudding be finished in the same manner in either case.

Recipes for dishes of the remaining bills of fare will be given in a following number.

## How to Mount Microscopic Objects.

### PART II.

THERE is a vast variety of opaque objects which do not require to be mounted in balsam in order to prepare them for microscopic observation, and which may be treated in a far more simple and easy manner. Procure some slips of wood of the same dimensions as an ordinary glass-slide, that is, three inches long by one inch broad, and about one tenth of an inch in thickness. In the exact centre of each of these must be perforated a circular hole from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in diameter. They are to be used in the following manner. Take some stout paper of the peculiar colour known as "dead black," and paste a piece about an inch square to the lower surface of one of these slides, so that the central hole is completely closed by it. See that it adheres thoroughly in every part, and put it upon one side until quite dry. You will then have a kind of cell in which the object is to be placed. Now take the gum tragacanth, the manufacture of which was described in the preceding paper, and transfer a small quantity to the centre of the cell, laying it upon the black



paper which forms the bottom. Having done this, place your object upon the gum, press it down slightly with one of the needles you will have ready to hand for that purpose, and then lay it aside until it is thoroughly dry. If time is an object the slide may be placed upon a warm mantelpiece in order to accelerate matters, but in no case should it be dried too quickly. On the other hand it must never be completed until every particle of moisture has evaporated, for if the cell be closed while the object is still damp, mould is almost certain to ensue before many weeks have passed. This is trying enough even with simple and easily obtained objects, while with those of a more valuable nature, the damage done may be irreparable.

HAVING satisfied himself that the condition of the newly-mounted object is all that can be desired, the operator may proceed to the final stage of the business, which is a matter of perfect simplicity. Take one of the thin glass covers, either circular or square, and close the cell with it, fastening it firmly in its place by gold size, Canada balsam, or by ordinary cement. The slide may then be finished off in any style most fancied by the operator, a very simple plan being to cover it entirely with white paper, while a coloured label may be affixed at one end on which the name of the object, etc., may be written. A band of black varnish painted round the cell itself will add greatly to the appearance of the slide.

MANY objects may be satisfactorily prepared in this manner, which has many advantages over mounting in balsam, inasmuch that it is far more rapidly conducted, and requires but little practice before perfection is arrived at. On the other hand, of course, transparent objects cannot be mounted in this way, as the nature of the cell effectually prevents the transmission of light from below which is so necessary for their examination. Such specimens, however, as small insects, seeds of plants, pollen, and many others, are quite suitable for this method of preparation, and may always be procured without much difficulty.

MOUNTING objects in fluid is far more difficult than either of the processes already explained, and is, indeed, hardly suitable for description in these pages, for it is of little value excepting to those who are making the microscope a special study, and for whom, of course, these remarks are not intended. It is principally employed when it is required to show the internal organs of insects and other minute beings *in situ*, and therefore requires the exercise of great skill in dissecting the object to be prepared, as well as in the actual mounting itself.

Now as to the method of collecting the objects to be mounted. It is as well to make a point of invariably carrying in the pocket one or two receptacles for any objects of interest which may be met with, for it is impossible to be sure that some curious and valuable specimen may not turn up during even the shortest of strolls, and it is very aggravating to be obliged to pass it by for want of the apparatus with which to secure and carry it home. No insect-hunter worthy of the name thinks of stirring from the house without at least a box or two in his pocket, and the microscopist should take pattern by his example. Two or three chip pill-boxes, such as are employed to hold ointment, and can be procured of any druggist at the rate of from four to six a penny, will be useful for holding large specimens such as insects and other small animals, while a glass phial fitted with a cork (not a stopper) will serve to contain more minute objects. This phial should be of the same dimensions throughout, for if furnished with a neck it is often very difficult to induce the contents to come forth when they are required for use.

ANY small insects which are taken alive, and are required for immediate use, may be instantly and painlessly killed by dashing them into boiling water. Take care, however, that the water is absolutely boiling, and remove the insects from it without delay after they have been killed, for, if allowed to remain, the action of the water will cause them to fall to pieces. If it is desired to keep them for any length of time, they may be dropped into methylated spirits of wine, which will preserve them uninjured for months, or even years, if need be. The larger insects, also, and any creatures which are intended for dissection, must be kept in spirits for a time, in order that they may become partly hardened, for their bodies are so full of fat, and the tissues are so soft and delicate, that they cannot be manipulated when freshly killed. In this case the spirit should be diluted with one-third part of water, for otherwise the hardening process will be too complete, and the dissection rendered a matter of great difficulty.

It may not be out of place here to remark that most useful tools for insect dissection may be made out of the needles thrust into handles as before described, at the cost of very little trouble to the operator. All that is required is to rub them down upon a stone until they assume the form of fine double-edged knives, whose edges are capable of taking the greatest keenness. These simple implements are really invaluable, and are the principal tools employed by one of our leading entomologists, whose wonderful dissections of beetles so small as to be almost invisible to the naked eye have won for him fame throughout the scientific world. A pair of fine dissecting scissors will also be useful, and can be obtained of any dealer in microscopic apparatus.

EXCEPTING for the very minute species, I am inclined to think that a magnifying-glass is of little use in dissection, and should seldom be employed while the actual work is going on. For it should be remembered that, if a magnifying-glass is used while the dissection is in progress, the implements are enlarged in exactly the same proportion as the subject, so that working at a small insect with an ordinary needle is much like attacking a stag-beetle with a poker. In some cases, however, its use is absolutely necessary, and it should be fixed on a stand at the right focus in such a manner that both hands may be free to carry on the work. It need not be a powerful one, and an ordinary pocket lens, with two or three glasses of different focus, will answer every purpose.

THERE is no part of an insect, or other small creature, which is not full of interest when viewed through a microscope, so that quite a variety of objects may be procured from a single specimen. The various parts of the mouth, the eye, the scales, the breathing holes and tubes which pervade the body, the gizzard (when present), and many other parts of the structure, may be mounted without any great difficulty, as may also vegetable tissues, etc. It must be remembered, however, that, before mounting, all portions of internal structure must be steeped for a time in a moderately strong solution of caustic potash, while vegetable fibres, such as those of leaves, must be soaked in water until partial decomposition has set in, when the delicate cuticle may be easily removed from the framework by means of a camel's-hair pencil. A speedier method is to immerse the leaves for a few minutes in dilute nitric acid, but this process requires some little care, and is not always equally satisfactory.

SECTIONS of wood are very beautiful objects, but can scarcely be prepared without a special machine, and as this is somewhat expensive it is pretty well as cheap to buy the slides outright. There is, however, such a vast variety of objects to be obtained without difficulty, and which need no special care in their preparation, that it is quite unnecessary for the microscopist to waste his time and money over this branch of the work, unless he should happen to be making a speciality of that line of study.

IN conclusion I would offer a few suggestions in recapitulation of those which I have already set forth. In the first place, do not be discouraged at a few early failures. These are inevitable in any work requiring skill and delicacy of touch, and must be expected by every one who enters upon a course of study with the microscope. In the second, never lose patience while mounting an object, no matter how troublesome the operation may be. Loss of temper invariably means a spoiled slide. And, lastly, be very careful to see that all slides are thoroughly dry before the final touches are put to them. If this precaution is attended to, and if the necessary perseverance is forthcoming, proficiency in mounting objects for the microscope will be merely a matter of time.

## An Encounter With a Wild Cat.

THE following anecdote is told by the Brooksville correspondent of the *Mount Desert Herald*: "Towards the latter part of an afternoon recently I was coming from Sedgwick on foot, and alone. When about half-way down the hill above Black's school-house I heard a very peculiar kind of a purring sound, with an occasional low, snapping noise at the same time, which seemed to be very near the road (the land on the Brooksville side of the road was quite thickly wooded with spruce and fir trees, the limbs growing near the ground). After listening a minute or two and locating the sound as near as I was able to, I stooped low in the road, and looking under the branches of the trees, I saw a large wild cat some fifteen or twenty feet from the road, very busily engaged with something so buried up in the snow that I could not tell what it was. Not really expecting to get near the animal, I went back a few rods and succeeded, after some trouble, in getting a small stake from the fence on the opposite side of the road, and started for the wild cat. By creeping very easy through the snow I got within five or six feet of him before he saw me. I saw that he was very busy eating a rabbit he had just killed. As soon as he saw me he jumped into the limbs of a small spruce directly over his head, with the rabbit in his mouth. By this time I was within reach of him with my stake, and struck at him through the limbs of the tree, which, however, were so thick that, although I hit him on the back, I didn't seem to hurt him. But he dropped the rabbit and turned towards me with a savage growl. He looked wicked, and I put myself into a posture of defence, and none too soon, for he immediately leaped from the tree directly at me. I was ready for him, and met him with my stake fair in the forehead. It dropped him in the snow, and broke my stake short off, leaving the longest part in my hands. Before he could recover himself I got my foot on him, and got in half-a-dozen more good licks on his head, that finished him. I dragged him home (about a mile distant), having to stop many times on the road for people to examine my trophy, for he attracted considerable notice. The next day I took his ears to the town treasurer, who paid me two dollars and a half for them, the town at that time paying that amount of bounty for every wild cat killed within the limits of the town."

## Household Gardening.

WE last week referred to the importance of keeping the roots of fruit-trees moist when out of the ground during the process of removal. As much transplanting is being done now, it will be well to observe that the drying of the roots which is either thoughtlessly or carelessly and certainly needlessly permitted, is one of the most fertile causes of failure.

Thousands of trees and shrubs fail to grow satisfactorily, and many refuse to grow at all, because the sap has been allowed to evaporate from the roots by exposure to air. On this account, fruit-trees, evergreens, Roses, and other deciduous flowering shrubs with parched and shrivelled roots, should not be purchased in markets, nor from barrows that traverse the streets of large towns, however apparently cheap the examples offered for sale may be.

We have seen Roses innumerable sold for twopence each that certainly were not worth twopence a dozen, for not one in twenty of them could grow and flower satisfactorily.

Many persons are in the habit of purchasing what they do not want when they see articles that they consider cheap. There is, in truth, no economy whatever in a policy of this kind, and by far the better plan is to decide on the number of plants or trees that are really needed for furnishing a garden satisfactorily, and then to obtain them from a dealer of repute, who will supply them in such condition that with reasonable care they may be expected to flourish.

### USEFUL FRUITS FOR SMALL GARDENS.

#### DWARF-GROWING APPLES.

Without a knowledge of the habits of the different varieties of this useful fruit, mistakes must inevitably be made in planting. For instance that excellent and popular kind, the Blenheim Orange, is so robust and spreading in growth as to be quite unfitted for the narrow border of a suburban garden, and others could be named similarly unsuitable where space is limited.

The best early autumn dessert-apple for small gardens is the Irish Peach. The tree is a compact grower and good bearer of attractive and delicious fruit. Following it, and good for both dessert and cooking, are Duchess of Oldenburg and Cellini, both dwarf growers, and early and good bearers of medium-sized and beautifully-striped apples. For use in November and onwards till January, we have Cox's Orange Pippin, the prince of dessert-apples for Christmas, the tree being compact and productive. This splendid apple should be in every collection.

We pass now to note four more strictly serviceable varieties that produce large fruit abundantly for culinary purposes. These are Stirling Castle, a noble fruit almost as round as an orange, and often produced freely on trees three feet high. Similarly productive in a small state is Prince Albert, a sure bearer of medium-sized, rosy-cheeked fruit; then comes Eclinvile Seedling, one of the finest and most profitable. Warner's King completes the quartette, and under good cultivation it is not uncommon to see fruits of it eighteen inches in circumference. The varieties named may be planted without hesitation by all who have room for a few trees. It were easy to extend the list, but the probability is that the longer it is made the less useful it may be to the majority of readers.

When dwarf early-bearing trees are desired, they should always be grafted on the French Paradise Stock, which is used by all good nurserymen, large standard trees for growing in orchards being worked on the Crab Stock. It is important to remember this, and order trees accordingly.

#### CHOICE PEARS.

Undoubtedly one of the best early Pears is William's Bon Chrétien, the fruit being of the first size and quality, and always in demand in its season. Succeeding it, and very delicious, is Beurre Superfin, a very juicy and buttery Pear of the first excellence. Also of high quality and handsome in appearance is Louise Bonne of Jersey, which must never be overlooked, nor must the superior but less known Doyenne du Comice. The two late Pears we recommend are Josephine de Malines and Bergamotte de Esperen, which will afford fruit of the highest merit from January till May. This is a very choice half-dozen, and if planted in positions where the trees will grow well, and the fruit mature and develop its qualities, will give satisfaction to the most exacting connoisseurs of this esteemed fruit. If a very early Pear is wanted for training to a wall, plant the Jargonelle.

#### A FEW GOOD PLUMS AND CHERRIES.

The most useful of early Plums is Rivers's Prolific. It has been mentioned before, as has the Cluster Damsion, and both must be grown. These, however, are small fruits. A large Plum that should be grown everywhere, when this fruit will flourish, is the Victoria, a very fine red, egg-shaped fruit, that is produced in such abundance as often to break down the branches. Larger still, also red, is Pond's Seedling, but the tree needs more room than the others. It is a magnificent kind, and fruits of it were sold last season for threepence each. Round Purple Plums of great merit are the Czar and Purple Gage; and the most productive and serviceable of the yellow Plums is Magnum Bonum. Perhaps the richest of all is the Greengage, but the tree is not a great bearer, and is usually best secured to a wall.

Cherries are also best trained to walls, as they are there less liable to be devoured by birds than in the open, where the fruit is seldom allowed to ripen, unless protected by nets. Early Prolific, nearly

black; Governor Wood, red; Elton, amber; and Black Tartarian are among the finest and richest. The Morello, as has been previously intimated, is the only one that birds do not attack voraciously. This is because it is not sweet, but it is withal very useful, and may be planted wherever space can be found.

#### PEACHES, NECTARINES, AND APRICOTS.

Every year there are persons who desire a tree of each of these fruits for covering a vacant wall having a southerly aspect, but out of the great number of varieties prepared for sale, they know not which to select. As a Peach, then, all who desire a tree will not err by planting the Grosse Mignonne, which is very fine and delicious.

One of the best Nectarines is the Violette Hative, and the finest Apricot the Moorpark. It may not be known to all that the Nectarine is merely a variety of the Peach, having a smooth shining skin, that of the Peach being downy, but the flavour of the two is totally dissimilar. By the term variety, as employed here, we mean that if any person were to raise a tree from the stone of a Peach it would be as likely to bear Nectarines as Peaches, while if a Nectarine stone were planted the resulting fruit might be a Peach. This curious fact proves that the two are simply differing forms of the same fruit, just as one Gooseberry is smooth and another hairy.

#### PLANTING TREES.

First bear in mind the above injunction of keeping the roots moist, then make an excavation much wider than the roots extend when spread out. Let the tree be placed in position so that when the roots are covered and the soil levelled, the stem is just as deep in the soil as it was before removal, and this point may easily be determined by an examination of the bark.

If any of the roots are bruised, cut off the injured portions with a sharp knife, and spread out the remainder quite straight, not doubling them. Work the soil well amongst them with the hand, then make it tolerably firm by treading, and cover the surface of the soil over them, and for a foot beyond their extremities, two or three inches deep, with manure. This will exclude frost and the virtues of the manure will be washed down and afford nourishment for the roots.

Secure each tree to a stake or to the wall, as the case may be, to prevent their being twisted by the wind, but care must be taken that the ligatures employed do not injure the bark. It is always desirable to attach the names to the trees. Smooth deal labels covered with white paint, and written on with a very black pencil while the paint is still wet, last for years, the names remaining legible, as they are practically "sunk," i.e. through the covering of paint.

#### HYACINTHS IN GLASSES.

It is not often that the bulbs that have flowered in glasses of water are of any use for another year; still, some of them may be so preserved that they will afford small flowers.

There is no better way of preparing them than to transfer them from the water to flower-pots, working cocoanut-fibre refuse or leaf-mould carefully amongst the roots and keeping it moist. If by this means the foliage can be kept fresh for a considerable time, the bulbs may be useful for planting four or five in a pot in the autumn; these small bulbs often producing a number of slender spikes of flowers even more suitable for cutting for bouquets than the larger spikes, which are too massive for that purpose.

## Buying Pictures.

As we arrange our payment of pictures at present, no artist's work is worth half its proper value while he is alive. The moment he dies, his pictures, if they are good, reach double their former value; but that rise of price represents simply a profit made by the intelligent dealer or purchaser on his past purchases. So that the real facts of the matter are, that the British public, spending a certain sum annually in art, determines that of every thousand it pays, only five hundred shall go to the painter, or shall be at all concerned in the production of art; and that the other five hundred shall be paid merely as a testimonial to the intelligent dealer, who knew what to buy. Now testimonials are very pretty and proper things, within due limits; but testimonials to the amount of a hundred per cent. on the total expenditure are not good political economy.

Do not therefore, in general, unless you see it to be necessary for its preservation, buy the picture of a dead artist. If you fear that it may be exposed to contempt or neglect, buy it; its price will then probably not be high; if you want to put it into a public gallery, buy it; you are sure, then, that you do not spend your money selfishly; or, if you loved the man's work while he was alive, and bought it then, buy it also now, if you can see no living work equal to it. But if you did not buy it while the man was living, never buy it after he is dead. You are then doing no good to him, and you are doing some shame to yourself.

Look around you for pictures that you really like, and in buying which you can help some genius yet unperished—that is the best atonement you can make to the one you have neglected—and give to the living and struggling painter at once wages and testimonial.—*Ruskin.*

# Odds and Ends.

THE Marquis of Lorne, in the interesting paper which he read before the members of the Society of Arts on "Canada and Its Products," said: "We can now return to the plains, and look at the Indian nomad tribes. A law exists throughout our territories against the sale of whisky, a law vigorously enforced. Whisky is the bane which drives the savage wild, and is the fruitful cause of every crime amongst the white men in the American Western villages; and the prohibition placed upon its use does much towards preserving order among the young communities of a British soil. You do not hear in villages in our land, as you do hear it said farther south, that 'Shooting was pretty lively last night.' There is a story that, in a Colorado ball-room, it was necessary, on account of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, to write in large letters over the head of the unfortunate gentleman who had been detailed to perform music for the evening's amusement: 'Please don't shoot the pianist; he is doing his best.' If trouble occur in our Canadian West, it is promptly suppressed, and the guilty ruffian handed out."

ONCE Lord John Russell called a cab in the evening to carry him from the House of Commons to Chesham Place. To the cabman he gave a coin; but when, with proper care, he balanced his accounts that night, he found 19s. short. He rightly concluded that he had given his driver a sovereign for a shilling. On the following day he asked the waterman in Palace Yard if he remembered the cabman. The cabman was found. Lord John reminded him of what had occurred. The cabman knew all about it, and acknowledged his rascality. Lord John suggested the immediate return of the money. "Can't be done, your lordship," said the cabman, grinning. "Can't! why not?" rejoined the immortal Whig. "Why, my lord, I thought a great nobleman like you of course meant to give me the money as compensation for the honour of driving you; so, as my boots was werry old, I went and bought a pair—and here they are," pointing to his somewhat shapely legs. "They're werry nice boots, my lord. Some calls 'em Wellingtons; I calls 'em Russells."

RECENTLY a well-known barrister was concerned in a case where the question involved was as to the mental condition of the testatrix. The witness under examination, herself an aged lady, had testified to finding her friend failing, childish, and that when she told her something she looked as though she did not understand. Counsel, cross-examining, tried to get her to describe this look, but did not succeed very well in doing so. At last, getting a little impatient, he asked: "Well, how did she look? Did she look at you as I am looking now, for instance?" The witness very demurely replied: "Well, yes—kind of vacant—"

THE cashier of a bank in the city reports the following incident: A German gentleman approaching the counter, requested that a cheque payable to the order of Schweitzercase be cashed. "Ja, dot's me," he nodded reassuringly in answer to the cashier's look of enquiry. "But I don't know that you are Mr. Schweitzercase. You must get yourself identified," said the cashier. "How vas dot?" asked the German with a puzzled look. "You must get some one to identify you," repeated the bank officer; "I don't know you." "Ah, ja!" cried Hans, much relieved. "Dot's all right. I don't know you neider."

WHEN Fouché was appointed minister by Louis XVIII., the king asked him whether, during the Empire, he had not had him watched. He wanted to know the name of the spies. Fouché hesitated to reveal them; the king insisted; Fouché spoke at last: "If your majesty must know, it was the Duc de Blacas," said Fouché. "And how much did you pay him?" asked the king. "Two hundred thousand francs per annum," came the answer. "It is well," said the king; "he has not cheated me; we went halves."

A BIT of wholesome advice is credited to Washington Irving in Orville Dewey's autobiography, as follows: "Mrs. S. told me that one evening he (Irving) strolled up to their piazza and fell into one of his easy and unpremeditated talks, when he said, among other things: 'Don't be anxious about the education of your daughters; they will do very well; don't teach them so many things—teach them one thing.' 'What is that, Mr. Irving?' 'Teach them to be easily pleased.'"

IT was my custom in my youth (says a celebrated Persian writer) to rise from my sleep, to watch, pray, and read the Koran. One night, as I was thus engaged, my father, a man of practised virtue, awoke. "Behold," said I to him, "thy other children are lost in irreligious slumbers, while I alone awake to praise God." "Son of my soul," said he, "it is better to sleep than to wake to remark the faults of thy brethren."

A GOOD wife never grumbles. A good horse never stumbles. A good child never tumbles. A good cart never rumbles. A good actor never mumbles. Good yarn never jumbles. Honest work never humbles.

A MAN loved by a beautiful and virtuous woman carries a talisman that renders him invulnerable; every one feels that such a one's life has a higher value than that of others.

GOOD-NATURE will always supply the absence of beauty, but beauty will never supply the absence of good-nature.

Few persons have sufficient wisdom to prefer censure, which is useful to them, to praise, which deceives them.

A SOUND discretion is not so much indicated by never making a mistake as by never repeating it.

KINDNESS—a language which the dumb can speak and the deaf can understand.

EVERY noble crown is, and on earth will for ever be, a crown of thorns.

LANGUAGE was given to us that we might say pleasant things to each other.

GREAT hearts alone can understand how much glory there is in being good.

TELEGRAMS were published a week or two ago which gave a summary of Henry Ward Beecher's deliverance on Theatres after he had seen Mr. Irving. It appears, from the New York papers, that the statement was made at the Plymouth Church week-night meeting, at which Mr. Beecher often replies to questions put to him by any person in the audience. A white-haired old gentleman at one of these meetings wanted to know why Mr. Beecher, who had sometimes spoken against the drama, had recently gone to see "Pinafore," and other plays—whether his objections had been removed, and if so, from what cause? The Brooklyn pastor, seated comfortably in his chair, explained that he had been brought up to regard the theatre as a bad institution, and to consider that going to such a place "was almost as bad as going to the devil." For many years his time was too fully occupied to pay much attention to the subject, but at last he went to see Salvini in "Othello," and was glad that he went. The question as to what he would advise was adroitly fenced. "I advise every young man to follow in my footsteps," said the wary old minister, "and when you are seventy years old, go and see the best actors you can find."

MR. HAWKINS, Q.C., engaged in a cause before the late Lord Campbell, had frequently to mention the damage done to a brougham, and this word he pronounced, according to its orthography, brough-am. "If my learned friend will adopt the usual designation, and call the carriage a bro'am, it will save the time of the court," said Lord Campbell with a smile. Mr. Hawkins bowed, and accepted his lordship's pronunciation of the word during the remainder of his speech. When Lord Campbell proceeded to sum up the evidence, he had to refer to the omnibus which had damaged the bro'am, and in doing so pronounced the word also according to its orthography. "I beg your lordship's pardon," said Mr. Hawkins, very respectfully; "but if your lordship will use the common designation for such a vehicle, and call it a 'bus—'" The loud laughter which ensued, and in which his lordship joined, prevented the conclusion of the sentence.

THE Gaelic bard, Jan Lorn Macdonald, whose loyal and satirical effusions are well known in every corner of the Highlands, pursued with the most unrelenting rancour of his verse the celebrated Marquis of Argyll, the enemy of his clan, and the head of the Whig interest. The marquis, like all Highlanders of the period, felt sore at being the object of a bard's ridicule, and, happening to meet Jan Lorn soon after the composition of one of his satires, asked him in Gaelic: "Wilt thou never cease to gnaw me, Jan?" "Never," replied Jan with asperity, "never, until I can swallow you."

A COURTIER in France, in the reign of Louis XIII., playing at picquet in an open gallery, observed the President (whose name was Gaussant) talking very freely of his method of playing, and, having purposely made some trifling mistake to draw him still further, he exclaimed: "What stupid play! I protest I am a mere Gaussant!" "You are a mere fool," replied Gaussant. "True," replied the other; "that was what I meant."

"MISS FITZROY—aw—are you not fond of etchings?—aw—you know, they are deuced clever—some of them are." "Ah yes, indeed, Mr. Featherweight. And, do you know, there is something about you that reminds me very much of an etching?" "Why, really—aw—how charming!" "Yes; there is about you such a foggy suggestion of something that isn't there, you know."

THE mistress of a house in the city said to a young servant-girl fresh from the country: "Maria, go see if Mr. Scott, the pork butcher, has pigs' feet." The servant-girl departed and returned a few moments later. "Please, ma'am, I don't know; I couldn't see!" "But what did you say?" "I didn't say anything. I looked at Mr. Scott—he had boots on."

A SCOTCH farmer had determined, in spite of the bad times, to pay his rent if it were his last shilling, and, saying to his landlord, who received it, "It is my last shilling," he threw down a roll of notes. The landlord counted them and said: "There is fifty pounds too much." "Odds, man," said the farmer, "I put my hand in the wrong pouch."

A STORY is told of a Welsh jury, who, when a learned counsel had opened his case and concluded by saying, "Now, gentlemen, I will call before you witnesses who will bear out the statements I have made," replied unanimously: "Oh, Mr. Williams, you need not give yourself the trouble: we can believe you."

A MILLER had his neighbour arrested upon the charge of stealing wheat from his mill, but as he was unable to prove the charge, the Court adjudged that the plaintiff should apologise to the accused. "Well," said he, "I've had you arrested for stealing my wheat. I can't prove it, and I'm sorry for it."

JONES and Brown were talking of a young clergyman, whose preaching they had been to hear. "What do you think of him?" asked Brown. "I think," said Jones, "he did much better two years ago." "Why, he did not preach then," said Brown. "True," said Jones; "that is what I mean."

ANXIOUS friends were informed in the *Times* of January 22nd that "Mr. Spurgeon is compelled to prolong his absence at Mentone, but is full of confidence that he will soon be well." If this popular gentleman's "absence" is at Mentone, where may his presence be?

"Do you know why you and George remind me of two shades of one colour?" asked a young lady of a companion, who had been engaged for a good many years. "No," was the reply. "I'll tell you, then; it's because you don't match."

NEIGHBOURS are very considerate in Norway. When a baby is born, a placard is nailed up on the door informing the community of the fact. Those who wish to move out of the vicinity are thus enabled to do so in good season.

"You bachelors ought to be taxed," said Miss Lachford to a resolute evader of the noose matrimonial. "I agree with you perfectly, ma'am," was the reply, "for bachelorism certainly is a luxury."

A LAY sermon—a "curtain lecture."

THE way of the world—the railway.

TABLE of contents—the dinner-table.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That no ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## QUESTIONS.

LENA writes: "I should be much obliged if you could give me the verses of a poem called 'Sympathy.' The idea expressed therein is, a man and maid are both lost in a wood (I think); both have been crossed in love. Meeting each the other, they propose, 'for sympathy,' to drown together. Many other things they propose 'for sympathy,' each alternate verse ending with these words."

LONDON SPARROW wishes to know where he can find the quotation, "O Purblind Race of Miserable Men," and who is the author of it?

M. A. B.—Can anyone give this correspondent the name of a magazine published in November in which an account of the application of petroleum to fruit-trees was given?

O. E. W. will be glad to know if Thomas Hood's poem, "A Grave in the West," has been set to music; if so, by whom?

## ANSWERS.

BUXTON.—"The Branks" was an instrument used for the punishment of scolds. It fitted over the head and locked behind; a tongue-piece projected, intended to enter the mouth to keep down the unruly member of the subject operated upon. The instrument, no doubt, was in general use throughout the country, and was known in Worcestershire as "The Cranks." Brand, in his "History," gives a portrait of a woman wearing it. In the Mayor's Room at Newcastle-upon-Tyne an ancient crank used to be exhibited for the edification of scolds, and his worship would, in the case of contending female witnesses, point significantly to the instrument.

C. A. C.—1. It was to the so-called "hot water cure" we referred in our answer to Elia, and not to the use of hot coffee, tea, or other such beverages as those which you name. Much difference of opinion exists as to the ultimate effect on delicate membranes of the continued use of hot water, that is, water at a temperature of 110° to 150° Fahr., and we adhere to our opinion that the "hot water cure" should only be tried under medical advice. 2. The word "calenture" is derived from the Latin *calco*, to be hot. It is a kind of delirious home sickness, well known to sailors, and is caused by exposure to the heat of the tropics. Swift says of these fancies in the following extract:

So by a calenture misled,  
The mariner with rapture sees,  
On the smooth ocean's azure bed,  
Enamelled fields and verdant trees.  
With eager haste he longs to rove  
In that fantastic scene, and thinks  
It must be some enchanted grove,  
And in he leaps and down he sinks.

As regards our opinion of De Quincey's style, we can only say that it is masterly, but should not recommend his writings to any but persons of matured judgment. As we do not know which edition of De Quincey's works you have, we cannot tell if it contains all the autobiographical sketches. You may, however, judge for yourself, as these extend from 1790 to 1803. 3. Your father's opinion of your handwriting is too severe. Could you not try and improve your style by writing from good models?

COUNTRY COZ.—The stockingette bodices can be had at any of the large drapers' shops in London.

EAGER ENQUIRER.—1. Such light refreshment implies a standing supper, guests placed informally round a room, seated or not, as space and circumstance permit. If the dishes provided are numerous enough to arrange upon a centre table, plates laid all round facilitate the waiting; also allow gentlemen to attend to the wants of the ladies they take into the room. Should, however, the refreshment be merely for a few friends, a "tray supper," or upon a side table, the plates can be kept together close to the dishes. As dessert is the last stage of dinner, and guests are seated, there is but one arrangement possible—to place a plate before each person. 2. The young lady can write the invitation herself, introducing her mother's name in it, as hoping for the pleasure, etc., etc. Unless the friend invited be very juvenile, still in the schoolroom, the formality of the mothers addressing each other is quite unnecessary.

HELEN.—A paper on "China Painting," giving a few practical hints to beginners, appeared in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 5.

J. E. P.—Apply to Mr. G. Buck, mechanical tool maker, 242, Tottenham Court Road, who will sell you appliances for bevelling the edges of cardboard mounts.

LONDON SPARROW.—"John's British Birds in Their Haunts," 7s. 6d. (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge).

MARIANNE X.—"Change" is by J. W. Doune, and is to be found in "Poetical Quotations," published by Groombridge:

In bower and garden rich and rare,  
There's many a cherished flower,  
Whose beauty fades, whose fragrance flits  
Within the flitting hour.

Not so the simple forest leaf,  
Unprized, unnoticed lying—  
The same through all its little life—  
It changes but in dying.

Be such, and only such, my friends;  
Once mine, and mine for ever;  
And here's a hand to clasp in theirs,  
That shall desert them never.

And thou be such, my gentle love,  
Time, chance, the world defying;  
And take, 'tis all I have, a heart  
That changes but in dying.

O. E. W.—"The Brave Young Comrade" is published in a book of Volkslieder, at Augener's, in Regent Street.

ONIONS.—According to the Act, Vic. 37 and 38, Sect. 8, "If any child shall have been registered, and within twelve months after such registration, have any additional or different name given to it in baptism, the parent or guardian or other person may deliver to the registrar or superintendent registrar, a certificate, in accordance with the Act, signed by the minister who baptised the child, and thereupon, on payment of an appointed fee of one shilling, the registrar or superintendent registrar, must add such baptismal names to the entry on the register, without any erasure, and certify accordingly to the Registrar General."

THALES.—1. Cribbage.—Too many or too few cards constitutes a misdeal, the penalty for which is taking two points by the non-dealer. Ecarté.—The dealer must give five cards to each, by three and two, and two and three at a time, which must not be changed during the game. An incorrect deal, playing out of turn, or a faced card, necessitates a fresh deal. 2. The published price of "Dickens's Dictionary of London" is 1s.

THE LASS HE LEFT BEHIND HIM.—"Black Watch," so called from the sombre colour of their tartan, to distinguish them from the regular troops, who were called the "Red Soldiers."

T. J. L.—Try hot soap and water with a little soda, but turpentine is best.

VERITAS.—If an oil-painting is of any value, it is always best to have it cleaned by a professional hand. The method of cleaning depends much upon the state of the picture, the varnish, etc. We hope shortly to give a paper with some general hints upon this subject.

W. McW.—Lena kindly writes that you will find "My First and Last Appearance on Any Stage" in "T Leaves," by Edward Turner; it can be copied in the Reading Room, British Museum.

ZODIAC.—As regards the Star of Bethlehem, the star that guided the wise men, it is a matter of history that about one hundred and twenty-five years before Christ a bright star appeared, and gradually increased in brilliancy, so as to be seen in the daytime, about the time of our Saviour; it gradually decreased in brightness and disappeared. It was the appearance of this star that induced Hipparchus to draw up his catalogue. It was situated in the constellation of Coma, or Koma, not far from Virgo. Its great peculiarity would be that its appearance had been predicted some fourteen hundred years before. From its position it would culminate, or be on the meridian, about twelve at night in the latitude of Jerusalem. It is a fact, independent of all hypotheses, that at the precise hour of midnight, when Christ was born, and Christianity appeared, the celestial sign which mounted above the horizon was Virgo. R. C. Trench speaks of this star "shining in calm and silent splendour, larger, lovelier, and brighter than any of the host of heaven."—R. C. Trench's "Star of the Wise Men."

1884.—Yes.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 147.]

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[VOL. VI.]

## Valentine's Day.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

It was on the 14th of February, 187—, a damp, soft day.

Along a country road, leading down a long, low hill, a young girl was making her way, rather hurriedly, lest she should be missed from home and asked where she had been; for this she particularly wished to keep to herself.

She was not half-way down the incline when she heard wheels behind, and in another minute a pony phaeton overtook her, and was pulled up alongside of the pathway, and a cheery young voice called out:

"Oh, Myra, I wanted to see you. Did you get many valentines this morning?"

Yes, Myra had got two.

"Only two! I've got quite a bundle of them, and I do want you to come and see them. Bring yours, and we'll compare notes about them. Mamma said if you would come to tea the boys would see you home. They're with us, you know, for two days' holiday—Jim and Arthur, I mean."

The speaker was a bright, merry girl of eighteen, rosy-cheeked, and rather pretty.

The pony she drove was fidgety, and the old lady beside her, who was her grandmother, got fidgety also, and was glad to second the invitation and receive an answer in the affirmative so that they might move on.

"Cecilia little knows how indifferent I am to valentines," thought Myra Conway, as she hurried on towards a stile which led into Oakdene Wood, and, crossing it, went on through the trees. There was no footpath, but she knew the way well.

The day was still; there was neither wind nor sun, but something in the air told of spring, some whisper of new life—a little, just a little freshness, mingling with the odour of last year's leaves as they lay thick and damp on the ground.

Overhead, rooks were consulting, and cawing, and fighting about sticks, and among the brushwood small birds were gathering in groups, and then scattering with a general twitter that seemed to say nest-keeping cares were at hand.

A few shy primrose-buds might have been found had Myra looked for them, but she hurried by, intent on reaching one particular spot.

It was where an old oak-tree grew, no grander than many of its fellows, but to Myra a very particular tree indeed. Its gnarled roots rose up around its trunk, as if it had stood there so long that the earth had decayed and shrunk down round them.

On these gnarled roots Myra took her stand, and clasping her arms round its mighty stem, she pressed her lips on some figures cut in the bark.

It was simply a date—February 14, 187—, no name or initials—nothing but the date, and it was of five years before.

Below it were three other dates following each other, being the dates of three successive years from that time on.

The date of the present year was wanting, and the girl, taking a penknife from her pocket, cut it in the bark, reached up again and kissed the topmost inscription, and then hurried away as she had come.

An hour afterwards she entered her father's study at Oakdene, where they lived, and said quietly:

"Father, will you be lonely if I go up to the Maitlands' this evening? Mrs. Maitland sent to ask me, and Jim and Arthur are at home, and will bring me back."

The gentleman she addressed was sitting writing at a table, where sheets of paper, more or less written on, lay thickly over books or whatever else may have been beneath them. The carpet round him, too, was littered over in the same way, although a waste-paper basket stood near.

Mr. Conway was a literary gentleman—at least he considered himself such. Any way he was always writing, and sometimes his productions were published. He had a good many peculiarities, and one of them was a habit of objecting to everything when first it was presented to him for approval.

Those who were used to him knew that he objected this way without ever considering why or wherefore. So they paid no respect to his utterances, and merely waited to see what was the best way of bringing him round to what they required, a little adroitness being all that generally was required.

"To the Maitlands' this evening? Weather like this! How can they think of it?"

"The evening will be quite mild, father, there is no prospect of rain, and the roads are very dry."

"Ah, roads indeed! If you had a carriage to go in now, it would be different. Mrs. Maitland never thinks of that, and she might know well enough how girls get cold going out in winter in evening-dress."

"There is no occasion for me to dress; they are alone."

"There it is! If they had any one worth meeting, their own neighbours would be forgotten. If they are quite alone, what does she want you for?"

"Cecilia has got such a number of beautiful valentines. She wants me to see them."

"Valentines! the very things I am writing about—to prove the mistaken, the wholly false ideas there are about valentines. I thought I should have had my essay ready for this evening's post, but it will be impossible, there are so many authorities to consult. Just sit down, my dear, for a few minutes until I read this to you. One can always judge of one's own composition best by reading it aloud, and I have no one now to listen to me."

He said this with a deep sigh, and Myra knew what he meant. She knew how patient and forbearing her dead mother had been with him, how she had listened to his wandering lucubrations about things she cared nothing for, and how she had never told him she was tired, or that she wanted to do something else; and Myra was fond of her father, and excused his teasing ways, as she thought of all the troubles he had gone through.

She sat down on a foot-stool beside him, and laid her head on his knee. She was very sad herself. Her afternoon walk had roused a great depth of painful feeling in her mind, and, like her father, she had no one to listen to her. Thought and emotion were all pent up within herself. Not for the world would she have suffered the faintest breath of the feelings she held so sacred to be exposed to the "idle questioning of idle tongues and eyes."

There was something restful in laying her head on her father's knee, and feeling his hand stroke her soft hair while he read:

"Antiquaries have an unthankful task to perform when, in the interest of truth, they endeavour to disabuse the public mind of errors, sentimental in their nature, and venerable from the length of time during which they have retained their hold. Not the less is it their duty, when searching into the records of the past, fearlessly to uproot those ideas the falsity of which imposes upon the present generation, while it misrepresents the past. Of these none are more flagrantly mistaken than the popular notion that Valentine's Day is a Christian festival, having any right whatever to be associated with the saint and martyr whose name has thus been wrongfully appropriated. That this holy man was beheaded at Rome on the 14th of February, A.D. 270, there is no doubt, and this because he assisted the Christian martyrs during the terrible persecution of Claudius; but it is absolutely impious to associate him with the feasts in honour of Pan and Juno, which were held during that same month—the Lupercalia, as they were called, when, amidst many heathenish ceremonies, the names of unmarried women were put into a box for men to draw out as chance directed. 'The heathen's superstitious custom,' this has been called by ancient writers, and from this has come our modern Lupercalia, with its amatory and anonymous correspondence, ornamented by artists and colour-printing, and—"

Here the dinner-bell, pretty loudly rung, made Myra start, and warned her father to wash the ink off his hands. He never excused anyone else if they kept dinner waiting, so he could not well do it himself, and he had to stop reading.

"What do you think of my article?" he demanded of Myra. "Of course, that is only the beginning. A biography of Bishop Valentine will be introduced."

"It's very clever, I'm sure, father, only I wish you had not told us Valentine's Day was heathenish; it seems to spoil it, and where will you get a biography of the old bishop?" To which question Mr. Conway, waving his hand majestically towards the table, replied, "he had his authorities."

The Maitlands were a large and prosperous family, who lived in a new, handsome house not far from Oakdene.

Mr. Maitland was a rich man according to the estimate of a neighbourhood where no modern millionaire had ever dazzled his fellow-creatures. He had inherited his income, and had never in any way earned money, or found it necessary to exert himself. He was very fond of personal ease and luxury, out of the midst of which, in an indolent kind of way, he found fault with people and things, this being indeed most of what he had to do.

It was a mild, dry evening, with good moonlight, when Myra Conway, with her father's old gardener for an escort, walked over from Oakdene, having previously arranged with the sister next to her to see after the younger children, and to take care that their father



had his tea in proper time. For Myra was the female head of the family, their mother having died some time before.

Next to her in seniority was a brother whose course had been sad and disastrous. No one knew exactly where he was now, and that he might be permitted thus to bury himself in oblivion, Mr. Conway had undertaken responsibilities which were proving more than he had anticipated, or than he could meet without injuring the interests of his other children.

But perhaps he judged wisely in thinking he had not bought too dearly their exemption from the shadow that criminality when exposed seems ever to cast upon near relatives.

Besides this consideration there was another. He thought thus to save their mother's life; she was sinking under anxiety and dread, but when the worst was past she was unable to rally. The pressure upon the springs of life had been too heavy, and even in the rebound they broke.

Thus it will be seen that Myra Conway knew a good deal about the possibilities of life, besides what was connected with the inscription on the old oak-tree.

She was a slight girl of good height and graceful figure, with pretty features, pale, clear complexion, brown hair braided in a coil round the back of her head, and deep, calm, yet weary-looking grey eyes.

Her heavy crape-trimmed dress was this evening, for the first time, relieved by delicate tulle frillings, and amused by the merry chatter that went on round a table where Cecilia and two cousins who were staying with her had spread a shoal of valentines, some of this and some of other years, Myra's pale cheek had flushed, and Mrs. Maitland, as she watched her brightened face, thought to herself:

"How handsome that girl would be if she were only brought forward more."

Mr. Maitland, lolling on a soft, low couch, with a shaded lamp on a stand placed at exactly the right spot, was amusing himself with the illustrated papers.

"Here," he cried to his wife, who sat near with crewel-work in her fingers, "here's young Lawrence coming to the front, appointed interpreter to the Embassy to Burmah, and a whole heap here about him; accomplished linguist and so on. Here's a picture of the Embassy arriving on elephants; which of them is Lawrence, I wonder? The fellow in front, I suppose, going on first to speak. You remember him, don't you?" to his wife.

"Oh yes, certainly; Miss Harding's nephew."

"The old cat!" said Mr. Maitland, "she ought to have left him her money. County Hospital indeed!"

"It's very useful, though," said his wife.

"They are an extravagant set," replied he; "they raised every salary in the place as soon as they got her money, and I'm told they give the people forty-shilling port."

No one had observed that while this was passing Myra Conway had become like one who was going to faint.

Her head leaned heavily on her hand, as she strove to steady her elbow on the table, wondering whether she was falling off the chair, for she felt very like it. The remembrance that she never had fainted, even when passing through circumstances that might well have excused any girl for doing so, helped her to fight against the icy, pulseless feeling that was creeping over her, and she strove to maintain consciousness to hear what they were saying.

Through the singing in her ears came Mrs. Maitland's voice:

"Splendid, handsome young fellow he was; I always admired him."

"Too tall and lathy," replied her husband, who was himself short and broad.

"Oh," thought Myra, who was battling with the weakness that followed the agitation that had assailed her, "oh, if I could only see that paper!"

Before the evening was over she had recovered her habitual self-control, so as, without any apparent consciousness of too much interest, to lift the paper, look with outward calmness on the beloved name, and on the pictured procession, one of the figures in which was surely his, and read the words of eulogy that memory so quickly made her own, and laid up amongst her choicest treasures.

Miss Harding, whom Mr. Maitland had so irreverently termed "an old cat," had owned a nice property, that lay between the neighbourhood we have been telling of, and the not very distant county town. Reaching as it did to the suburbs of this town, it was of considerable value.

When she died it was then found that she had directed her whole estate to be sold, and the proceeds invested for the benefit of the County Hospital. Very great surprise was felt at this, as it was known that she had a widowed sister with a family by no means well provided for.

Miss Harding's entire property was at her own disposal, having been left to her unconditionally by a person who was a very distant connection.

The will under which it now passed to public purposes had been made soon after she became the owner, and had never afterwards been altered or added to.

That she had no ill-will to her sister's family was proved by her being accustomed very frequently to have some of them staying with her, more especially Archie, the eldest, on whose holidays and spare time she made such continual exactions that a considerable part of his early years had been passed with her.

The grounds of her residence adjoined the Oakdene Wood; naturally he was very much at Oakdene, and naturally—indeed, it was almost impossible it should have been otherwise—he fell in love with Myra Conway.

She was seventeen and he was twenty, when this fact became revealed to both of them.

Of course every sensible person will say: "Quite too soon for young people to think of anything of the kind." But, oh, the bliss of those delicious days—the vividness of the awakening to such intense delight!

It may be that with some it all fades away like morning's rosy hues, but there are others who never lose its glow, who hold by it as their very life, and live and die under its influence.

Whether this faithfulness to that which, as time goes on, sometimes becomes but an idea is suited to things as they are we do not say, but it exists, and Myra Conway could no more have taken back the love she had given than she could have changed her nature. Had he to whom she gave it proved unworthy, it would have ceased to exist. It could no more have been called forth by any other than the Dead Sea could teem with life.

## CHAPTER II.

OUR lovers were simply and perfectly happy for a time, and then a great wrench came.

A friend of Mrs. Lawrence's was going to India to join a relative engaged in indigo-planting, and he offered to take her son Archie with him, and put him in the way of making a living. While his mother hesitated, his aunt, Miss Harding, urged him to go, and offered the first substantial assistance she ever had offered to her struggling sister.

It was to pay Archie's passage and all expenses of outfit. The young man himself hesitated. It seemed like parting with life to go away from Myra, but he could not go on for ever remaining at his aunt's, and roaming about Oakdene; and to get forward in some way, and make an income, was essential before he and Myra could be anything more than lovers.

His mother knew nothing of their attachment, and he thought his aunt did not either; but in this he was mistaken, and it was to break off the matter that she so urged his going to India.

Miss Harding had no dislike to Myra—no one could have had—but she possessed an undying hatred to her father, for she had once in a spiteful kind of way known something of love herself, the fact being that after her fashion she had loved him, and she believed that he had jilted her.

But people who remembered the facts of that period said it could not have been so, for the attentions were all on her own side, and apparently he never noticed them. Anyway, she hated him, and was determined that her nephew should not marry his daughter. As for the lovers themselves, when it was determined that Archie should go, the only consolation they could see lay in an engagement and the prospect of continual correspondence.

What was their consternation when on young Lawrence making known to Mr. Conway the state of feeling between himself and Myra, that gentleman, in the sternest and most uncompromising manner, forbade either the one or the other; and not only so, but severely reprimanded the young man for attracting his daughter's affections without the knowledge of her parents, and while she was at such an early age that it was impossible she could judge for herself; or know her own mind. All which would have been more applicable had her lover himself been a little older.

He could obtain no mercy whatever from Mr. Conway, no modification of the stern refusal to admit that he ought in any way to consider his pretensions or his feelings. As for his daughter, at her age—little more than a child—she would soon forget such folly. So he said, asserting, as we often do, what he knew nothing of.

The day before Archie Lawrence made his avowal to Mr. Conway, he and Myra, standing under the old oak-tree, had exchanged assurances of love and faithfulness for all mortal life and time; more than each might hear again from the other words that were so dear, than with any idea of creating additional security; for to them nothing on earth seemed more stable than their love.

It was Valentine's Day, and Archie cut the date upon the tree. In all the sanguineness of youth, he thought perhaps a year might pass before he could be there again, but as for any longer time—impossible.

He would work so hard, he would get on so fast. Besides, longer than that he could not exist in banishment from Myra. And then they talked romance about life in the glowing East, and so on. Of the two, this turn of mind belonged more to him than to Myra, and when he asked her, if he should not be home quite in time for next Valentine's Day, would she come to the tree, and cut another date? she said, "Yes, and every Valentine's Day until he came."

Her lover looked at her reproachfully for such an implied suggestion. The possibility seemed not to have occurred to him.

On the very next day they parted under that same tree, with the parental ban on all and everything except this one farewell.

Mr. Conway's edicts in his own family were never disregarded. A pope's interdict, a law of the Medes and Persians, were not, in their different spheres, more effectual. Myra had no resource but to obey. Her nature would have revolted from any deceptive course, even had her lover proposed it.

No letter was to pass between them, no engagement to exist. Ah, but it did exist, and neither her father nor they could undo it—not now, at least.

It might in time rust through, if the magnetic influence of any intercourse whatever were still to be withdrawn; but as to snapping in a moment these first bright links of youthful faith and love—Mr. Conway was talking nonsense, as, indeed, he often did.

Early in the first winter after young Lawrence left, Miss Harding died.

When the contents of her will became known, people said she had treated her nephew very badly, after always leading him to suppose he was her heir. At the same time, this "leading" consisted chiefly in continually urging him to stay with her, and perhaps she might have intended at some time to make a different arrangement of her property, for she never thought of dying so suddenly, and might reasonably have expected some years of life to be still before her.

Had her nephew also been dead, Myra would have heard as much about him. No sign came from him, but this was as Mr. Conway had said it must be.

It was a lonely shrine before which Myra's memory and love still burned a hidden lamp.

This parting with her lover seemed to make the first great chasm in the peace and happiness which had hitherto marked her life. Her childhood and early youth had been passed in a pretty country home, among brothers and sisters, with an indulgent but sensible mother, whose gentle management rendered the petty tyranny of the father of the family of less account than it would otherwise have been.

And yet with all this Mr. Conway was an affectionate man, and his children knew this, nor during their childhood was there much opportunity for too hard a pressure from his unbending opinions. It was as they emerged from childhood into the years when, being old enough in some measure to judge between good and evil, the responsibility arose that none can resist who understand the bent of their own actions; it was then that Mr. Conway went astray, in thinking that the mere assertion of his will should be sufficient to change the tastes and wishes of those who were fast advancing to manhood and womanhood.

It was thus that he could not be held altogether blameless with regard to the misfortunes that his eldest son had brought upon them, after being forced by his father into a position that was repugnant to him.

The lad was clever, and wanted to go to college and be a barrister. His father had taken up a notion that there is nothing like business, no way by which a man will so soon be independent and ultimately so rich, and he applied to an old friend who had become a successful merchant, hoping to place his son in this gentleman's office.

But the friend could not at that time take him. Such openings were eagerly sought for, and all he would have for two or three years were promised. In the meantime, Mr. Conway, by way of preparing his son for his turn when it should come, placed him in a bank, and himself gave the requisite security.

A year after this the merchant died, his business passed to a brother with a number of sons, and young Conway's chance in that direction was gone. "Chained for life to a desk in a bank, at a starvation salary," was his description of his position, and sullenly and angrily he listened to an acquaintance who showed him what he called "a royal road to fortune."

There were pitfalls in this road, however; fortune, like the luminous vapour passing over a marsh, was always just on before, but near—very near; only to catch her she must be bribed by gold, and Conway's friend alternately jeered and importuned him on the subject of this gold, which it would be so easy for one in his position to borrow for a little, and then pay back again, after it had multiplied itself many times in their hands.

There was no crime in this, he argued, when Conway, the son of an honest gentleman, and brought up to be one himself, hesitated and drew back. The other knew his man. Had he been met by the

indignant, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this?" he would have backed out as if he had been jesting; but he understood the wavering resolution that, like the lightly scorched moth, played over the flame until it fell into it.

Conway made a clumsy business of what he had to do. He was never meant for such work, and his associate got off safely with the spoil, while he was left ruined.

The word does not express what it was, for ruin may mean only loss, and he was disgraced.

No need to describe the subsequent scene at Oakdene. Myra alone shared it with her parents. Her mother would have died if she had had none but her husband to speak to of what had happened, for he in bitterest wrath poured blame upon their son, and she could have blamed him.

But she did not do this, she did better. She herself went to those in authority who had been wronged, and so worked upon their compassion that they gave up the necessity of "making an example," and consented to let the culprit escape by a bridge of gold, which his father was to build.

This implied making good the forfeited security, as well as all other loss, and, the Conways not being rich, the sacrifice to them was very great.

It is not always at first that a pecuniary loss makes itself felt. In this case some time was given for arranging matters, and the cramping and drying up of old resources was gradual, but it ended in the loss of Oakdene.

Mr. Conway foresaw this before his wife died, but latterly he concealed from her the great difficulty he experienced in making the payments to which he was pledged.

Carriage and horses had been given up, and the number of servants reduced, but Mrs. Conway passed away without knowing that the old home would be lost, and her children be taken to a small house in a London suburb, the education of the younger ones to be carried on at the neighbouring day-schools, and the elder to be shut out by narrower means from the society in which their place would rightfully have been found.

When Myra returned from the Maitlands' on the evening of which we have told, she went at once to her father's study, thinking to wish him good-night, and then escape to the solitude that would so relieve her excited and overcharged feelings.

"Father," she said, going up beside him and softly laying her cheek against his, "won't you stop writing now? It is time we were all asleep. Have you not finished the poor old bishop yet?"

Mr. Conway took off his glasses, rubbed his eyes, and said:

"I have been wanting you this long time, Myra. Finished the bishop! I have only begun him. But I have finished the most complete proof that he had nothing to do with the 14th of February, and that the observances belonging to what is ignorantly called Valentine's Day are thoroughly heathenish."

Myra thought of the dates on the oak-tree and held her peace while he continued:

"I shall send my paper on the subject to the *Antiquarian Review*. I'd like you to hear this part of it; and she sat down patiently while he read. "Now," said he triumphantly, as he laid down the manuscript, "that ought to convince people—eh?"

Myra said she supposed it ought.

"The surest test in a matter like this," he continued, "is one's own conviction. Don't you see the heathenism of the thing? Why, it is absolutely keeping up Paganism in the land—Pan and Juno!"

Myra could stand it no longer.

"Will you excuse me, father?" she said. "I am quite stupid with being up so late. It will all be plainer to me to-morrow. I must say good-night."

But the subject was not renewed on the morrow, for the morning post brought letters to Mr. Conway relating to the liabilities which still lay upon him on his son's account, and made it but too plain to him that he could no longer avoid parting with Oakdene.

By May Day he and his family were cramped up in a high narrow house in Camberwell, and feeling as if they were in a prison.

For some time after the memorable evening when Myra had so unexpectedly heard of her lover she lived in continual expectation of some communication from him.

Never for a moment had she doubted his parting assurance that, as soon as he had made a position for himself, he would break through the silence that her father had so rigidly commanded, and assert his right to claim her hand. Yet year after year had passed without her even knowing whether he still lived. Year after year she inscribed on the old oak-tree the date that he thought would be cut but once before he returned, yet her faith in his love never failed or wavered.

But, oh, the heart-sickness of long-deferred hope—the weary waiting, the disappointment that seemed each day heavier, and its pressure sorer, since that chance news of his advancement! And it was all the harder to bear when cut off from every place that had been associated with that old happy time, the remembrance of which was so vivid among the scenes where their love had begun and grown.

The first dull season in London had passed, the first winter was almost gone, when Mrs. Maitland, being in town, urged Myra to return with her for a few weeks, and while she hesitated about leaving home, where she seemed to be indispensable, Mrs. Maitland attacked her father on the subject and fairly overpowered him into consent before he had time to raise objections.

Any one might have seen, as Mrs. Maitland did, that Myra's pale, fair cheek was absolutely colourless, and that there was pain in the wistful, weary look of her deep grey eyes. But no one observed these things, nor the gradual change that such signs told of. Her younger sisters were too inexperienced to note it, and her father, who spent most of his time in the reading-room of the Museum, too pre-occupied.

One reason known only to herself rendered Myra more ready than she might otherwise have been to accept Mrs. Maitland's invitation, for blank consternation was expressed in the household as to how its routine was to revolve correctly when the central pivot was gone.

But Myra had a tryst to keep in Oakdene Wood. A year had almost passed since last she had stood beneath the old tree and made another entry in the register of love and truth that it recorded.

Lately she had often pondered, but in vain, on how the next record was to be made, for, Pan and Juno notwithstanding, the day called Valentine's was close at hand, and the suppressed eagerness with which, when her father's consent was gained, she arranged to accompany Mrs. Maitland, was taken by that lady as a personal compliment.

For some days she avoided going near Oakdene. It was inexpressibly painful to her even to speak of the dear old home now passed to strangers, and when she did so, she heard that the new owners were gone for some months to France. There would, therefore, be no difficulty in making her way to the wood unseen and unnoticed, provided only that she could go unaccompanied by any of the young Maitlands.

The morning post on the 14th was eagerly watched for by them, and great was the fun and laughter as they carried in their numerous valentines, the largest number of which were for Cecilia, the eldest girl and the prettiest.

Under cover of going to see the old man who had been her father's gardener, Myra managed to leave the house alone during the forenoon, and the position of old Job's cottage rendered it easy to go thence by a quiet pathway to the wood.

The spring was late that year; there were no primrose-buds, or early nesting birds; but long, though not heavy frost; and this day, as Myra turned into the wood, every familiar tree, every climbing ivy and trailing bramble, stood out in all the purity of frosted silver.

The thin coat of frozen snow on the ground cracked lightly as she passed along, and the low, chill wind whispering through the leafless wood had a weird, unearthly sound.

The intense loneliness gave Myra almost a feeling of awe. Not a bird passed by, nor a scudding rabbit; not a sound was heard, unless when some lifeless branch gave way under its load of frosted snow, and, as it cracked in that thin, still air, sounded like a shot.

There are times when we seem intensely alive to impressions; when every sense is quickened, and we feel as if on the verge of some new and untrod experience.

At such times the past is very vivid, and like a flood its memories and recollections sweep in upon us.

It was so with Myra now.

Reaching the great oak-tree, and stepping on to its high roots, she looked round on the chill, lonely scene, and then up to the figures cut in the rugged bark that told such a tale of tender and lovely faith.

Suddenly a great rush of feeling came over her; the memory of the past happy time that seemed as far back as if belonging to some other life—the silent loneliness in which she still maintained her love, the future's blank uncertainty—it was all too much. For once she let feeling have its way. There were none to see or know, and she yielded to the pent-up emotion that was making every pulse throb with pain, and, flinging her arms round the mighty trunk, she laid her face against it and wept.

Through the wood, by a direction different to that by which Myra had come, a figure was approaching, passing swiftly among the snowy trees, treading fast and firm on the frozen way.

As he came near the oak-tree—for the figure was that of a man—he slackened his pace, attracted probably by the singularity of seeing a lady standing leaning against the tree with her face turned to it.

But though the man slackened his pace, and seemed as if treading softly, he still went on, until he paused a few paces from the oak-tree, and stood there.

Not long, for Myra turned round.

Why, at that instant, she could not have told, but she turned with a consciousness that some one was near.

As she did so, her hat, loosened by the way her head had been resting, fell off. The stranger sprang forward as if to lift it for her, but before she had time to be alarmed by thus suddenly finding that she was not alone, their eyes had met. Her lips parted as though to utter a cry, but no sound came, and in another minute she would have fallen, but the strong arms of her lover were around her, and his passionate kisses on her lips and brow brought back from unconsciousness the spirit that had bravely borne long years of sorrow, and failed only under this sudden and overpowering joy.

The date of another Valentine's Day was cut on the tree that day by the same firm hand that had traced the first six years before—nearly as long a time as the old patriarch served for his beautiful Rebecca.

"I may go with you to the Maitlands', may I not?" said Archie Lawrence as they left the wood. "They will let me in for an hour, I think. I used to know them a little."

Myra assured him he would be made very welcome, "and," she said, "I think I will just tell Mrs. Maitland all about it."

Poor Myra felt then the loss of her own mother, but Mrs. Maitland was a true-hearted woman, and Myra was right in trusting her.

The secret of the success that had justified Archie Lawrence in thus returning to claim his love lay in a natural aptitude for acquiring languages, and an untiring industry in using that aptitude.

The work he had engaged in on first going out had left him some leisure, and though without seeing in what manner such knowledge would be of service to him, he at once began to learn some of the principal dialects of India, feeling sure that their attainment would not be always valueless.

This story is of some years ago. Probably, if an embassy to Burmah were starting now, there would be more applicants for the post of interpreter than could then prove their fitness. Anyway, Mr. Lawrence's qualifications procured him the place, and though its advantages did not last long, it brought him into notice at headquarters, and led to his obtaining a permanent and well-paid secretaryship.

As soon as possible he obtained a short leave of absence, and hastened to England to seek tidings of Myra, of whom, during the past six years, he had heard no more than she had heard of him. Since Miss Harding's death, his mother, who lived in the extreme north of Scotland, had no connection whatever with the neighbourhood of Oakdene, so that in letters from her or his sisters, the Conways were never named, nor did they know that Archie had any particular interest in hearing of them.

On reaching England he at once made his way to the neighbourhood of Oakdene, which place he found had been sold by Mr. Conway under painful circumstances, believed to be connected with his son; but though there were several conjectural accounts of the matter still in circulation, the real facts were well concealed. One thing was certain, the Conways lived in London, and old Job, who used to be their gardener, could give their address.

Before starting for London in search of them, Lawrence set out for Oakdene Wood, to see whether the old tree bore any record that in silent eloquence would mark the endurance of a love lasting as his own.

In what a sudden revelation that knowledge came to him has been told. All this and more he related to Myra as they sat in Mrs. Maitland's little boudoir, where she had installed them until dinner-time.

"And now, dear love," said he, "I see by your pale cheek, and by this," as he fondly stroked her thin hand, "that it has all been rather too much for you, but the long trial is over. Your father, I feel sure, will be reasonable now. Won't you be happy and grow strong?" and Myra promised that she would.

By the night mail he went to seek Mr. Conway, and to show him, among other things, how Valentine's Day had been turned to account.

Myra's marriage was hurried on so that there might be a little time to go to Scotland and stay with Archie's mother, and his leave was short.

They were married in a little ivy-covered church down in a Kentish village, and Cecilia Maitland being bridesmaid, met her fate in the person of Mr. Lawrence's best man, an officer home on leave from his regiment, and before the year was out she followed her friend across the Indian Ocean.

Mr. Conway never succeeded in upsetting Bishop Valentine as the author and patron of the observances that bear his name.

Probably those who read his article in the *Antiquarian Review* knew more about the good bishop than they had ever done before, but as to dating back to Pan or Juno, or any other deified myths, the observances of the bishop's day, and forsaking them on the ground of Paganism, Young England would in no way agree to it.

Leave us, oh, ye antiquaries and men of science, leave us some at least of our time-worn legends! A flaw in their origin does not matter. We want something more to help us along besides downright material reality. Like the little children we want something to amuse us.

Men and women will not do their daily duty any the less, and they will sympathise with young life a great deal more, if they themselves have joined in, and can still be amused by the time-honoured celebration of Valentine's Day.

## A Broken Vow.

I VOWED I would not love thee,  
Oh, fickle maiden mine!  
Nor ever more trust eyes of blue,  
Or rosy lips; alike untrue,  
As that sweet face of thine.  
I vowed, and in an agony,  
I turned away from sight of thee.  
I vowed that I would hate thee,  
With hatred deep and high;  
A hatred time should never fade,  
And so to hate each fickle maid  
Aneath yon fickle sky;  
I vowed with fierce hot words of pain—  
I vowed—alas! I vowed in vain!

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book III.

#### CHAPTER. I. JACK'S MAP.

It was full summer.

The days had been long and sultry, and the earth looked parched from long drought. The corn was ripe for the harvest, and the hedges were scarlet with poppies. Everywhere an intense heat and cloudless radiance brooded in settled calm, making the toilers in the fields long for cool breezes or heavy rain-clouds.

In the heart of a little wood where the last lingering rays of light slanted through the fir-boughs, three children were sitting in the enjoyment of truant liberty. Before them was spread a feast of dainties—cakes, toffee, pears, tarts—all those sticky and unwholesome specimens of confectionery in which the juvenile mind delights.

Through an opening here and there a glimpse of the sea could be caught, and a sense of coolness seemed to shut itself in with the shading boughs and drooping branches.

"This is first-rate," said the eldest of the group, a sallow-faced, large-headed boy—no other, in fact, than the heir and hope of the Crumpletons before mentioned. "Guess old Creeps will be looking out for us considerable before she finds us this time."

The heir and hope, it must be observed, had picked up a number of phrases and expressions from an American youth of great precocity and piratical tendencies, who had been an inmate of Miss Crawley's select establishment for the brief space of one term; after that he had been summarily expelled, having contrived with untiring perseverance to be in mischief during every hour of his stay, and to make the lives of all the inmates of the aforesaid establishment one perpetual misery and martyrdom. This youth, known to the boys as "Yankee Doodle," had been the bosom-friend of the heir and hope, consequently that interesting youth looked upon it as a point of honour to emulate his *fidus Achates*, as much as some small natural drawbacks in the shape of inherent cowardice and meanness would permit. His favourite occupation was to plan various schemes and projects, all more or less harmful to anyone but himself, and the bold, fearless nature of Cyril Marsden served him as a capital scapegoat for his own innocent inventions.

"Well, you needn't collar all the jam-tarts," said Cyril, perceiving that in his elation at cheating the vigilance of his venerable preceptress, the heir and hope was unconsciously taking possession of the larger portion of the feast. "Leave some for Jack and me."

"Don't you be so skeered," said the interesting youth; "I ain't goin' to eat 'em all. Besides, my money bought 'em as well as yours."

Rules of grammar being somewhat rigidly enforced upon the juvenile minds at the establishment, it became a point of honour with them to set all such rules at defiance on every possible opportunity. Young Crumpleton was especially successful in this noble insubordination.

His American friend had once observed to him in a moment of enthusiasm:

"Lord, major, how darned easy it does come to you to be vulgar!"

The major—so called from a habit of constantly introducing his father's name in boastful attempts to assert his own superiority of birth and breeding—had accepted the compliment with becoming modesty, and naturally felt impressed with the necessity of continuing to merit it.

"I don't like jam-tarts," said little Jack, who after a year at school had dropped many of his babyish expressions; "they's so greasy and sticky. I like fruits better."

"Yes, but you're not going to have all those pears," cried the major, making a hurried grab at the three pears piled on the leaf of an exercise-book by way of dessert-dish.

"You leave those alone," cried Cyril emphatically. "They're Jack's. He bought them with his own money. You stick to your stale old jam-tarts. You only got those because they were a penny; and the pears were twopence."

"You said we'd share all the things," remonstrated the major sulkily.

"Very well, so we will. Jack can have two pears. I don't want any; and there's one for you."

The major caught it eagerly as it was tossed contemptuously across to him, and the three boys set to work at their feast, and brewed a bottle of sherbet as a drink, and poured that delectable beverage into a cracked wineglass, which was handed from one to the other, and felt very hilarious indeed. Jack, as usual, crept close to his brother. Since that awful blank time when he had been torn, sobbing heartbrokenly, from "mummy's" arms, the little fellow had turned to his brother with a double share of love and devotion. Something he must have to love and cling to. It was his nature, and he could not resist it. So, finding that no fretting and no tears could bring "mummy" back, he at last listened to Cyril's consolations, and tried to believe that if he only ceased to cry, and tried to grow big, and strong, and clever, he would be able to join her; and then—happy then!—there would be no more partings for either.

"Wonder what old Creeps"—short for Crawley among the boys—"will say, when she finds we've not been home to tea," said the major presently, his voice somewhat indistinct from the amount of crust stuffed into his mouth. "Guess she'll talk some when we go back. I wish Doodle was here. He was a chap for larks," he continued admiringly. "D'you remember the day he dressed up and came and knocked at the front door and pretended to be his own brother just arrived from New York, and how old Creeps believed it, 'cos he'd got a moustache and a high hat, and such a fine stick. My! and then she sent up for Master Cornelius Doodle, and he wasn't to be found, and all the time Yankee sat there as grave as anything, and said he feared his brother was not all he should be, and that it grieved him deeply to hear such accounts of him, and how he'd talk to him very seriously when he saw him, and, oh, stuffed her up no end. And she sitting there with her best cap on, and her Sunday fixings, and never dreaming that it was Yankee himself. And then when she wrote to his father and said how charmed she had been to make the acquaintance of his elder son, and what a gentlemanly, pleasant young fellow he was, and she only wished Cornelius resembled him. Then didn't she cut up rough when the old Doodle writes back, and says is she dreaming? He ain't got no son but one, and that's his eldest, and he's with her at the present time. Guess it wasn't long after that she told him she'd about had enough of his only eldest son, and so Yankee had just to cut his stick and walk. Oh, wasn't he a jolly chap just?"

"Don't think so; him wasn't at all nice," said little Jack, his memory still smarting with the recollection of many severely practical jokes played upon him by the irrepressible Doodle. "Very glad him's gone."

"Ugh, you baby!" sneered the major. "You haven't no call to be at school at all. Guess you'd like to be tied to your mammy's apron-strings as you used to cry for."

"Let him alone," said Cyril authoritatively, with a look at the little flushed face. "I've told you before I won't have him teased. If he is a baby, so much the more shame for you to torment him."

"And mummy's got no apron-strings," said little Jack. "You don't know nuffin about her."

"Don't want to," said the major curtly. "My mother's enough to be a caution to any fellow. 'Spect they're all pretty much alike. Doodle said so."

"Doodle didn't know my mother," said Jack with dignity, and

thinking he had at last succeeded in dropping the familiar "mummy." "There's no other like her, not in all the world."

"Oh, bother!" said the major impatiently. "Don't let's talk about mothers. I say, Cyrrie, old fellow, I do wish you'd do me a kindness. You easily might if you only would."

"What is it?" asked Cyril curiously; the humble tone of the suppliant was not novel, but the idea of begging a "kindness" was.

"Well, when that soldier chap comes to fetch you for the holidays this time, do ask him to let you bring me too. It is so beastly, stuck here all the year round."

"Don't think Cap'n Grant likes you," said Jack, who did not relish the proposal. "Says you're not a dood companion for Cyrrie or me."

"Then you've been sneaking on me!" cried the major indignantly. "Not good enough for Cyrrie! Bah! Cyrrie ain't no better than I am."

"It doesn't matter," said Cyril quietly. "I won't ask Captain Grant any such thing. We see quite enough of each other at school."

"Oh, all right," said the major sulkily, as he tipped the last of the sherbet into the cracked and stemless glass. "It's horrid mean of you, and you call yourself my friend."

"I don't," said Cyril, with that ingenuous frankness peculiar to the mind of early youth. "You call yourself mine when you want to get anything out of me."

"Ah," sighed the major, contemplating a jam-tart with affectionate enthusiasm. "If only Doodle was here!"

He felt himself wronged and snubbed, and at such times was particularly faithful to the memory of his absent friend.

"You were always quarrelling with him when he was," said Cyril, rising and sauntering off to that open space between the straight stems and drooping boughs, which showed the sea lying in smooth unrippled beauty far below the cliffs of the little headland. Jack followed. The major lingered behind, to gloat over the feast and carefully gather up the fragments.

"Wish him hadn't come," said little Jack, linking his hand in his brother's. "Him's very disgeaceable. I like best to be with you alone, Cyrrie."

They were standing almost on the edge of the shelving cliffs, and their eyes watched thoughtfully the white sails which here and there dotted the mirror-like surface of the sea.

"If one was mummy's ship," sighed little Jack, blissfully and geographically ignorant of the fact that no Indian vessel could possibly pass that coast. "Why," he continued, "we might stand here, and she might stand on the deck, and we should see each other quite well—couldn't we, Cyrrie?"

"I don't know," said his brother, laying sudden hands on the little holland coat, as Jack leant forwards. "Perhaps; only I don't think the ships come this way. It's Southampton or Liverpool. Now don't go so near the edge. Remember that time I found you, and Tommy, and Crumpleton, and the Doodle, all trying who could lean over the farthest. I wonder you didn't go clean down the cliffs into the sea."

"Was you frightened?" asked Jack, lifting a little solemn face from that rapt contemplation of the distant sails. "I hanged over a very far away—didn't I?"

"I should think you did. Just fancy what mother would have said, and she told me to take such care of you!"

"Is it a very many years since mummy went away?" asked little Jack. "Seems such a long, long time."

"Only one year," said Cyril. "Don't you remember it was last summer? and now it's summer again."

"And when it's another summer will she come back?" asked the little fellow eagerly.

"Her letters don't say anything about coming back," said Cyril gravely, "only that we're to be very good, and learn all we can, and do everything to please old Creeps. I wish," with a sudden burst of indignation, "she knew what an old beast she was."

"She gives me such hard lessons," sighed little Jack. "I couldn't learn them if you didn't help me, Cyrrie, and my head aches and aches. I'm sure mummy would be very sorry if she knew how it aches."

His brother looked at him anxiously.

"Does it ache now?" he said.

"Oh no," said Jack, "not in these nice cool woods; but it would if I'd been kep' in again, and Miss Cawley said I was to stop in till I 'membered my tables."

"Can you say them to me now?" asked Cyril.

"No; I'se too tired," said the little fellow, seating himself on the ground. "P'ease don't want me to say nanything; I want to think of mummy."

Cyril looked at him silently, wondering if his mother would see any change in the little face, were she here now—if it was only his

fancy that it had grown so pale and wistful of late; taxing his memory to discover if he had in any way neglected the precious charge laid upon his shoulders, if he had failed to be his brother's champion, to protect him from rough handling, unkindness, ridicule, such as he himself had experienced.

The lessons, too; how often he had given up his own play-time to help his little brother, to coax him into a comprehension of letters and syllables, such as Miss Crawley's voice usually frightened out of his head!

Cyril himself had little trouble in learning. He was naturally quick and intelligent, and possessed of a wonderful memory. His thoughts were cut short by Jack himself looking suddenly up, and exclaiming eagerly:

"Cyrrie, I've done my map. I'll show it you when we goes home."

"Map?" said his brother vaguely. "Did she give you a map to do? What nonsense! You can't even understand it."

"Yes, I can," said little Jack wisely; "I've drawn it through tracing-paper, like the major says Doodle always did his. Then I've written all the names—there's Yarmouth at one end, and Edinburgh, and Woodford, and—India!"

The burst of triumph which concluded the crowning achievement of that list of names was wonderful. Cyril was dumfounded.

"Then I drew mummy in India," continued little Jack, "and put a big sun over her head, 'cos I 'membered it's very hot there. Do you think," he added anxiously, "Miss Crawley will be p'leased wid my map?"

"Here, you two fellows!" said a voice in the rear. "Guess this picnic's rather slow. Let's go home."

"You go home by yourself," said Jack with dignity. "I'se going to sit here and think."

## CHAPTER II. WHAT CAME OF THE "BUNNIES."

"SAY, Jack," whispered the major mysteriously as he came up to the little fellow some two or three days after the picnic, "I'll tell you an awful lark. Have you got any money, though?"

"Yes," said Jack wonderingly; "but Cyrrie said I wasn't to give you no more."

"I don't want it," said the major contemptuously; "don't you be so jolly skeered. I was only going to tell you something. However," he added with dignity, "it's of no consequence. I know someone who'll be glad enough to have the chance."

"What is it?" asked Jack, looking up with solemn, wondering eyes.

"There's a boy in the village," continued the major, "who's got two lovely little rabbits, one white and one speckled, such long ears, my! and he wants to sell 'em. Dirt cheap, too. One and sixpence the pair. Now if we went halves, you know, I'd manage it, and get a hutch thrown in too. I know you've got heaps of money in your money-box."

Jack hesitated.

"But Miss Cawley," he said. "I've got Fuff, but she won't let me have wabbits, I'm sure, 'cos mummy's not here to ask her."

"Pooh! Old Creeps needn't know," cried the major; "we'll keep the hutch in that broken-down old summer-house at the end of the garden. No one ever goes there. Come, you get the money, and we'll go down this afternoon, after school, and bring 'em back with us. Will you? You know how you've always wanted some."

"I'd like to," said little Jack thoughtfully, "only Cyrrie—"

"Oh, bother Cyrrie!" interrupted the other. "You needn't say anything to him. You mustn't be such a baby. Say you'll come with me after school's over. Such beauties, Jack! Lop-eared, real prime ones. My, if you only saw them!"

"I'll come," said little Jack decidedly; "but why did Miss Cawley say none of us was to go in the village?"

"Oh, she's got some fad in her old head. Something about illness," said the major hurriedly; "that's nothing. So you'll come?"

Jack nodded. He felt a little uncomfortable. He did not like to have a secret from Cyril, or to share any of the major's escapades, but the temptation of seeing and possessing the "lop-eared ones" was altogether too strong to be resisted.

He went to the little dormitory that he shared with Cyril, and took out his money-box, then extracted the necessary shilling—the major had suggested he might as well contribute that amount, it being difficult to cut it into ninepence—by a process into which the heir and hope had once initiated him. Fluff crept out of his basket and danced about his little master with wild delight and frenzied barks.

He had not grown any bigger, and looked more like a black toy-lamb with bright beads of eyes than anything else. Jack dropped the money-box and got down on the floor to hug his favourite and



talk to him, being fully convinced that Fluff understood every word he said.

With that old-fashioned thoughtfulness of his, he had seen that it troubled Cyril greatly when he confessed how tired he was of the long tasks and the close confinement to the schoolroom, made even longer by that system of "keeping in" which Miss Crawley considered an essential part of the discipline of the establishment. In this one year the poor little fellow's head had been crammed till he wondered sometimes if it could possibly hold any more.

Miss Crawley had taken it into her own head that he was backward and too fond of idleness. Certainly Jack was far from quick at acquiring knowledge, being given to digging below the surface and seeking out the why and wherefore of all he was told, instead of contenting himself with a superficial repetition of it.

Even Cyril grew a little impatient of the slow, curious, plodding manner in which he set to work at his tasks, and felt that, after all, Miss Crawley was not far wrong when she declared him stupid. It seemed so easy to him to learn that he could not understand why Jack found it difficult, and the very patience and quietude of the little fellow made him the more difficult to comprehend.

He rarely complained or cried, and when punished he only set to work with the same gentle, plodding perseverance to get through this labyrinth of learning which opposed itself like a maze to the efforts of his childish brain.

Perhaps it was as well "mummy" could not see him at such times—as well she could not see him now as he sat on the bare floor of his little room with the dog clasped in his arms and the money-box lying forgotten by his side.

"I wonder if mummy would say I was naughty?" he said with a sudden pang of compunction. "I don't like to ask Cyrie. Besides, he's gone to play cricket now."

A long, thoughtful pause followed these words. The little dog curled itself up in his arms and prepared for a nap. Jack's eyes sought the window, with its glimpse of blue sky and waving trees, and his thoughts travelled far away into a maze of odd, unchildlike fancies which he could not have told to anyone—which he hardly understood himself.

At last he took up the shilling, replaced the box, and carefully closing the door on Fluff, went down on his errand.

The major met him at the foot of the stairs. He took Jack's hand and they walked slowly and silently along the hot, shadeless road leading to the village. It was a good mile and a half from the establishment, and but for the thought of those wonderful lop-eared rabbits, Jack would have given way under a sense of weariness and fatigue. There was not a breath of air, the sky was like a furnace, and the dust was suffocating; still he trudged patiently on, buoyed up by the hope that every step brought him nearer his destination, and that he would soon be the proud possessor of some more live-stock.

They reached the village at last; a narrow, straggling little place with one good street and a few dirty, bad ones. It was to one of these latter that the major took his way, stopping at last before a low, thatched cottage, at the door of which an old woman sat, very ugly, very dirty, very poorly dressed, with a toothless mouth that continually mumbled and muttered, as if worked by some hidden machinery which had been set in motion and never turned off.

Before this delectable individual the major paused.

"Is Tom at home?" he enquired.

The question, and the effort to answer it, set the machinery at work so dreadfully that little Jack shrank away in terror from the mouthing old crone.

The major having apparently extracted the desired knowledge, bade Jack follow him, and the two entered a dark, low room with very little furniture and still less air, and, when their eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, saw a half-broken truckle-bed by the fireplace, on which lay a lad of some twelve or thirteen years, and standing by the fire, a shabby, tattered-looking girl with rough, unkempt hair, and a face of bovine stupidity.

"Why, Tom, are you ill?" asked the major. "I've come for the rabbits."

"Nell will give 'em ye," said the lad in a thick hoarse voice. "Yes, I've got a touch of the fever. I feel mortal bad, and gran's been talking about having the doctor chap to see me, but I 'spose she's forgotten."

"Where's the rabbits?" asked the major, turning hastily to the girl.

She made a sign to him to follow her, but Jack crept up to the miserable bed, and looked with wistful eyes at the sufferer.

"Are you very ill?" he asked in his odd, old-fashioned way. "Does anything hurt you?"

The lad looked at him with his burning eyes, and Jack wondered why those strange, scarlet patches were on his face, and why his lips looked so black and parched.

"I'm very thirsty," he answered, wondering who was this strange little being with the wistful eyes and compassionate face.

"I'll get you some water," said Jack, looking round.

"It's all so hot," the lad answered. "They can't keep it cool, they say. And it's so hot here," he added drearily. "Oh, for some air!"

"Here's the water," said Jack, bringing a broken pitcher to the bedside. "Shall I give it you?"

"You be a funny little chap," said the sick youth, looking at him wonderingly. "Why don't you go and see the rabbits like t'other one? He don't trouble hisself 'bout me, he don't."

He sipped some of the lukewarm beverage with evident distaste, then fell back on the apology for a pillow—an old bundle of rags—and gave a groan.

"I'm very sorry for you," said little Jack pityingly. "Why hasn't you a nice comfortable bed like me?"

"Why?" echoed the boy forlornly. "Well, 'cos it's one thing to be rich and t'other to be poor—that's why."

"I will give you all the money in my money-box," said little Jack. "There's a lot, 'cos it's very heavy. Will you get well then?"

"I don't know," said the boy wearily, "and don't care much, neither. There ain't nothing to live for when one's poor and miserable."

"Haven't you no mummy?" asked the little questioner; "no one to take care of you?"

"No," was the answer. "Mother died when Nell was a baby, and father he went to Ameriky long ago. There's only gran, and she's so old."

"Is she a hundred million years?" asked Jack, with a vivid remembrance of the machinery, and the ancient, ancient face at the cottage-door.

"I don't know," said the lad; "'specs she is. She's always been old ever since I can remember."

"Wonder if she'll ever be an angel," mused Jack thoughtfully.

This being apparently a question too deep for Tom's powers of intellect, he only stared stupidly at the child and held his tongue.

"I 'spose you pway to God to make you better?" continued the little fellow presently. "He would make you better if you asked Him. Mummy says He always does what we ask."

"Does He?" said the sick lad wonderingly. "Don't know; never tried it. Seems to me he's got a deal else to do than to think of poor folks. They're born miserable, and they'll be miserable, that's all."

"What's miserable?" asked little Jack curiously. "Does you feel bad here?" laying his little hands on his breast.

"Mortal bad," said the boy despairingly. "You don't care for nothing, and you don't want to live, and yet you just do live, because you're poor and hungry, and nobody wants you."

"I always thought God was kind," said little Jack, his eyes growing more wistful and compassionate as his little brain tried to take in this sense of woe, and want, and apparent injustice which has puzzled many an older and wiser head before. "I don't think it's kind to let people be miserable."

"No more do I," said Tom. "So I gave up going to Sunday-school. Can't see that what they tell us there is a bit like what we find it. Perhaps there's two heavens—I don't know. I can't see how things is goin' to be so different when we're dead."

"It must be awful funny to be dead," said little Jack, raising such a weird old face to that flushed and fever-marred one on the truckle-bed, that Tom could only stare at him as if he had been some fantastic little goblin and not a child at all. "I shut my eyes sometimes and try to think I'm in a box like the dead peoples go in, and I wait—and wait—and wait, and then I think I hear the angels singing, and it is all bright—oh, so bright, and— Oh," breaking suddenly off with a scream of delight, "the bunnies!"

"Why didn't you come?" asked the major's voice, as he appeared with the treasures in their hutch. "Have you been here all this time?"

"Yes," said Jack, fondling the little animals with eager hands. "Forgot about the bunnies. Me was talking to the poor boy. He says he's miserable."

"Well, here's the eighteenpence," said the major, laying the money down on the mantelpiece, and keeping a respectful distance from the sick lad, whose appearance rather alarmed him; "and now, come along, Jack; we mustn't be late for tea."

"Good-bye," said Jack, turning to the bed. "Please don't be miserable more'n you can help; and thank you for the bunnies."

He trotted off after the major, watched by two yearning eyes which for long after seemed to see nothing but a little figure outlined against the dark and desolate room with the brightness that its own childish sympathy had brought; and, when a ragged sleeve went up to hide those same eyes, perhaps the sick lad was as far from understanding what could have caused such weakness as was the child whose little heart felt oppressed and heavy even amidst its novelty of

delight. The idea of someone being "miserable" was a very painful idea. It made the dusty road longer and more toilsome; it detracted from the charms of the "bunnies;" it followed the little feet like an echo, and set itself to fancies even more sorrowful and more puzzled than those with which the child's brain usually teemed.

"I'm so sorry for that poor boy," he said, as the major began to slacken his speed, and his panting, heated little companion could keep up with him at last.

"You'd no business to stay there talking to him," said the major crossly. "He'd got the fever. Don't you tell Cyril, or he'll half murder me."

"Does the fever kill people?" asked little Jack thoughtfully. "'Cos I think he'd be happier if he was killed. Angels don't want money, and don't feel miserable, do they?"

"Don't know, I'm sure," said the major gruffly. "Never saw one to ask."

### CHAPTER III. "ME ONLY WANTS 'MUMMY.'"

"WHAT made you late for tea to-night?" asked Cyril of his little brother when they were alone in their own room. "I hope the major and you weren't in any mischief?"

"We went to buy bunnies," said Jack rather shamefacedly. "Don't be cross, Cyril. Such beautiful bunnies, with long ears, and they stand up on their hind legs; we've got them in the old summer-house. I'll show them you to-morrow."

"Where did you get them from?" asked Cyril quickly.

"Major got them from a boy!" explained Jack, struggling out of his little shirt, and folding it up with a neatness and precision peculiar to himself. "Poor boy! him was very sick," he added thoughtfully.

"I hope you weren't in the village?" cried Cyril in alarm. "You know Miss Crawley said there was scarlet-fever there, and none of us were to go near it. The major knew that; did he take you?"

"Yes," said little Jack, remembering too late the major's caution, but quite incapable of telling Cyril a lie, even had that caution been bound by heavier penalties than the major's wrath.

"He'd no right to," cried Cyril angrily; "and you'd no right to go. Why didn't you tell me?"

"You wasn't here," said little Jack, his delicate face flushing, and his lips quivering at his brother's angry voice.

"You're very naughty," said Cyril, still in wrath. "You know I've told you not to go anywhere without me. Didn't I promise mother to take care of you? And such a chap as you are to catch things, too! It isn't so long since you had the measles, and just before that the chicken-pox, and now— Was the boy very ill?"

Groat tears had welled up into little Jack's eyes. He stood there with rosy, bare feet on the bare floor, with his little shirt in his hand, and his head hanging down, cut to the heart by his brother's rebukes, and already convinced that the bunnies weren't worth the sorrow they had cost him.

"Yes," he said at last; "his face was all red, and he said he wanted so to die. Oh, please, please don't be angry, Cyril!"

The remembrance of that sad scene in the cottage, coupled with Cyril's just wrath at his imprudence, was too much for the little fellow's sensitive heart. He burst into passionate sobs that for long nothing would stay or soothe.

"I'm always naughty now," he moaned dismally. "I can't help it; I does want mummy so bad."

And Cyril, who of all things dreaded to see "mummy's sweet-heart" in tears, set to work to console him with all his might, promising unheard-of things if only Jack would not cry. At last his efforts succeeded, and the little fellow's sobs were silenced, and he was coaxed into bed, and lay down exhausted by the storm of emotion.

Cyril too felt wearied, and was thankful to lay his head down on the pillow and close his eyes.

Always a heavy sleeper, it seemed to Cyril that he had been dreaming of a noise in the room, or of someone calling his name, long before his startled senses leapt into actual knowledge of what was passing around him. Then he sat suddenly up, alert and wakeful, and found his little brother standing by his side.

"What is it?" he cried. "Were you calling?"

"Calling a long, long time," said little Jack, in a strange, husky voice. "Cyril, somefin hurts me awful bad."

"Where—how?" cried Cyril in alarm, his thoughts even in that moment seeming to bridge over land and sea, and show him his mother's face looking reproachfully at him for want of care of this, her treasure.

"It's here," cried Jack, clasping his hands to his throat, "and it burns and burns, and I've drunk all the water, and I'm so thirsty again."

Cyril sprang out of bed and drew up the blind, then snatched

the little fellow in his arms and put him in his own bed, looking all the time with anxious eyes at the altered face and parched, dry lips, and trembling as he touched the little hot hands.

"I'll go and call Miss Crawley," he said hurriedly. "You lie still, I won't be a minute."

There was no way of procuring a light, as the boys were not allowed to have matches in their rooms, so Cyril groped his way along the narrow corridor and dark staircase until he reached Miss Crawley's door. Here he knocked loudly, until he succeeded in arousing that austere virgin.

"Jack ill?" she cried crossly, when she had mastered the boy's errand. "Stuff and nonsense! You're always fancying he's ill. Here, wait a minute, you shall take him some castor-oil."

Castor-oil was a sovereign remedy in that establishment, and one especially feared and hated by little Jack. Cyril knew that it would be impossible to administer it, but he took the glass meekly from Miss Crawley's hand.

"I—I wish you would come and see him, ma'am," he said pleadingly. "I think he's very queer."

"I'll see him in the morning," said Miss Crawley sharply. "He'll do till then. I suppose he's been eating sweets again and made himself sick. Now be off. I can't stop here all night."

Never at any time a very beautiful object, Miss Crawley looked even less so in the mysteries of her night toilette, and if Cyril's heart had not been so anxious and perturbed, he could have made any amount of capital out of her appearance; but he felt in no humour for fun, and was only anxious to get back to his brother.

The sight of the nauseous mixture completely upset little Jack.

"Oh, please not that, Cyril," he begged. "I'm much better now;" and Cyril, with a child's ignorance of illness, was only too ready to believe him, and the castor-oil remained in the glass. He made another voyage of discovery for water, and came back with a large jug, which was emptied long before the bell rang for getting up.

By that time, too, little Jack was talking so strangely and wildly that Cyril grew alarmed, and, this time, he betook himself to the governess, Miss Cheape, who was persuaded to come and look at the little fellow, and seeing that it was a case of no ordinary illness, went herself to Miss Crawley, and begged that the doctor might be sent for.

Hour after hour passed, and Jack grew worse with each. It was Sunday morning, and the boys filed off to church, but Cyril refused to leave his brother for all Miss Crawley's mandates, and after a fierce battle he gained his way.

The doctor came at last, and his first glance confirmed Cyril's worst fears. Jack had the fever—the same fever that was raging in the village, devastating homes and families like a scourge. The announcement threw Miss Crawley into terrible agitation, and the establishment into a whirl of excitement.

Arrangements were made to have the other boys sent off to friends or parents that same day. The sick-room was stripped of curtains, and almost of furniture. A large screen was fixed on the landing, on which was hung a sheet steeped in disinfecting fluids, and strict orders were given that no one in the house was to approach this quarter. The doctor promised to send in a nurse from the village, and then bade Cyril keep away from his brother's room altogether. The boy's face grew very white. He shook his head determinedly.

"I can't do that," he said. "I promised mother to take care of him. I couldn't think of leaving him when he's ill."

"But you can't do any good," said the doctor, a kindly-faced, middle-aged man, who knew the little brothers well, and had often admired their devotion to each other. "Nonsense, my dear, I must insist on your not being in here. Miss Crawley has telegraphed to Captain Grant, and he will come and fetch you to-morrow, and you can stay at the Court till Jack is better; then I'll send him there at once."

Cyril listened and allowed himself to be taken downstairs, where he wandered about for an hour in misery. Then he went out into the garden to feed the fatal "bunnies," wondering as he did so if it would be wrong to punch the major's head on a Sunday, and so ease the wrath in his heart when he thought of all that his selfishness had entailed upon little Jack. From the garden he wandered below the window of the room where his little brother lay. He found himself measuring the distance from the ground, and calculating the strength of the creepers and the trellis-work.

The temptation was too strong for him. He swung himself up, and in another moment was looking in through the window. It was open, and he could see the bed and the little figure on it, and the bandages on the child's head, and the great sheet stretched over the door. There was no one there, and Jack was tossing restlessly to and fro, a sight piteous and strange to Cyril's loving eyes.

"Mummy, mummy, mummy!" That was always the cry, and its reproach seemed to smite home to the boy's heart with a pain

and dread that stifled every other thought. He sprang into the room and bent over his little brother, with the tears springing hot and swift to his eyes.

"Jack—don't you know me, Jack?" he cried.

But his voice could not pierce through the dulled senses, any more than his face could be seen through the fever-mists that blinded those solemn, unchildish eyes.

To and fro, to and fro, the little head tossed and turned, and nothing from the parched lips but that one monotonous cry.

Cyril fell on his knees in an agony of dread and terror.

"Oh, mother, mother!" he cried, "why aren't you here? Oh, if he should die and never see you again!"

The thought was terrible, and he struggled with it as with some giant monster threatening to overwhelm him then and there. Perhaps it was too hard a struggle, or perhaps that long, anxious, sleepless night was taking vengeance on him. Be that how it may, when the nurse came in from the village, and Miss Crawley conducted her to the patient's room, Cyril was found stretched on the floor beside his brother's bed, quite stiff, and cold, and unconscious, and the little dog, Fluff, sat perched beside him, looking as if he were holding a court-martial upon the proceedings of his two little masters, and thought them very extraordinary indeed.

"Oh, dear me, dear me!" cried Miss Crawley. "This is really most annoying conduct. Master Marsden, I am surprised at you. This is direct disobedience, and deserves severe chastisement. Do you hear?"

"I don't think it's much good speaking to him, ma'am," said the nurse quietly. "He's fainted, and if he's been with his brother all this time it's not much use to part them now. He's taken the infection already if he's to have it."

So Cyril gained his way, and the little brothers were not separated.

There was not much to be done, it seemed to Cyril. He was told to keep very quiet, but that was no effort, for his head ached, and he felt languid, and tired, and strangely sleepy. He sat by the window, and read, and saw the cool bandages being changed and medicine given, and always—always—that restless little head was tossing to and fro, and never once did that murmur of "mummy, mummy," cease till the day wore on to its close.

There were intervals of consciousness, but so brief that they were scarcely noticeable. In the evening the doctor came again, and Cyril being in bed, and pretending to sleep, listened anxiously to the whispered colloquy between him and the nurse.

He could not make much out of it, however, and then suddenly the door was pushed open, and he saw the kind, anxious face of Ivor Grant.

In a moment the boy was out of bed and beside him.

"Oh, Captain Grant," he cried in passionate eagerness, "I'm so glad you've come. Don't say it's my fault. I know I ought to have looked after him that day, but I never dreamt of his going to the village, and— Oh, what shall I say to mother?"

He fairly broke down here, sobbing as childishly as little Jack himself might have done.

Ivor took him in his arms, and tried to soothe him, even while a strange tightness seemed about his heart, a feeling of terror such as in all his life he had never known, as his eyes rested on that little dusky head beyond, and noted with the sharpness of a first and shocked surprise the dreadful change in little Jack's face.

"Is there danger?" he asked huskily, dropping Cyril's hands, and turning to the doctor.

"There is always more or less uncertainty about these cases," was the reluctant answer. "So much depends on the constitution and strength of the patient. Is the child naturally delicate? Excuse me, but you are a relation, I suppose?"

"No," said Ivor, "only a friend. Yes, the boy was never very strong, I am afraid."

The doctor was silent for a moment or two.

"It must take its course," he said at last. "I can give no opinion yet."

Ivor's lips paled. He seemed suddenly to see that lovely, wistful face of Beryl Marsden looking at him across the gulf of land and sea, trusting to him for the care of her darling, building up visions of hope and gladness on the frail foundation of that little life; and with a terrible sense of impotence and despair he recognised how helpless a thing was human love, even at its best.

He turned to Cyril.

"You ought not to be here, my boy," he said. "You run the risk of taking the fever also. They should have kept you apart."

"He won't stay away, sir," said the nurse. "He came in through the window when he was forbidden the room."

"I must stay," said Cyril, his lips quivering with that sense of trouble and dread he yet but vaguely understood. "I promised mother never to leave Jack—always to look after him. Don't say you'll send me away, sir."

At that moment the languid eyes of little Jack opened on the two faces and noted them with some ray of consciousness.

"Cyrrie," he murmured, "is mummy coming? Tell Cap'en Grant to fetch mummy. She'd send this pain away—me knows she would."

"Mummy will come soon, my darling little fellow," said Ivor, bending over him tenderly. "You try and sleep, and get well, and you will be able to run about when she comes."

"Don't want to run about," said the little fellow wearily. "Me's so tired; me only wants mummy."

"Bless his heart!" said the nurse, wiping her eyes. "he didn't ought ever to have left her. Such a baby as he is!"

"Don't cry," said little Jack, looking at her wonderingly. "Me doesn't like people to cry, and my mummy couldn't help leaving me. But she's coming back—isn't she, Cyrrie? Only it's such a long, long time," he added with a sigh.

Then the wandering returned, and it seemed to Ivor Grant that he had never heard anything more pathetic than that rambling baby talk. Sometimes he was in the meadows, and "mummy" was making cowslip-balls; sometimes pouring out those confidences to Fluff which as yet had been heard by no other ears; sometimes bidding the poor boy not be "miserable," or murmuring snatches of those "payers" at whose repetition Cyril had often rebelled. But it was agony to Ivor Grant to listen to him, and it terrified Cyril as he tried to follow the fancies of that wandering brain, which, setting out always from the one starting-point of "mummy," took so many and such varied turnings on the weary journey of its love.

And so the night wore on, and Cyril at last fell asleep for very weariness, and Ivor Grant sat by little Jack's side, while the baby-lips unfolded in their unconscious babbling the whole panorama of that innocent life—its love, its quaint fancies, its childish trials and secrets—all its sweet and plentiful compassion for those vague sorrows that had thrown the shadows of others' woes across a pure and wondering soul.

Morning broke, and clear sunlight looked in at the unshuttered window, and a bird perched itself upon the trellis-work and burst forth into wild, jubilant song. There was silence in the room. Both children slept, and Ivor had sent the nurse away to procure some rest. He unclasped the lattice and threw open the window, and stood drinking in the rich, cool air, though his eyes were blind to the beauty of the outer world.

A stifled, husky noise attracted his attention at last. He turned, listened, his breath caught in a sudden spasm of terror. Then, with one rapid step, he was bending over Cyril's bed.

"My God!" he cried in a stifled voice, "he has got the fever too!"

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Through No Fault of Hers.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER V.

MURIEL LEIGH had not spent so happy an evening as that of the ball for many a long day. She had quite reconciled herself to remain in the background most of the evening, and to have as partners those young gentlemen who were not sufficiently good at dancing, or brilliant in conversation, to enable them to claim the hand of the leading belles of the evening. In fact, beyond her dance with Hugh, she had sat out the early part of the evening; Connie had brought one or two men who had put their names down on her programme for a dance, but at such a distant period that there seemed small chance of its ever arriving.

When she had seen the name of Venables on the invitation-list, she had hoped for a moment that it might turn out to be her old friend. Some two years previously she had known him somewhat intimately.

Circumstances, however, had rendered it necessary for him to go abroad for a considerable period; he had written Muriel one or two letters, but after a while their correspondence altogether ceased.

When he shook hands with her, however, that evening, she could tell instinctively that he was utterly ignorant of all that had happened to her since they last met, and she determined that he should remain in ignorance of it for that one evening at any rate. Why, indeed, should she not enjoy a revival of her old life for a few hours? The awakening to her ordinary existence and the recollection of the disgrace hanging over her must come again only too soon; but for the present she would forget all about it.

As she crossed the ball-room, leaning on Venables' arm, she felt like a new creature. No one of all the company could know who she was, whilst all must see that she was with the handsomest man

in the room, and that she was not unworthy to be at his side. She danced to perfection. Venables was very fond of waltzing, and declared at the end of the dance that it was by far the best that he had enjoyed during the evening. He asked for another, and took advantage of her permission to put himself down for two more.

"Let us go into the marquee," he said as the music finished; "we shall find it cooler there, and there are not many people about."

Muriel made no objection, and they soon found themselves seated together on a lounge. Venables busied himself in bringing some refreshments to her.

"I did not know you knew the Pankhursts," he remarked.

"They were friends of my father," Muriel replied; "I came here once before when I was quite a little girl."

"Are you staying here long?"

"Yes, for some time," said Muriel, despising herself at the moment she said it for being ashamed to confess the truth.

"I'm very glad of that," returned Venables; "I am a fixture at Eastcote for some months for certain, and it will be very pleasant to know that I have an old friend so near."

"I hope we shall see you over here occasionally," rejoined Muriel.

"Oh yes, you may be quite sure of that. How have things been going with you since I last saw you? I hope your father is well?"

"Not very," replied Muriel, with difficulty restraining her tears as she thought of where her father was. "And you?" she continued. "How have you been getting on?"

"Oh, I have had a strange sort of time. I've been half over Europe since I saw you last, but I hope now that my wanderings are over, and that I am going to settle down in England for the rest of my existence. I am tired of this unsettled sort of life, and it is quite time that I followed the example of everyone else."

"In what way?" enquired Muriel.

"In marrying," answered Venables somewhat hesitatingly.

"Indeed; are you thinking then of getting married?"

Venables looked at her for a moment and then replied:

"I don't know; you see that does not altogether depend upon oneself."

"No," said Muriel; "I suppose the lady would have something to say in the matter."

"And the question is, what?" rejoined Venables.

"Well, we must leave that to time," she replied.

"By the way," he resumed, "are you a great friend of Miss Pankhurst?"

"Yes," said Muriel, "we are a great deal together."

"She seems rather a nice girl; but she has a very strange way about her."

"Oh, you must not take any notice of that," said Muriel; "she is the best of girls, really."

"H'm!" responded Venables, "she has a strange way of showing it; she behaved very peculiarly to me just now, although her father introduced me to her somewhat warmly."

"Oh, but you must not notice that," again urged Muriel; "she really is a very charming girl."

Venables did not pursue the subject, and finding he had a name down for the next dance, he was reluctantly compelled to return to the ball-room.

He had not been gone many minutes when Hugh made his appearance in the marquee, where Muriel, at her own request, had been left, and made his way to her side.

"I think, Miss Leigh, this is our dance, is it not?"

"I don't know, I am sure," replied Muriel carelessly.

Hugh looked hurt, and Muriel at once recollected herself, rose, and said:

"I dare say it is our dance; but I have mislaid my programme."

"Why, there it is!" said Hugh, and he pointed to it as it hung to her fan.

"Oh yes, so it is. Shall we go back?"

Hugh offered his arm, and they returned slowly through the conservatory.

"Do you know Mr. Venables?" asked Hugh, with just a touch of jealousy which he was unable to conceal.

"Oh yes; we are very old friends," she replied.

"I did not know that," said Hugh, adding to himself: "If I had I should have taken precious good care that he did not come here to-night."

He did not altogether enjoy his dance with Muriel. Some duty called him away from her directly the dance was over, and when that was accomplished he could not find Muriel before he had to seek his partner for the next dance.

He was immensely surprised to find how differently he seemed to look upon Muriel on this particular evening. One reason doubtless was that he had never seen her look so brilliant as on this occasion. She was certainly one of the most beautiful girls in the room. It flattered him to be able to talk freely to her in the presence of so

many of his associates, who were ignorant that she was only a companion to his sister.

When he saw Venables take her hand, and observed the smile with which she greeted him, he experienced a totally new sensation; he had not been aware until then how much he cared for her. He had deluded himself with the idea that he had been simply flirting with her, and that at any moment he could let her drop, and things would go on just as they had done before she came to Como Hall. To his surprise he found that this was very far from being the case—to see another man talking to her brought pain to him, and if he could have had his way the ball would have closed at that instant, and he would have spent the rest of the evening in her society. This, however, was impossible, and he blamed his stupidity for having only engaged himself for two dances with her. Not that she had not plenty to spare, but that he had not. His position as son of the host had obliged him to fill his programme to the bitter end.

"Never mind," he thought, "if I play my cards well, I ought to be able to get Connie to be kind to Venables, and then he at all events won't see much of Muriel, and I will introduce him all round so that he may not dance with her much more to-night."

Connie, however, was rebellious that evening, and when her brother gave her a hint that she had better pay some attention to Venables she told him to mind his own business.

When, after supper, he came to Venables, and offered to introduce him to any girl that he liked, he was disappointed to be told that he did not mean to dance much more that evening, he was not very well, and was so utterly out of practice through living abroad so long; all of which, being interpreted, meant that he intended to spend a considerable portion of the remainder of the evening in the company of Muriel. Hugh understood this, and was the more incensed because he felt utterly helpless.

Sir Joseph, however, had his eye on Venables, and by way of making him as comfortable as possible, kept him by his side for a considerable period, expatiating in his pompous style on the beauties of Como Hall, and on the important position that he himself held in the neighbourhood. Venables listened as became him as a guest, but felt tremendously bored. However, it struck him that if he wanted to renew his acquaintance with Muriel it would be wise to be on good terms with the master of the house. So he made himself as agreeable as circumstances permitted, and to his gratification received a warm invitation to renew his visit as often as he wished.

"We have a good billiard-table," said Sir Joseph, "and Hugh is not a bad hand at the game, nor for the matter of that is Connie either—in fact, I don't know what it is the girls don't do nowadays. I should really feel obliged to you if you would come up occasionally and give her a good beating; she gets the best of her old father now, and is inclined to become a little too proud of it."

Venables replied that he should be most happy to accept the invitation, although he was conscious that Sir Joseph meant him to come and see Miss Pankhurst, whilst he himself knew that Muriel would be his attraction.

"I wonder how on earth she came to visit here," thought Venables, when he at last escaped from Sir Joseph's conversation. "It cannot be because she likes it, I should imagine, unless she finds something more in Miss Pankhurst than I do."

This thought was caused by a second and more decided snub from Connie during the evening. He had come to the conclusion that she, if possible, was still more objectionable than her father.

Before the evening ended he had received from Lady Pankhurst a hint that if he would come up any day when he felt inclined they would be very glad to see him, and whilst he was still wondering what this meant, to his further surprise Hugh joined him, and somewhat effusively asked him if he would come up and have some tennis next day.

"You are very good," said Venables. "I shall be most happy, though I don't play very well."

"Oh, for the matter of that neither do we," replied Hugh, "but it helps to pass away the day. Then you will be here about three o'clock?"

"Yes," responded Venables, "if that time will suit you."

"All right then, we will leave it for that hour. You see we have got two girls here, so that we can have a four if you like, or else we can play singles."

This invitation was the result of some cogitation on Hugh's part. He had come to the decision that he must see a good deal more of Muriel. As he was of opinion that it was not improbable that Venables would take a liking to his sister when he came to know her better, he had resolved that the best thing he could do would be to ask him up; then a little generalship ought to arrange the pairing off of Venables with Connie, leaving Muriel for himself. His companionship with Muriel would not look so marked if several people were about, and he specially wanted his attentions to pass unnoticed. Besides, Venables might learn incidentally the peculiar circumstances in which Muriel stood.

Venables kept his promise and paid a visit to the Hall next day. Hugh's tactics were so far successful that Miss Pankhurst was allotted to the visitor for a partner, whilst Muriel played with Hugh. Not that that very much mattered, for conversation of any kind during tennis is almost out of the question. When the game was over Venables made an attempt to join Muriel, but to his surprise she appeared anxious to avoid him, and moved away in the direction of Connie. He followed her, but soon found himself, to his disgust, alone with Miss Pankhurst. This did not tend to put him in a very good temper, for he was obliged to confess that Muriel did not seem to be so anxious for his company as on the previous night. Moreover, Connie was by no means pleased to find herself by his side.

Muriel had spent a restless night; she had scarcely slept for thinking of the events of the past evening. She had come to the determination that the dream in which she had indulged must now end; she had had one happy evening in the company of her old friend; it was quite time that he should know the truth. But she could not bear to tell him. She knew it was her duty to do so; she felt that if he knew of her father's crime and her own position it would be scarcely likely that he would continue to pay her the attention which he had done, yet she did not feel equal to the sacrifice of telling him everything.

"He will be sure to find it out sooner or later from some one else," she thought; "it is not my duty to tell him; I may take it for granted that he knows already; perhaps he does know, and it is his kindness that makes him still treat me as if nothing had happened."

With this she comforted herself and her conscience, although in her inmost consciousness she was aware that it was a false consolation. However, she had sufficient determination to resolve that she would no longer give him any encouragement; she had almost determined not to join the tennis-party in the afternoon, but Connie had so pressed her to come that she at last yielded. She did not find Hugh's companionship much more pleasant than Connie did that of Venables; in fact, the whole quartette seemed playing at cross-purposes. Before long Connie and Venables had almost quarrelled.

"I think I will go in now," said Connie rather suddenly, after Venables had been standing saying nothing for more than a minute.

"Won't you play another game?" he enquired.

"No, I don't think so; I don't find it very great fun."

"I'm afraid that is because you have me for a partner," said Venables.

"Perhaps that may have something to do with it," she retorted rather rudely.

"I'm sorry you did not tell me that before; had you done so we might have arranged for different sides."

"I don't know that that would have been much better," said Connie petulantly; "it isn't much fun playing with one's own brother."

"Well, what arrangement would you like?" enquired Venables. "It seems unfortunately somewhat difficult to please you."

"Yes, it is," she retorted; "it is so difficult a matter that it is not worth your trying to accomplish it."

"Very well," returned he; "in future I will consider it an impossible object, and will make no attempt to attain it."

Connie turned towards the house and then stopped suddenly.

"Why did you come here to-day?" she asked.

"Because I was invited," was the reply.

"By whom?"

"By your father and mother, and Hugh also asked me to come."

"No one else?" enquired Connie again.

"Miss Leigh expressed a hope that we might meet occasionally," replied Venables, wondering what it all meant.

"No one else?" came once more.

"No, who else should ask me?"

"I'm sure I don't know, I am the only one left," replied Connie.

Venables looked at her for a moment.

"Really, Miss Pankhurst," he said, "I am totally at a loss to understand why you should speak to me as you have done. I know no reason whatever why you should take so violent a dislike to me. If I have offended you in any way, at least tell me how and let me assure you it has been unintentionally."

His words seemed to reassure her to some extent; she looked up hesitatingly.

"Do not imagine that I am trying to obtrude myself on you," continued Venables; "I assure you that I did not intend to speak to you to-day if I could avoid it. That must sound rude, but it is true."

"Is it really?"

"I must confess it is."

"I believe you," said Connie, her manner changing to one of cordiality. "I am going to tell you the truth, too. From what I had been told I was afraid you looked on me as a girl who was in

the matrimonial market, for you to take if I pleased you. So I determined to show you that I was not to be handed over to you or anyone else. I tried to make you dislike me, and I succeeded. The fact is, I am engaged already, though my father and mother won't recognise the engagement, so I don't mean to be agreeable to any man who comes, as I thought you did, to see how I would suit."

Venables listened in astonishment.

"I am very glad you have told me this," he said, "though I am at a loss to know how such ideas got into your head."

"I needn't explain how, I had good reasons. I should never have acknowledged their existence if I had not felt sure you would understand me. I was unwilling to let you imagine I really disliked you; I only disliked what I thought your motive."

"Let us have a talk about this," said Venables, leading her to a distant part of the garden.

She made no objection, and they had a long conversation together. Venables learnt the whole story of her engagement to Lewis, and was able to promise her some aid. He knew Norman, and had no hesitation in offering his assistance in bringing the two lovers together as often as he could, by obtaining invitations for his friend to any house at which Connie might be visiting.

"Your father won't be able to hold out long," he said; "Norman is making marvellous progress, and is holding a very high position. From what I was told the other day, there is a chance of his being an A.R.A. before long."

Connie was delighted, and in return for the confidence which she bestowed on Venables, she encouraged him to confide in her. She had noticed, with all a girl's quickness, his evident liking for Muriel, whilst Muriel's for him was still more clear.

Venables, however, had not yet reached the stage when he could unburden his mind to a third person, even though she might be so sympathetic as Connie. At the same time he did not attempt to conceal that he felt a strong interest in Muriel.

"Do you know," he remarked, "I fancied just now that she avoided me. As I was quite certain that you did, I began to fear there was something repellent about me. Do you think I was mistaken in her case as well as yours?"

"I hope so."

"Why?"

"Because it would be a still greater disappointment to you. Suppose we go and find them now? I expect she is getting tired of my brother."

"As you are of me?"

"Oh no, I like being with you; you don't know the difference in my feelings towards you now. We must be great friends, and the greater the better, so far as deceiving papa is concerned. What a wretched state of things, isn't it?"

"Not so wretched for me as for you," laughed Venables.

## CHAPTER VI.

MURIEL, however, was not easily found. She had grown utterly tired of Hugh, and had at last escaped indoors on the plea of a headache.

But it was more from heartache than headache she was suffering.

She had observed Venables and Connie walk away in confidential talk, and a pang of jealousy had shot through her heart.

"Has she been deceiving me?" she thought. "She has fallen in love with him. How could she help it?"

But the thought of Norman somewhat assuaged her anger. She would not believe Connie capable of throwing him over for a man she had only seen twice. Besides, had not Venables expressed his dislike of her?

She felt that she was getting into a false position than ever. There was no doubt now that Hugh admired her, and even more. Unintentionally she had inspired in him a strong affection, which was evidently on the point of being declared. What should she do?

Of course she must refuse him. But afterwards?

If it became known, it meant that she must leave the Hall at once. Where should she go then?

Besides, that would mean absence from Venables. She knew that that was the best thing that could happen, for she felt every hour that his presence was becoming more indispensable to her. But it was far better that she should depart before separation became heartbreaking to her.

She resolved that she would tell him all unless her departure was immediate. Then she thought that she would persuade Connie to do so.

The upshot of her deliberations was to do nothing. She persuaded herself that she had no right to think that she was the object of the slightest interest to him; he had paid her no more attention than he was now paying to Connie.



Until he was more pointed in his conduct she would do nothing. Before many days had passed he must learn all about her.

However, this was not the case. Venables came frequently to the Hall during the next week—much too frequently for a casual guest.

Sir Joseph, who was most anxious to have him for a son-in-law, was clever enough to pretend to be ignorant of his visits. Nevertheless, he kept a keen eye on him, and instructed his wife to do so too.

Hugh's hopes beat high. He had been very disappointed at first to see how Connie and Venables had not taken to each other. However, after the tennis, things had apparently taken a fresh turn, and now they were constantly together—"as thick as thieves," as he put it. He mistook the confidences which they exchanged regarding Connie's love-affairs for the confidences of lovers.

Sir Joseph was not so easily deceived. At the end of a fortnight's observation he had come to the conclusion that Muriel, and not his daughter, was the attraction that led Venables so often to the Hall. Lady Pankhurst's less acute mind had come to the same conclusion. Sir Joseph resolved that an understanding must be arrived at.

He met Venables on the lawn one day, and, under pretence of showing him his greenhouses, led him away from the others. He soon managed to bring the conversation round to Muriel—a subject which interested his companion, though he would have preferred another when talking with such a man as his host.

"Yes, poor girl," said Sir Joseph. "I'm glad to see that she is beginning to look quite bright again."

"Has she been unwell?"

"Mentally, my dear Venables, and natural enough. She has gone through a terrible amount of anxiety, and of course it tells on her. You know the details, I suppose?"

"I know nothing," replied Venables, an anxious sensation at his heart. "You forget I have not long returned from abroad."

"Of course, I'd forgotten it. Well, you see, her father made a terrible mess of his business affairs, not to put it more strongly; went to smash financially and every other way, though some say he isn't to blame, and I agree with them to a certain extent. However, here is the poor girl without a penny to bless herself with, and I'm sure I don't know what she would have done if Lady Pankhurst hadn't engaged her as companion to Connie. Not that we wanted one, but we were glad to do something for the girl."

Venables showed his surprise and agitation more than he wished. They did not escape Sir Joseph's attention, who, thinking he had said quite enough, turned the conversation.

He had said enough to engage Venables' thoughts for the next few hours. At last he had an explanation of the mysteries of the last few days.

Muriel's conduct had been inexplicable to him. At times she absolutely avoided him without the slightest apparent reason, and he had puzzled his brain to invent one. At other times she had been almost hysterically gay with a sort of defiance which frightened him. He had once or twice asked Connie for an explanation, but she had resolutely avoided giving him a direct answer.

Now he knew the truth. It was the fact that Muriel had alternately encouraged and repelled him. Sometimes her reason had the upper hand, and she refused to allow herself to indulge in an impossible dream of happiness; sometimes his presence and kindness intoxicated her, and she forgot all about her resolutions and threw herself into the enjoyment of the moment with a sort of madness.

Before the night came Venables made up his mind. Sir Joseph had made a great mistake in saying what he had said. His object was too palpable to Venables, now that Connie had told him of her father's hopes as regarded him. Had Venables been a selfish, money-seeking man like the knight, the knowledge he had just acquired might have led him to give up Muriel. But he was a true, honourable man, one who would be the last to let monetary considerations have any weight in the question of his marriage. Fortunately, too, his own means were such that he need not regard them.

He was certain he loved her; he almost hoped that her recent conduct showed she felt a more than ordinary interest in him. He would not wait another day before letting her know that his chief desire was to win her hand in spite of everything.

A word to Connie the next day gave him the desired opportunity. Hugh was out, the garden was deserted; it was easy to find a summer-house in a secluded spot, and Connie undertook to see that neither Sir Joseph or Lady Pankhurst should have a chance of interrupting.

"You can guess what I'm going to do," said Venables to Connie.

"Yes, and I wish you every success. She is a splendid girl, isn't she?"

"I think so, of course," he replied with a smile. "I shall do my best, I promise you."

"I'm afraid it will be necessary," was Connie's half-sad rejoinder as she turned away. She knew Muriel's secret.

Venables' first words to Muriel agitated her almost painfully. She felt what was coming; it was too much for her to bear.

When they were safe out of reach of interruption Venables told her in simple, manly words how he loved her, how he had but one desire—to win her for his wife; but one dread—that she did not care for him.

Muriel was trembling violently. At his last words she gave an hysterical sob.

"Is what I am saying so painful to you?" he asked. "Forgive me if I have taken you too much by surprise—if what has been the only subject of my thoughts for the last fortnight has been a stranger to yours. For Heaven's sake, my darling," he burst out, "do not tremble so; you frighten me."

With a powerful effort Muriel gained her self-command. She released herself from his arms, and sat down wearily on a seat.

"You must forgive me," she said, "I have not been well lately. I am very sorry," she continued slowly, averting her gaze from his, "but I must refuse the offer you have made."

Venables stood silent for a few moments.

"May I ask the reason?" he said. "I have no right to ask, but I hope you will answer."

Muriel gave no reply, but her face grew whiter and more painfully miserable.

"Is it because you do not love me?" asked Venables, "or because you feel that there is no chance of your ever doing so?"

"You have no right to ask," cried Muriel.

"I will not do so," said Venables. "I will only ask you to listen to me for a moment. If your refusal is in any way connected with recent unfortunate circumstances, I can assure you on my word of honour that I have offered you my hand with a knowledge of them, and that their existence does not make the slightest difference to me, as they should not to you."

Muriel looked up with a gleam of hope in her face. But it died away as he concluded.

"You are very good," she murmured, "but you do not know. What have you heard?"

"Do not insist on my repeating painful details. Enough that I am quite aware of your position here and that I honour you the more for your courage in leaving a happy home to fulfil the duties which circumstances have rendered necessary."

"Ah, you do not know!" she cried. "There is something more."

"What is it?" he demanded.

"Spare me that. You must learn it soon from someone or other, spare me the pain of telling you. There is a disgrace hanging over me—a terrible disgrace."

Venables started. He stepped into the open air for a minute or two. When he came back Muriel was hiding her face in her hands, sobbing.

"Muriel," he said, "I refuse to accept your refusal as final. I don't understand what you have said, but I will do so. When I know the truth you will see me again. Till then good-bye."

He took her hand unresisted and kissed it. When Muriel looked up he was gone.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 145.)

## Why?

Why did he go?

Ah, why, why, why?

To take the light from the summer sky;

To take the rest from the long lone night;

To take the hope, from the morning's light;

And we were so happy, he and I.

Ah, why?

Why did he go?

Ah, why, why, why?

Because life's riddle is all awry;

Because fate, fortune, and circumstance,

And the thing that men call blindly, chance,

All ranked against us silently.

Ah, why?

Why did he go?

Ah, why, why, why?

Because joy is fickle and faith is shy;

And something there is in the world amiss,

That grudges to life an hour of bliss.

We were too happy he and I—

That's why!

## The Editor's Note Book.

WHEN General Hicks's army was cut to pieces in the Soudan, those of us who take a serious view of Egyptian affairs comforted ourselves with the reflection that the Egyptian troops were terribly outnumbered, and suffered besides from lack of supplies and ammunition.

THIS consolation, slight as it was, is now denied us, and the hope that the Government of the Khedive might eventually be able to hold its own against the Arab levies of the Mahdi must be altogether given up. Baker Pasha's troops have been entirely routed by an inferior force, and it is clear that the safety of what it is now the fashion to call Egypt Proper rests with us, and with us alone.

So little, however, do the gentlemen who are good enough to govern us, and the other gentlemen who are supposed to fill the function of a critical Opposition, seem to know the conditions of the problem which is presented to us for solution, that the debate on Egyptian affairs, which was started on the first night of the session, collapsed ignominiously, for the simple reason that nobody of "light and leading," either in or out of office, had the slightest idea what to say.

So the Government have begun by wasting a night, and by upsetting all arrangements which had been made for the conduct of the business of the early part of the session—a circumstance which should not be forgotten when they presently begin to complain of obstruction and consequent loss of time.

ON what shifting sands English policy in Egypt is built is evidenced by the remarkable fact that, on the day after this abortive debate, Mr. Gladstone told the House of Commons that the Government did not intend to take any measures in consequence of Baker Pasha's defeat, and an hour or so afterwards had to announce that a telegram just received from Admiral Hewett had decided them to "take measures for supplying him with increased forces in order to secure the safety of Suakin."

How it can be right for us at one and the same time to secure the safety of Suakin and to abandon Khartoum is, perhaps, more obvious to party politicians than it is to mere ordinary mortals.

EXCEPT as affording a text for lectures about the incompetency of Parliament to deal with the affairs of the nation and for lamentations over obstruction, veiled and otherwise, there can be no reason whatever why any Government should think it necessary to start with such a programme as that which Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues announced last week. Egypt, the Bill for the Extension of the Franchise, and the necessary routine business, will certainly take up an enormous amount of time; and, if anything more is seriously attempted, we shall probably again see the deplorable spectacle of Estimates involving millions of money being galloped through in a few minutes, simply because no time can be afforded for their proper consideration.

NOTICE has been given of the usual array of private members' Bills, and our old friends, the Deceased Wife's Sister, the repeal of the compulsory clauses of the Vaccination Acts, the law of primogeniture, and many others, are again to the fore. For a good sweeping measure, commend me to Mr. Stevenson's Bill for the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors in England on Sunday. It is announced that when Mr. Stevenson's Bill gets into Committee—if, indeed, it ever reaches that stage—Sir Joseph Pease will propose amendments exempting London, and allowing publicans in the country to keep open for two hours on Sunday.

WHY London should be exempt, and not such places as Manchester, Birmingham, or Liverpool, is one of those conundrums which the faddists are continually propounding for our edification in their legislative projects. Perhaps it is considered that the London mob is less likely to submit to such arbitrary treatment than their brethren in the other great cities. For my part, I think that if Mr. Stevenson's mischievous Bill, or Sir Joseph Pease's scarcely less ill-considered amendment, were by any chance to become law, there would be serious riots in every town of any importance throughout the kingdom.

THE Anti-vivisectionists have fought a pitched battle with Dr. Burdon Sanderson and his supporters in Convocation at Oxford, and, notwithstanding that there was an imposing muster of the forces of bigotry and prejudice, were decisively beaten. Consequently, the newly-appointed Waynflete Professor of Physiology will have his laboratory. Dr. Sanderson's opponents do not seem to be aware that Parliament has legislated with great stringency on the subject of vivisection, and that its practice is now limited by the severest restrictions.

THE recent failure on the Stock Exchange is interesting chiefly as throwing a further light on the loose manner in which much of the banking business of the country is transacted. It appears that the directors of at least one bank, the shareholders of which had lately been congratulated by the chairman on the absolute safety of their securities, had been content to leave a large sum in bonds and similar documents in the hands of the defaulting stockbroker, with the result that a very serious loss has been incurred.

A GOOD deal has been said about the action of the Highgate justices who last week fined a girl of thirteen a sovereign for stealing milk, and the *Daily Telegraph* in especial, which describes the culprit as a "child of thirteen summers," had a very severe leader on the subject.

BUT, after all, the question arises, What is to be done with girls of thirteen—and of indifferently character, by-the-bye—who steal milk? And it must not be forgotten that among the children of the poor, who have to learn their way about very early in life, thirteen summers do not represent so very tender a state of infancy as some people might suppose. The proper place for this young person is a reformatory school, and the nearest way to a reformatory school lies through a prison, a fact which the magistrates no doubt bore in mind. The Home Secretary, however, adopted the *Daily Telegraph's* view of the matter, and promptly released the culprit.

THE case of the London Financial Association against Kelk and others—the Alexandra Palace and Park case—is not, so far, encouraging to people who are contemplating going to law. The trial of the matter before Vice-Chancellor Bacon has employed for twenty-nine days an army of learned gentlemen, whose fees must be something awful to contemplate, and now the Vice-Chancellor has announced that he will endeavour to dispose of the matter, "some time either before or after the Long Vacation." His lordship's excuse for this somewhat vague appointment was that "his other necessary arrangements for public business were such as to prevent his speedily disposing of such a case as this." In other words the Judicial Bench is so undermanned as to lead, not unfrequently, to a positive denial of justice.

SIR JAMES INGHAM has convicted the Proprietor and Committee of the Park Club, as it was generally expected he would do, and each of these culprits has been punished with a fine of five hundred pounds. The non-official gamblers were let off with a hundred pounds apiece. Whether the fines will ever be enforced is quite another matter, as a case was, of course, granted for the consideration of the Superior Courts, and the fun, from a legal point of view, has only just begun. If Sir James's decision is upheld, it will inevitably lead to something very like a revolution in Club life.

THE strike in the North and North-East Lancashire cotton trade has come to a sudden and unexpected end, after an abortive struggle on the part of the men for eight weeks. Thus the men lost eight weeks' wages, practically to no purpose, and unfortunately it is more than probable that the lesson will be lost almost as soon as learnt.

A CASE of considerable importance to theatrical managers, as well as to editors of magazines and periodicals, was tried last week in the Queen's Bench Division. The author of a play having sent, without invitation, his manuscript to Mr. Augustus Harris, brought an action for damages against that gentleman in consequence of the non-return of the drama. The law on the subject is sufficiently clear, and the jury had no difficulty in returning a verdict for the defendant, but the case serves to show to some extent one of the never-ending troubles of managers and editors. It very rarely occurs to the ingenuous mind of the amateur author, that the simplest way to ensure the safety of the precious offspring of his brain is to take a copy of it before he sends it on its travels.

WHATEVER may be the exact amount of its author's indebtedness to Von Moser's "Krieg im Frieden," there can be no doubt that Mr. Hamilton's farcical comedy, "Our Regiment," now being played at the Globe, is a thoroughly amusing entertainment of its class. Mr. Hamilton's dialogue is easy, appropriate, and smart; and, if he has availed himself here and there of some venerable witticisms, it is fair to say that they appear to be quite new to the majority of the audience.

IN addition to its own intrinsic merits, "Our Regiment" has the advantage of being remarkably well played, especially by Mr. Gerald Moore, whose Guy Warrener is a singularly well-studied character; by Mr. Gardiner, as the Curate in whom the old Adam of a rascally Oxford man is perpetually asserting himself at inconvenient moments; by Miss Abington, who is agreeably bright and fresh in an *ingénue* part; and by Mr. Lethecourt and Miss Fanny Brough, who give just the right amount of earnestness to the pair of rather perverse lovers, who furnish what of serious interest there is in the comedy. Altogether "Our Regiment" may be safely recommended to any of my readers who want to pass a pleasant evening at the play. C. D.

## "Who Murdered Downie?"

ABOUT the end of the eighteenth century, whenever any student of the Marischal College, Aberdeen, incurred the displeasure of the humbler citizens, he was assailed with the question: "Who murdered Downie?" Reply and rejoinder generally brought on a collision between "town and gown," although the young gentlemen were accused of what was chronologically impossible. People have a right to be angry at being stigmatised as murderers; but the "taking off" of Downie occurred when the gowmsmen so assailed were unborn, or in their swaddling-clothes.

But there was a time when to be branded as an accomplice in the death of Richard Downie, made the blood run to the cheek of many a youth, and sent him home to his books, thoughtful and subdued. Downie was the sacrist or janitor at Marischal College. One of his duties consisted in securing the gates by a certain hour, previous to which all the students had to assemble in the common hall, where a Latin prayer was delivered by the principal. Whether, in discharging this function, Downie was more rigid than his predecessor in office, or whether he became stricter in the performance of it at one time more than another, cannot now be ascertained; but there can be no doubt he closed the gate with austere punctuality, and that those who were not in the common hall within a minute of the prescribed time, were shut out, and afterwards reprimanded and fined by the principal and professors. The students became irritated at this strictness, and took every petty means of annoying the sacrist; while he, in his turn, applied the screw at other points of academic routine, and a fierce war soon began to rage between the collegians and the humble functionary. Downie took care that in all his proceedings he kept within the strict letter of the law; but his opponents were not so careful, and the decisions of the rulers were uniformly against them, and in favour of Downie. Reprimands and fines having failed in producing due subordination, rustication, suspension, and even the extreme sentence of expulsion, had to be put in force; and, in the end, law and order prevailed. But a secret and deadly grudge continued to be entertained against Downie, and various schemes of revenge were thought of.

Downie was, in common with teachers and scholars, enjoying the leisure of the short New Year's vacation, when, as he was seated one evening with his family in his official residence at the gate, a messenger informed him that a gentleman at a neighbouring hotel wished to speak to him. Downie obeyed the summons, and was ushered from one room to another, till at length he found himself in a large apartment hung with black, and lighted by a solitary candle. After waiting for some time in this strange place, about fifty figures, all dressed in black, and with black masks on their faces, presented themselves. They arranged themselves in the form of a court, and Downie, pale with terror, was given to understand that he was about to be put on his trial.

A judge took his seat on the bench; a clerk and public prosecutor sat below; a jury was empanelled in front; and witnesses and spectators stood around. Downie at first set down the whole affair as a joke; but the proceedings were conducted with such persistent gravity, that, in spite of himself, he began to believe in the genuine mission of the awful tribunal. The clerk read an indictment, charging him with conspiring against the liberties of the students; witnesses were examined in due form; the public prosecutor addressed the jury; and the judge summed up.

"Gentlemen," said Downie, "the joke has been carried far enough—it is getting late, and my wife and family will be getting anxious about me. If I have been too strict with you in time past, I am sorry for it, and I assure you I will take more care in future."

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the judge, without paying the slightest attention to this appeal, "consider your verdict; and if you wish to retire, you can do so."

The jury retired. During their absence the most profound silence was observed; and, except renewing the solitary candle that burned beside the judge, there was not the slightest movement.

The jury returned, and recorded a verdict of "Guilty."

The judge then solemnly assumed a huge black cap, and addressed the prisoner:

"Richard Downie, the jury have unanimously found you guilty of conspiring against the just liberties and immunities of the students of Marischal College. You have wantonly provoked and insulted these inoffensive lieges for some months, and your punishment will assuredly be condign. You must prepare for death. In fifteen minutes the sentence of the court will be carried into effect."

The judge placed his watch on the bench. A block, an axe, and a bag of sawdust were brought into the centre of the room. A figure more terrible than any that had yet appeared, came forward, and prepared to act the part of doomsman.

It was now past midnight; there was no sound audible save the ominous ticking of the judge's watch.

Downie became more and more alarmed.

"For mercy sake, gentlemen," said the terrified man, "let me go home. I promise that you never again shall have cause of complaint."

"Richard Downie," remarked the judge, "you are vainly wasting the few moments that are left you on earth. You are in the hands of those who must have your life. Attempt to utter one cry, and you are seized, and your doom completed before you can utter another. Everyone here present has sworn a solemn oath never to reveal the

proceedings of this night; they are known to none but ourselves, and when the object for which we have met is accomplished, we shall disperse unknown to any one. Prepare, then, for death; other five minutes will be allowed, but no more."

The unfortunate man, in an agony of deadly terror, raved and shrieked for mercy, but the avengers paid no heed to his cries. His fevered, trembling lips then moved as if in silent prayer; for he felt that the brief space between him and eternity was but as a few more tickings of that ominous watch.

"Now!" exclaimed the judge.

Four persons stepped forward and seized Downie, on whose features a cold, clammy sweat had burst. They bared his neck, and made him kneel before the block.

"Strike!" exclaimed the judge.

The executioner struck the axe on the floor; an assistant on the opposite side lifted at the same moment a wet towel, and struck it across the neck of the recumbent criminal, and a loud laugh announced that the joke had at last come to an end.

But Downie responded not to the uproarious merriment. They laughed again—but still he moved not. They lifted him up, and Downie was dead! Fright had killed him as effectually as if the axe of a real headsman had severed his head from his body.

It was a tragedy, after all. The medical students tried to open a vein, but all was over; and the conspirators had now to bethink themselves only of safety. They then, in reality, swore an oath among themselves; and the affrighted young men, carrying their disguises with them, left the body of Downie lying in the hotel. One of their number told the landlord that their entertainment was not quite over, and that they did not wish the individual who was left in the room to be disturbed for some hours. This was to give them all time to make their escape.

Next morning the body was found. Judicial enquiry was instituted, but no satisfactory result could be arrived at. The corpse of poor Downie exhibited no marks of violence, internal or external. The ill-will between him and the students was known; it was also ascertained that the students had hired apartments for a theatrical representation, that Downie had been sent for by them; but beyond this nothing was known. No noise had been heard, and there was nothing to prove that murder had been committed. Of two hundred students at the college, who could find out the guilty or suspected fifty? Moreover, the students were scattered over the city, and the magistrates themselves had many belonging to their own families amongst the number, so it was not desirable to go into the affair too minutely. Downie's widow and family were provided for, and his death long remained a mystery; until about fifteen years after its occurrence, a gentleman on his death-bed disclosed the whole particulars, and avowed himself to have belonged to the obnoxious class of students who murdered Downie.

## Cookery.

### PLAIN DINNERS.

#### II.

#### Bread Soup.

Roast Mutton. Yorkshire Pudding.  
Boiled Apple Dumplings.

#### BREAD SOUP.

BOIL four onions, two turnips, and a small stick of celery, all minced, in a quart of water with a tablespoonful of salt. When the vegetables are tender add another quart of water, break in half a pound of light bread-crusts, and boil gently for twenty minutes. Stir the bread until broken up, add an ounce of butter, pepper and salt to taste, and a teaspoonful of finely-shred parsley.

#### ROAST MUTTON.

The rules which were given for roasting beef in HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 134, apply to roasting either the whole or a portion of a leg of mutton. When ready to dress the meat, wipe it with a damp cloth, sprinkle with flour, pepper, and salt, put it to commence cooking at a quick heat, which will at once dry up the pores and prevent the juice running out. Serve the meat with clear gravy.

By way of a change, the middle cut of a leg of mutton can be stuffed in the same way as a fillet of veal. A fine flavour is given to the stuffing by passing a knife over a clove of garlic and stirring the mixture with the knife. When dressed in this way, a thick, rich brown gravy should be poured over the meat before serving.

#### YORKSHIRE PUDDING.

Although a very good batter-pudding, suitable for eating with meat, can be baked, it is impossible it can resemble those finished under a joint of meat roasted before the fire, or in Leoni's gas-oven, in which the meat is suspended.

To make the batter, mix ten ounces of the finest flour in a gill of cold water, add, by degrees, a pint of new milk. When it is quite smooth and free from lumps, add a pinch of salt and the yolks of two eggs, and when ready to cook the pudding, beat the whites of the eggs to a strong froth, and stir them in briskly. Let two tablespoonfuls

of good dripping get very hot in a tin baking-dish, into which pour the pudding, and put into the oven for a quarter of an hour, until the batter is set. Put the dish with the pudding in the dripping-pan, under the meat, let it remain for an hour, when it should be brown. When you take up the pudding, drain all the fat from it, slide it on a hot dish, cut it into neat square pieces, and serve.

#### BOILED APPLE DUMPLINGS.

Make a paste of flour and beef-suet in the proportion of four ounces of suet to eight ounces of flour and half a gill of cold water, and roll the paste out to the thickness of the third of an inch, and divide it into square pieces large enough to cover up your apples. Peel the apples, with a scoop take out the cores, put a small piece of paste in each at the bottom, and then fill up the cavity with moist sugar mixed with a little grated lemon-peel or with a clove. Put an apple in the centre of one of the squares of paste, which pinch together at the top and neatly press into shape with the fingers, and when they are all ready drop them one by one into a large saucepan of boiling water, keeping them boiling rather fast for three-quarters of an hour, or longer if the apples are large.

#### III.

Stewed Macaroni.  
Boiled Mutton. Caper Sauce.  
Sultana Pudding.

#### STEWED MACARONI.

Throw a quarter of a pound of the best Italian macaroni into three pints of boiling water with a small teaspoonful of salt, and let it boil fast for twenty minutes. Drain the macaroni as dry as possible in a colander, put it into a clean stewpan with a gill of good gravy and an ounce of fresh butter. Stir over a slow fire for five minutes and serve.

If mushrooms are plentiful, a few stewed in the gravy before putting it to the macaroni make an excellent addition.

#### BOILED MUTTON.

Put the mutton into a pot of boiling water sufficient to cover it, with the turnips and carrots which are to be served with it. To a gallon of water allow two tablespoonfuls of salt and a large teaspoonful of pepper. Let the pot boil fast for ten minutes; then skim, and draw it to the cooler part of the range, and keep it just at boiling-point for the requisite time. A quarter of an hour to the pound of meat is sufficient, and if it weighs more than eight pounds, time may be calculated something less. If there is no objection, a few onions should be boiled with the meat, and they may be mashed with the turnips or served whole.

To mash the turnips, rub them through a colander into a stewpan, add a small piece of butter and a spoonful of cream, if convenient; work the purée over the fire with a wooden spoon until it is dry. Cut the carrots into neat pieces and serve in a vegetable-dish round the mashed turnips.

It is customary of late to pour caper-sauce over the mutton, but this should not be allowed, both because it is not good style and because many people object to it. A cupful of the liquor in which the meat was boiled, sufficiently salted, may be poured on the dish.

#### CAPER SAUCE.

Boil a tablespoonful of capers with half a pint of water in a stewpan without the lid for ten minutes. Mash the capers with a wooden spoon so as to bruise each one. Make the water boil up, and stir in one ounce of fine flour mixed smooth in a gill of cold water. When it has thickened, stir in an ounce of butter, let it dissolve; add a pinch of salt, and, if the sauce is not sufficiently acid, a little vinegar.

When the bottle containing capers is put away, take care to fill it up with fresh vinegar, as this prevents mould and loss of flavour.

#### SULTANA PUDDING.

Butter a pint mould or basin. Lay on it thickly fine sultana raisins which have been carefully wiped and picked, then fill up the basin lightly with the crumb of a French roll cut in rounds, shred an ounce of suet finely and strew over each round. Fill up the mould with a custard made of two eggs and half a pint of milk flavoured with ground cinnamon or lemon-extract. A little finely-shred lemon candied-peel is an improvement to the pudding. It should be placed at the bottom of the basin. This pudding is best steamed, and should be ready in an hour and a quarter. If, however, it must be boiled, it should be done very slowly, and with sufficient water to reach half-way up the pudding-basin.

For sauce, dissolve six lumps of sugar in a tablespoonful of boiling water, add a wineglass of marsala or sherry, put it into a jam-pot, and set it in a saucepan of boiling water to get hot. Just before serving pour it round the pudding.

#### IV.

Mulligatawny Soup.  
Potato Hash. Boiled Cheese.

#### MULLIGATAWNY SOUP.

Boil a small fresh haddock in a quart of water, with a little salt. When the fish is done take it up, and boil in the liquor four onions, which have been fried brown, and two apples, quartered but not peeled. When these are tender rub them to a pulp, and add to the stock two ounces of flour and two teaspoonfuls of curry-powder, mixed smooth in half a pint of cold milk; stir over the fire until the soup has

thickened, then put into it the flesh of the haddock, carefully picked into flakes and free from bones. Let it get hot, but not boil, add salt if necessary, and pour into the tureen. Serve with a little boiled rice.

The stock for this soup might be made of the mutton bones, or of any liquor from the boiled mutton, and, if liked, little pieces of preserved lobster be substituted for the haddock.

#### POTATO HASH.

Put some cold chopped potatoes into the frying-pan with a little fat, stir them about for five minutes, then add to them an equal quantity of cold meat, cut into neat little squares, season nicely with pepper and salt, fry gently, stirring all the time, until thoroughly hot through.

#### BOILED CHEESE.

Put four tablespoonfuls of beer into a small saucepan, shred into it a quarter of a pound of good new cheese, and stir briskly over the fire until all is dissolved and it is on the point of boiling, then take it off instantly, for if the cheese is allowed to boil it will become tough. Have ready slices of toasted bread, spread the cheese on them, and serve as quickly as possible.

## Sir Joshua Reynolds's Ruffles.

VISITORS to the Exhibition of Sir Joshua Reynolds's works at the Grosvenor Gallery cannot have overlooked the two glass cases, one in each of the large rooms, which contain little personal "belongings" of the first President of the Royal Academy. Opinions vary as to which relic is most interesting. The two dainty silver-handled palette-knives in one case will take the fancy of young lady art-students. The silver loving-cup of such liberal capacities must arrest the attention of every hospitable visitor. The sketch-books have delighted the parents of precocious children, fondly believing that the early art-works of their own nurseries and school-rooms are not inferior to Sir Joshua's, and that they are bringing up future rivals of his fame. The open-paged account-book is a text for economists to preach upon, in which we read that a coachman's wages were twelve pounds a year in the last century, and the entire cost of keeping a carriage and pair of horses, including servants, only one hundred pounds a year.

THE dainty sleeve-ruffles, beside the account-book, will provoke a breach of one of the ten commandments if any lovers of old-point look at them. "Greek, sir," says Dr. Johnson, "is like lace—everyone gets as much of it as he can." And in Sir Joshua's day lace cravats and ruffles were the distinctive mark of a gentleman's attire. The loom had not then been invented to turn out, by thousands of yards daily in one factory, imitations of the old laces which could only be patiently wrought by the needle, or woven upon a pillow. Every gentleman collected lace in the days of George III., and it was one of the evidences that the grand tour of Europe had been made, that fine lace, Italian, French, or Flemish, had been collected and brought home. The cost of the fine laces when brought to England and sold was enormous, for the duty was high. If brought in less quantities than twelve yards the duty imposed was two pounds a yard. This restriction on private dealing in foreign lace was with the double design of increasing the revenue, and of inducing English people to buy the laces of their own country—Devonshire, Buckinghamshire, Nottinghamshire, etc.

LOOKING round the walls of the Grosvenor Gallery, we see all the great men immortalised by Sir Joshua's brush wearing dainty lace. He has only given himself ruffles once—in the portrait of himself in the robes of President of the Royal Academy. It would have been almost impossible for an artist to have worked with deep lace ruffles falling over his hand and smearing the canvas.

AN ell, the measure by which lace was bought, was a yard and a quarter. Each sleeve-ruffle contained an ell and a quarter, and the depth was three or four inches. The satirical poems of that day contained frequent allusions to the fine gentlemen whose ruffles dipped into the sauces at table, and experienced other misfortunes of a like nature. The lace for ruffles was gathered and tacked upon a narrow piece of tape which was sewn to the shirt-sleeve and easily removed or changed.

IN an earlier time, when the second George was king, and he was full of grief at the last illness of Queen Caroline, who died in 1737, he yet failed not to remind his pages, when he had to meet foreign ambassadors on the following day, "to see that new ruffles were sewn on his old shirt-sleeves, whereby he might wear a decent air in the eyes of the representatives of foreign majesty." Fashions lived long in those days, and did not come in and go out with the rapidity of nineteenth century caprices, and the ruffles worn in George II.'s time differed very little, if at all, from those of fifty years later.

THE cravats were of muslin, shawl shaped, edged round with lace. For them Indian muslin was in great repute, being finer, softer, and

clearer than any made in England. So large were these cravats that they were put on by placing the centre against the throat in front, carrying the ends to the back, crossing them, bringing them to the front, and tying them loosely with ends flowing. Besides the cravat, breast-frills, or jabots, as they were called, were part of a gentleman's dress.

LADIES were not less greedy of fine lace than gentlemen in those days, but it is easier to understand their indulgence in such outlay than Horace Walpole's, or his friend Mr. Damer's, the wardrobe of the latter selling after his death for fifteen thousand pounds, the lace being its valuable feature. Ladies' dresses, made with elbow-sleeves, had frills of lace depending from them, and these gave a softening tone to the arm, even a bony one looking plump and rounded under the cloudy lace which fell over it. These elbow-frills were known as *engageantes*, and the name, originating in France, came over with the laces of the seventeenth century from Argentan and Alençon, and soon became naturalised in England. The great pride was in the number of frills upon the sleeve, from one to sixteen rows being worn. From the lace bills of Mary, the consort of William III., we find that a pair of *engageantes* in her time took a yard and three-quarters of lace, and the price was five pounds ten shillings per yard. The *engageantes* which the ladies of Sir Joshua's time wore must have required more lace than those of the previous century. One has only to look at the elbow-sleeves upon the canvasses at the Royal Academy or Grosvenor, to see that at least an ell is in each row.

ALENÇON lace had an Italian origin. In Louis XIV.'s time immense sums of money were sent out of France to Italy to pay for the exquisite foreign laces without which no courtier was considered to be properly dressed. Royal edicts forbidding the purchase of foreign laces were of no avail. Court ladies boldly defied the laws and heaped on as much costly lace as they could afford to buy. Colbert, the astute minister of Louis, met the difficulty in a wiser way than by prohibitions. He imported lace-workers, opened schools, and soon supplied both his own country and others with the same fine laces, which from this time were known as Alençon, Argentan, and, roughly speaking, French-point.

It was not without difficulty that the workers were induced to abandon the easy cutwork, which was the work of the peasant women, and learn to make Venetian-point. In their reluctance we sympathise, for the trial to the eyes of such fine work must have severely taxed the health, as the discipline did the tempers. The first productions were heavy flowers in relief—what we now call Venetian and Florentine. These were joined by little bars—technically, "brides." It was not till nearly the middle of the eighteenth century that Alençon lace, like that of Sir Joshua's ruffles, was made—light flowers or sprays, with a very fine meshed ground, a net made stitch by stitch with the needle, known as the *réseau* ground.

THE lace was worked upon parchment, as ladies of our own day worked braid and point lace stitches upon leather. But instead of the braid, of which the solid parts were formed, the pattern was entirely made with the needle, button-stitch over a thread. The pattern was first traced upon the parchment, which was stitched to a piece of very coarse linen, folded double. The outline of the pattern was then formed by two flat threads, which were guided along the edge by the thumb of the left hand, and fixed by minute stitches, passed with another thread and needle through the holes of the parchment. When the outline was finished, the work was given over to the *réseuse* to make the ground, the fine network alluded to above. Then the parchment was handed to a fresh worker, who filled up the flowers by rows of button-stitching, so fine that the beauty can only be seen through a magnifying-glass.

THE French Revolution broke up the lace manufacture in France. Not only were the employers of the peasants driven away from the neighbourhood where the workers lived, but there were no purchasers. The Court was gone, and the Republicans who had taken possession of the Tuileries had no taste for lace, and no sympathy with patient, honest, much-enduring women-workers. Under Napoleon there was a lace revival. The Empress Josephine took up the interests of the workers, and lace again became the fashion at the French Court. The Emperor made lace-wearing obligatory, and the Empress had special workers, who were kept in constant employment. To reproduce the lace made for the marriage of Marie Louise, would in the present day cost at least a million of francs. The bed-furniture consisted of tester, curtains, coverlet, and pillow-cases. The Alençon lace, made for the King of Rome's layette, was exhibited at Paris in 1855.

WITH the fall of the First Empire Alençon lost its trade. No new workers were encouraged, and the old ones died out. The invention of bobbin net had revolutionised lace-making in every country. The Duchess of Angoulême in 1830 tried to revive Alençon, and six years later Baron Mercier tried to make the girls work the old patterns on bobbin net, but all in vain. Not till 1851 was there any needle-point made at Alençon worth recording. Then a flounce was sent over to the Great Exhibition, at which thirty-six women had worked for eighteen months. It was valued at twenty-two thousand francs, and was afterwards bought for the trousseau of the Empress Eugénie.

IN 1856 most magnificent orders were given for the imperial layette. The young prince was *vouté au blanc*; white, therefore, was the prevailing colour in the layette. The curtains of the Prince Imperial's cradle were of needle-point, with Alençon coverlet lined with satin. The christening robe, mantle, and head-dress were all of Alençon; and the three *corbeilles*, bearing the imperial arms and cipher, were also covered with the same point. Twelve dozen embroidered frocks, each in itself a work of art, were all profusely trimmed with Alençon, as were also the aprons of the imperial nurse. A dress of Alençon point in the Paris Exhibition of 1855 was purchased by the Emperor for seventy thousand francs (£2,800), and presented by him to the Empress. The Empress has sold all these costly laces, and some day we shall hear of the reappearance of special specimens. The dress offered to the Empress by the city of Paris is now in possession of Mrs. Mackay, the wife of the big Bonanza Mine owner, familiarly "The Silver King." It cost a hundred thousand francs, and took fourteen years of the work of some of the ablest lace-women in Paris. The Empress never wore it, and Mrs. Mackay's portrait by M. Bonnat, in the last Salon, shows the lace worn over a long white silk robe, and an immense bouquet of roses carelessly thrown on one side of the train, another nestling in the lace body. The last royal dress of Alençon lace was for poor Queen Mercedes, the first wife of King Alfonso of Spain, whose married life was so brief. Into the lace, which was worn over cream-coloured satin, was wrought the arms of twelve kingdoms of old Spain, rather a curious idea for a lace pattern. The dress had been in hand for ten years before the order was given, and it was only necessary to execute and insert the special features required, the arms and initials.

ALL this travels far away from Sir Joshua Reynolds and his lace ruffles, but it is in reality only the same old story adapted to the tastes and habits of the nineteenth century. Design is more perfect in the present day, but the lace has less character in it, being worked by some eighteen hands, each at special parts, than it had in the olden days when one hand wrought it all, or shared the labour with not more than two others.

## Cork and Virgin Cork Work.

MANY useful and ornamental articles can be made with cork, and the work is one that recommends itself to the attention of people who are anxious to send contributions to bazaars, or give presents, and whose capital mainly consists of a willingness to work, and spare time.

THE work can be divided into three kinds: The making of models of churches, ruins, and caves, ornamental articles of shredded cork, and children's swimming-belts from old wine-corks. The cork required is obtained from pieces of waste cork of various sizes; new but bad corks, such as are sold very cheaply by makers, when their unfitness for their original purpose is proved; and by saving up all the old corks that have been used in the house. Discoloured corks are only serviceable for swimming-belts, so beer, lemonade, and soda-water corks are better for the purpose than wine corks. A glue-pot and strong glue, which can be heated over the fire, cardboard, thin laths of wood, old brackets, frames, and boxes, a bradawl, sheet of glass, glass-ruler, several sharp penknives, and some fine wire, complete the necessary requisites.

To make a really correct model of a church or castle it is necessary to design upon separate sheets of paper the various outer walls of the building, and to make these drawings to scale, and exactly the length and height the model is to be. In each correctly indicate the position and size of any opening or projection, such as window, door, turret, buttress, then cut away the spare paper surrounding the design, and paste all the various walls together, upright, and in their proper positions, so as to make a paper model of the desired object. This paper model will show at a glance if the right proportions of the building have been found, and, as it is easily made and altered, will save a great deal of after vexation which is likely to arise when the cork model is finished if it has only been built up haphazard, or from a flat design. Perfect the paper model, cutting out the windows, etc., in it, and then pull it to pieces and lay each part upon thin pieces of deal (the lids of old boxes will do) or upon millboard; mark out the required proportions upon these, and cut out upon the sheet of glass the window-openings, battlements, etc., with a sharp knife, steadied as it cuts by the glass ruler. Before putting the chief walls together line their inside portions with pieces of cork, using the most discoloured for that purpose. Take the penknife and an old cork, and cut the cork into long narrow strips, which glue on so as to cover all the interior walls, so that they may look neat when seen through the windows. Cover the outside walls with fine, even-textured cork, and cut this into small blocks one-eighth of an inch thick and half an inch square. Glue those firmly down with hot glue, and then join the various parts of the building together with fine nails or glue. Put on buttresses made of thin cork where the walls join, or small projections or mouldings; make these of thin strips of cork glued upon each other, to imitate the different rows of moulding. Where mouldings



require hollowing out in their centres, heat some wire or a bradawl, and burn the cork to shape by these means, and then scrape off the blackened parts. Window-frames require mouldings and sills. Pieces of glass are sometimes fixed into the window-openings, and narrow pieces of cardboard, covered with cork-dust, put in to imitate the stone mouldings of church windows. If a roof is put on, make it of cardboard, chop up the cork very fine and dust it well over the cardboard, after spreading a layer of hot glue on the surface. To imitate a slate roof, dust powdered slate-pencil and powdered brick over the cardboard instead of cork. Finish the work by glueing pieces of dried moss, lichen, and shaded chenille on to the walls, and covering the ground upon which the model stands with moss and fine gravel. Caves and castles are made in the same way. Old ruins without roofs make the best cork models, and are much easier to make than churches and castles.

To ornament small articles with cork. Frames, baskets, plant-boxes, wall-tidies, flower-pot covers, etc., can be made. For the frames, cut some pieces of deal into the shape of Oxford frames, and take the whitest of the old corks, and shred them with the knife or scissors into very small pieces, not of a uniform size. Prepare a large quantity of these, and also some quite fine cork-dust. Cover a piece of the frame with hot glue, and pour the pieces of cork over it from the hand, and when as many have stuck as possible, fill up the interstices with a shower of cork-dust. Work round the whole frame in this way, then, with a brush, dab hot glue on the cork where it is not sufficiently raised, and pour on those places a second layer of cork pieces. Flat cabinet and promenade photo-frames, made of cardboard, can be ornamented, and if any old velvet photo-frames are to be had, they can be made quite fresh-looking by being thus covered with cork. Cardboard flower-pot covers, wall-tidies, etc., are covered in the same way, but the pieces of cork used upon them are cut into large dice and oblong shapes, and the dust and tiny bits only used to fill up spare corners. An old housemaid's box can be made into a bedroom coalscuttle by being covered with large-sized pieces of cork; black-lead and soap boxes into flower-stands (with tin linings), and flour-barrels into work-tubs. Brackets are made by covering deal with various-sized pieces of cork glued firmly together; hanging baskets of a small size from the half of a cocoa-nut similarly covered, with holes drilled for drainage and to insert a wire handle. This wire handle cover by stringing on to cotton small pieces of cork, and winding this round the wire. Strawberry-punnets, covered first with brown-paper, upon which to glue the cork, fitted with wire handles, and lined with bright-coloured silk, make pretty work-baskets, as do cigar-boxes, covered outside with cork, and lined with silk. The same cigar-boxes, with a slit cut in the lid, make good hall letter-boxes. Another way of using the cork is to make, with strong wire, square and Oxford frames, and then to cut the cork into little blocks half an inch long and one-eighth of an inch thick. String these blocks on to stout thread, so that their points turn every way, and wind the thread round the frames in such a manner that the cork only decorates the front parts, and spaces of plain thread come at the back, by which means a flat back to the frame is given, and a raised and jagged front. Cork can be coloured by being sized, stained with Judson's dyes, or regular stains, and varnished. Sealing-wax varnish gives a look of coral to the cork.

FOR making children's swimming-belts, cut out the shape of the belt on ticking, run fine wire through the old corks, making a hole with the bradawl, and bend the wire, with the corks on it, so that it completely covers the ticking, fitting the corks one into the other, and bending the wire up and down the belt, not round it. Sew the wire to the ticking with stout thread, and make shoulder-straps, also covered with corks. Fasten the belt with a buckle, and string a lot of large pieces of cork as floats round the belt at the waist.

#### VIRGIN CORK WORK.

BESIDES the many ornaments that can be made from the finer kinds of cork, that bark of the cork-oak that is known as virgin-cork has of late years become a prominent article of decoration for ferneries, blank walls, rustic jardinières, etc., and for ornamenting window-boxes, hanging plant baskets, side and corner wall-pots, and many other objects of out and in door decoration. From the rugged and uneven surface of the bark, and the many fantastic shapes of its natural growth, it is peculiarly adapted to take away the stiff and conventional appearance that is so often associated with new-made conservatories or suburban rustic-work, and it also possesses the merit of lending itself to the worker's ideas, who is thus enabled to create from it many fanciful effects without distorting it into unsightly shapes or taking away from its individuality. Its one fault, that of its liability to harbour insects, is removed by varnishing it upon both sides before using, or by occasionally renewing it. The cork is brought to England in bales, one of the largest importers being the London and Lisbon Cork Wood Company, 28, Upper Thames Street, who have as agents most of the chief seedsmen and florists. The bales of one hundredweight each cost from twenty shillings to thirty shillings, the difference in their price being regulated by the shape of the bark, plain pieces being cheap, and growth that has assumed a tubular form the dearest. When the cork is obtained it should be sorted out, all the best grown pieces put in one bundle, and the smaller and least curious in another.

THE article to be decorated has now to be considered; if it is an already made wooden window-box, there is little trouble over it. Obtain a sheet of common glass, a very sharp shoe-maker's knife (price sixpence), some French wire nails (threepence the pound), and a bradawl. Place the bark upon the glass and cut it into a variety of lengths and sizes, not evenly, but in a rugged, jagged manner. Put the window-box in place, and then nail all the cork on, making a hole in it with the bradawl to allow of the nail going through it. Be careful not to make a straight line anywhere, and to let the edges of the cork hang down far below the edge of the window-box, and also bring them well above its top. Fill in all small spaces with little pieces of cork, and cover over the heads of the nails with putty and a little brown varnish. When the box is quite covered, it is improved by pieces of cork being nailed on to it of funnel and half-round shapes. These filled with earth, and a creeper or small plant put into them, carry the floral decorations below the straight line at the top, and improve the look of the work. Rustic hanging-baskets require a foundation of wood on to which to nail the cork; tin can be used, but to fasten the cork to metal, holes for the nails must be drilled through the metal, or a composition made of one part hot tar to six of pitch, the metal coated with this, and the cork affixed whilst this is hot.

OLD walls when ornamented with cork are particularly effective, especially when cavities, recesses, or jutting-out ledges are contrived into which to introduce ferns and other plants, and so convert an unsightly object into one of beauty; the difficulty in wall-work is affixing the nails through the putty and crevices left in the brickwork. Rustic plant-stands and fountains are very suitable for covering; the stands make with strong wood, and select for their legs boughs or saplings of trees, so that the curves and general shape of the article should appear to be natural; then take tubular pieces of the virgin cork large enough to encircle each leg, and cover over every part; places that are too small to nail cork to, require it to be glued on with gutta-percha. Take a stick of gutta-percha, melt it over a lamp, and while hot stick the cork on with it.

FOR Christmas decoration and for school-treats letters made with virgin cork are useful. Take some of the small pieces of cork and cut the letters out from them, using paper letters as a guide to their shapes, and then colour the larger letters red, by varnishing them well with sealing-wax varnish, or dip them into strong gum and sprinkle them with glass shavings, tapioca, or rice, or stain with Stevenson's stain and varnish with oak varnish. Virgin cork will take most of the wood stains. The cork must be sized after the stain is applied with common glue size, and then varnished with plain varnish.

### The Frigate Bird.

AFTER a storm at sea, in distant climes, you may have a chance of observing in a patch of royally-blue sky, a small bird with immense wings, hovering at an altitude of perhaps some ten thousand feet. It is a gull? No, its wings are black. It is an eagle? No, the bird itself is small. It is the little eagle of the seas, the first of the winged race, the audacious navigator who never furls sail, the prince of the tempest, the despiser of danger—the warrior or frigate bird. We have at last reached the limit of the series of which the wingless bird is the starting-point. Here is a bird that is nothing but wing. No body at all, or hardly any, scarcely as big as that of a barn-door fowl, but with prodigious wings, measuring sometimes fourteen feet from tip to tip. Such a bird as this, sustained by nature on such supports, has nothing to do but to float at ease. Does the tempest rage, he mounts to a height in which he finds serenity. The poetic metaphor, false when applied to any other bird, is no figure of speech for him; he literally slumbers upon the storm. If he thinks fit to travel in earnest, distance becomes a thing of naught.

This strange being has, moreover, the royal quality of fearing nothing in the world. Little, but strong and intrepid, he braves all the tyrants of the air. He can despise even the great condor, for before that monster bird could get well on the wing, he would be leagues away. One thing, nevertheless, surprises you; which is, that on closer inspection, the first member of the winged kingdom does not enjoy one particle of the peace which would seem to be promised by a life of such freedom. His eye is cruelly hard, unmerciful, and restless. His twisted attitudes are the contortions of a wretched watchman, who is compelled on pain of death to keep a constant look out over the infinite expanse of ocean. His sight visibly strains at telescopic range, and if it fail him, nature has condemned him, and he dies.

He has scarcely any feet, and such as he has are very short and webbed, unfitted to walk or perch. With a formidable beak, he has not the talons of a veritable sea-eagle. False eagle, although superior to the real in audacity and thievishness, he is inferior in strength, and is unprovided with those invincible claws. He can strike and slay, but can he seize? Hence arises the uncertainty and the hazards of his life, which is that of a corsair or a pirate rather than of a peaceable sailor; and the permanent question written on his face is: "Shall I dine to-day? Shall I be able to feed my young ones

to-night?" His superb and enormous expanse of wing becomes, on land, an encumbrance and a danger. In order to take flight, he requires either a high wind or an elevated spot, a peak, or a rocky cliff. Surprised on a sand-bank or a low reef, where he often makes a halt, the frigate-bird is helpless and defenceless; it is to no purpose that he threatens and strikes right and left, he can be easily killed by blows of a stick. Out at sea, these immense wings, admirable at a certain altitude, are ill-adapted to skim the waves. Once wet through, they would become heavy and would sink.

And yet, what can he do? His daily meals are in the waves; he must, therefore, be always approaching them; he is obliged constantly to return to, and beat about the sea which threatens to engulf him. He would perish of hunger if he had not the cunning to find a provider whose rations he devours. His ignoble resource is to attack a heavy and timid bird, the noddy, an excellent fisherman. The frigate-bird, which is not superior in size, pursues him, strikes him on the neck with his bill, and makes him disgorge his prey. All this takes place in mid-air; before the fish falls from the noddy, the frigate-bird has caught it.

The same impudent robber has been known to snatch a fish from a man's hand, and even to hover over a caldron with the hope of snatching morsels of the boiling meat, regardless of the sailors who were engaged in the cookery. Dampier saw sick, old, or crippled frigate-birds establishing themselves on reefs, which seemed to be their hospitals, and levying contributions on the fisheries of their vassals, the juvenile noddies. But while in vigorous health, they rarely alight, but live like the clouds, floating on their outspread wings from one hemisphere to another, taking their chance, and piercing with their implacable gaze the boundless expanse of sea and sky.

## Household Gardening.

### DIVIDING HARDY FLOWERS.

THE majority of the old favourite perennial plants that are so attractive during the summer and autumn are increased by division of the roots, and the best time for dividing and replanting is in early spring, soon after the young shoots appear from the roots, or fresh growth is seen to be starting.

Almost all kinds of border-flowers may be taken up and replanted now, the exceptions being Carnations and Pinks, especially the former, old-established plants of which should not be severed into divisions at this period of the year.

Plants that may be treated successfully by root-division now are Primroses and Polyanthus of all kinds, Pansies, Violas, Phloxes, Pyrethrums, Delphiniums, Foxgloves, Michaelmas Daisies, and, indeed, almost or quite all kinds, including Chrysanthemums, that die down in the autumn, and push up fresh growths when awakened from their winter sleep.

Usually the outside portions of border plants that are established in clumps are the best for replanting, the centres of the roots being exhausted by having been overcrowded in summer, and enfeebled by impoverished soil. Always, therefore, select those healthy parts, the vigorous crowns and robust shoots, as these offsets invariably make the best plants. The exhausted portions of the roots, if not needed for increase, can be profitably thrown away.

In dividing plants, always secure as many fibrous roots as possible with each division, and take particular care that these are not kept out of the soil a moment longer than is absolutely necessary. It is imperative that the roots be kept moist, or they will shrivel, and the leaves and shoots also, or they will wither, and the plants then receive a serious check, from which they do not readily recover, whereas, if kept perfectly fresh and moist by shading and sprinkling them with water when out of the soil, they scarcely receive any check by being disturbed, but grow freely from the first, and are then certain to flourish.

When renovating a border, dividing and re-arranging the plants, it is always advisable to change their positions when this can be conveniently done. A moment's thought will show the necessity for this. If a plant long remains in one place, it extracts all the particular food from the soil that is requisite for its sustenance. It is in the same position as an animal secured in a certain portion of a field: it will consume every particle of food within its reach, and if not soon given a fresh pasture, will starve. Thus by changing the position of a plant, it is afforded a new pasture, and is consequently invigorated.

But it is often desirable to take up a plant, reduce it in size, discarding the weaker portion and retaining the stronger, and replant in the same position. In this case always dig out a few spadefuls of soil and exchange them with a similar amount from another part of the border. Great benefit is certain to result from this simple process, which has the same effect on the plant as removing it to another site.

In dividing plants, insert the divisions a little deeper than they were before being disturbed; they should, in fact, be planted just below the general level of the ground, leaving each in a saucer-like cavity. Old and long-established roots are commonly raised above the soil by the washing of the earth from them, in which state they soon wither if a term of dry weather occurs. By being planted deeper, the roots are kept cooler and moister, while the cavities in which the plants are placed are convenient for holding water that may be given, and for

conveying it direct to the roots. When rooted divisions of plants are inserted, they should always be well watered at the time, and as often as is needed afterwards to prevent the leaves from drooping. The fresher they are kept, the sooner will they be established, as flagging of the leaves always retards the action of the roots.

### PLANTING ROCKERIES.

This is an excellent time, choosing mild and dull days for the work, for planting mounds that may be formed in which stones are embedded. These mounds, well furnished, are very ornamental, and plants often succeed on them better than on the level ground.

The sides of these mounds exposed to the full sun may be appropriately planted with the mossy Saxifrages, trailing Sedums, Aubrietias, Arabises, and Iberises, with any of the taller plants above-named between them as room may be available. In cooler or rather shaded places on the mound, Violas, Lilies of the Valley, Primroses, and Polyanthus, and most hardy border-plants will thrive, while for forming a fringe for hanging over the margin, the small-leaved Ivies and Periwinkles, with the accommodating Creeping Jenny are admirably adapted. In the summer, any ordinary bedding-plants, such as Geraniums, Lobelias, and Verbenas, may be inserted for imparting brightness after the spring flowers are over.

For a shaded rockery, which the sun seldom reaches, no plants are comparable to Ferns, and there is no better time for planting them than when the fresh young fronds are just uncoiling, but the roots must be kept constantly moist when out of the ground.

Amongst the most free-growing kinds are the Male Fern, the Lady Fern, and Hart's Tongue Fern; very attractive, also, of lower growth, are the Holly, Oak, and Beech Ferns. These would form the nucleus of a collection that might be added to from time to time. Failing Ferns, or in addition to them, variegated Ivies would render the mound ornamental, with the pretty white Woodroffe, and the gay German Irises. Most or all of the plants named, with many more that are suitable for the purposes in question, are now plentiful in the flower-markets, and can be obtained at a trifling cost. If good plants are procured, carefully planted, and well watered, they will be attractive at once, and improve as the season advances. Rockeries are very suitable for small town gardens, and more of them might be formed with advantage in suburban districts.

### BUSH FRUITS.

The most important of the larger fruits have been alluded to, and the best varieties recommended, but not less valuable are the smaller preserving fruits, while they are even more suitable for culture than the others in very small gardens, at the same time being worthy of extended culture in large ones. Grown for commercial purposes they are the most quickly profitable of all, and the produce is always in demand for jam-making purposes. Before the planting season closes it will be well to point out a few of the varieties that are likely to give satisfaction to those who grow them well.

### GOOSEBERRIES, CURRANTS, AND RASPBERRIES.

Excellent growers, abundant bearers, and serviceable are all these small fruits, and they can be profitably grown either trained to low walls and fences, or in borders in the open garden.

The most generally useful Gooseberry in cultivation is the Red Warrington, the fruit being valuable in a green state for tarts, and equally so when either green or ripe for preserving; the most generally acceptable of yellow Gooseberries is the Early Sulphur, which is one of the first to ripen; the best white, or greenish yellow, being the Whitesmith. These are largely grown for market purposes, and are often very profitable to the cultivators. Young trees can be purchased for threepence each, and they begin bearing the year after they are planted.

Black Currants are particularly useful for planting in rather moist and shaded places, as the trees grow there freely, and bear abundantly. This is a very wholesome and profitable fruit, and the crops are seldom devoured by birds.

Red and White Currants are also very abundant bearers, but require drained soil, or land that is not wet, also more sun than the black sorts for bringing the crops to perfection.

The best Black Currants are the Black Naples, and Lee's Prolific; the most useful red variety the Raby Castle; the favourite white the White Dutch. No one can err by planting these sorts who has suitable positions for a few trees, and where they thrive satisfactorily, they will give as much pleasure to the cultivator as he can derive from flowers, apart from the value of the fruit.

Raspberries, like Black Currants, rejoice in moisture, and do not object to partial shade. When well grown they are highly remunerative to the cultivator, the fruit always being in demand in town and country. There is no better variety than Carter's Prolific, which grows sturdily and produces large red fruit bountifully. If a Yellow Raspberry is desired, plant the Yellow Antwerp, the fruit of which is pretty, but less useful than the preceding valuable sort.

### PRUNING NEWLY-PLANTED TREES.

Pruning should be done immediately after planting, trimming the side-shoots off the main branches to within an inch of the base of each shoot, and shortening the terminal growths, the ends of the leading branches, to about six inches. Raspberry-canecan, newly-planted only, not those established, should be shortened to a foot, then stout growths will spring from the base and produce fine fruiting canes.

# Odds and Ends.

WHEN the late Dr. Samuel Butler, Bishop of Lichfield, was a young man, holding a country curacy, the celebrated Dr. Parr, who lived at no great distance, used sometimes to ride over, and take an early dinner with him at Christmas. One occasion the equestrian was overtaken by heavy rain, and reached his destination in a dripping condition. The curate took him immediately into his bedroom, where there was a good fire, and supplied him with a change of clothing. Presently the doctor re-entered, arrayed in his friend's dressing-gown and slippers, with a nightcap pulled over his ears. Ten minutes or so went by in silence, when Dr. Parr raised his head, gave one or two preliminary sniffs, and then looking round, lisped out in tones of deep interest: "Gooth for dinner, Tham?" "I really don't know, doctor. I hope there may be. My housekeeper knows you are fond of geese." Then the appetising odour of a savoury roast pervaded the apartment more and more. "I'm thure it's a gooth, Tham," said the doctor, smacking his lips. "Dinner's ready, please," said the maid, opening the door. Up jumped the guest, and hurried into the bedroom to don the clothes he had left there to dry. Horror of horrors, what a sight met his eye! His cherished head-gear, his well-powdered and pomatumed wig, lay in the fender frizzling in its own fat, and, while browning nicely before the fire, exhaled the odour which had so tickled his olfactory nerves, and raised up hopes only to be thus cruelly overthrown.

THE Earl of Lonsdale was so extensive a proprietor and patron of boroughs, that he returned nine members every Parliament, who were facetiously called Lord Lonsdale's ninepins. One of the members thus designated, having made a very extravagant speech in the House of Commons, was answered by Mr. Burke in a vein of the happiest sarcasm, which elicited from the house loud and continued cheers. Mr. Fox entering the house just as Mr. Burke was sitting down, enquired of Sheridan what the house was cheering. "Oh, nothing of consequence," replied Sheridan; "only Burke has knocked down one of Lord Lonsdale's ninepins."

"You have the advantage of me," said the old merchant blandly. "You will have to get someone to identify you." "Identify me? Why, I am your son, just back from the university for the summer vacation." "May be, may be," answered the old gentleman, "but my son did not look like a fool, wear a cockney hat, monkey-tail coat, shin-tight pants, tooth-pick shoes, nor did he suck cane-handles. When my wife returns from her visit to my sister in the country, you may present your claims to her, and if she decides that you are our offspring, I shall be happy to bid you an affectionate good-bye on your return to the university."

AN attorney, who had many times sent away an impecunious client with equivocal answers regarding his case, was one day disturbed under a press of business by the aforesaid client walking into his office. "You here again?" said the lawyer impatiently. "Yes," answered the client, "you told me to come back another time." "Well, then," retorted the attorney, "I didn't mean this time; I meant some other time."

A CLASS of schoolgirls, highly educated on the newest principles, were pouring forth to the Bishop of Manchester a list of Latin words, with the English equivalents, and they came to the word which we elders should call *viciissim*. "We-kiss-im," said the girls. "We-kiss-im—by turns." "Oh, do you?" answered the bishop. "Then I don't wonder at your adopting the new pronunciation."

AN editor listened very patiently once to a lengthy and verbose manuscript read to him by its author, who, feeling much flattered at the editor's attention, asked him: "What do you think of it? Is it likely to take with the public?" The editor reflected a few moments, and then answered: "Well, for people who like that sort of thing, I should think it is just the sort of thing they would like."

AN Englishman and a Welshman disputing in whose country was the best living, said the Welshman: "There is such noble housekeeping in Wales that I have known above a dozen cooks employed at one wedding dinner." "Aye," answered the Englishman, "that was because every man toasted his own cheese."

WOMAN, with dog jumping at her, to professor, owner of the animal: "For Heaven's sake, man, call your dog off, or he will upset me." Professor, standing on one foot and scratching his head: "One minute, madam, one minute; (to himself) as soon as I can remember the brute's name."

SOME time ago an old woman who had received a cheque went with great glee to a bank to draw the money. "This cheque is crossed; we can't pay it over the counter, my good woman." "All right, sir; I'll come round, then," was the reply.

THREE gentlemen, whose names were More, Strange, and Wright, being in a tavern, says the last: "There is but one duffer in the company, and that's Strange." "Yes," answered Strange, "here is one More." "Aye," said More, "that's Wright."

A MAD princess of the house of Bourbon, on being asked why the reigns of queens were in general more prosperous than the reigns of kings, replied: "Because, under kings, women govern—under queens, men."

HUSBAND: "Well, my dear, did you see some beautiful things on your mountain excursion?" Wife: "No; the guide told me to look where I walked; so all I saw was my boots."

J. J. ROUSSEAU was one day showing his "Ode to Posterity" to Voltaire. "Do you know," said the sage, "I'm afraid your 'Ode' will never be forwarded to its address."

ABOUT the guiltiest-looking people in this world—A man accused of a crime of which he is innocent, and a newly-married couple trying to pass for veterans.

TWO farmers had a dispute about the boundary lines of their farms. The dispute is now settled, and so are the lawyers—on their farms.

WHEN a man puts his old green gingham umbrella up on the shelf, he is wisely laying up something for a rainy day.

ONE evening between nine and ten o'clock, Lord B.'s butler discovered a burglar hiding in a china-closet. The butler took the depredator to his master, who happened to be in his study at the time, and asked whether he should send for a policeman. "Certainly," replied his lordship, "or rather, I'll ring for one," and so saying, he rang the bell. A servant appeared, whom his lordship requested "to go into the kitchen and bring up a policeman or two." The domestic returned and said there was no policeman on the premises. "What!" exclaimed his lordship, "do you mean to tell me that with a plain cook and three housemaids in my employ, there is no policeman in my kitchen? It is a miracle, and our prisoner shall reap the benefit of it. Butler, let the man go instantly."

A POPULAR dramatist was at a party the other evening, and, coming out, was with a crowd of other gentlemen at the door. One of them mistook him for a waiter. It is a kind of blunder that is not unfrequently made, and originates in a pardonable and warranted misconception. "Oh, please," said the guest, "call me a four-wheeler." "Certainly I will," said the dramatist; "you are a four-wheeler." He then waited till the storm of indignation on the part of the mistaken guest and of amusement on the part of all the others had subsided, before he added: "You know I cannot call you a hansom."

DR. ABERNETHY, the celebrated physician, was never more displeased than by hearing a patient detail a long account of troubles. A woman, knowing Abernethy's love of the laconic, having burned her hand, called at his house. Showing him her hand, she said: "A burn." "A poultice," quietly answered the learned doctor. The next day she returned and said: "Better." "Continue the poultice," replied Dr. A. In a week she made her last call, and her speech was lengthened to three words: "Well; your fee?" "Nothing," said the physician; "you are the most sensible woman I ever saw."

THE Duke of York once remarked to Colonel W. at the mess of the 11th Regiment, that the colonel was uncommonly bald, and, although a much younger man than His Royal Highness, he stood more in need of a wig. The colonel, who had been of very long standing in the service, and whose promotion had been by no means rapid, informed His Royal Highness that his baldness could easily be accounted for. "In what manner?" asked the duke. "By my junior officers stepping over my head," was the reply. The gallant colonel received promotion in a few days.

THE most powerful king on earth is working; the laziest king, shir-king; the most popular king, smo-king; and the most disreputable, jo-king; and the leanest one, thin-king; and the thirstiest one, drin-king; and the slyest, win-king; and the most garrulous one, tal-king. And then there is the hac-king, whose trade's a perfect mine; the dark-skinned monarch, black-king, who cuts the greatest shine; not to speak of ran-king, whose title's out of the question; or famous ruler, ba-king, of good finance digestion.

DR. WHATELY once asked a roomful of divines why white sheep eat so very much more than black sheep. One person advanced the opinion that black being a warmer colour than white, and one which never fails forcibly to attract the sun, black sheep could do with less nutriment than their white contemporaries. At these profound speculations Dr. Whately shook his head gravely and then proceeded to explain: "White should eat more because there are more of them."

SIR WALTER SCOTT, on being asked to sit for his portrait for Terry, the actor, said that both he and his dog "Maida" were tired of that sort of thing; Maida particularly so, for she had been so often sketched, that whenever she saw an artist unfurl his paper and arrange his brushes, she got up and walked off with a dignity and expression of loathing almost human.

"WHY will you associate with such men as Flimsy?" asked Brown. "For my part, I always endeavour to associate with men who are my superiors." "It can't be hard work for you to find them," replied Jones, "but I am different from you. I am always willing that my friends should associate with their superiors."

LORD NORTH, who was very corpulent before a severe sickness, said to his physician after it: "Sir, I am obliged to you for introducing me to some old acquaintances." "Who are they, my lord?" enquired the doctor. "My ribs," replied his lordship, "which I have not felt for many years until now."

"THE sun is all very well," said an Irishman, "but the moon is worth two of it; for the moon affords us light in the night-time when we want it, whereas the sun's with us in the day-time, when we have no occasion for it."

SHE was a sweetly inexperienced housekeeper, as one may gather from her remark when someone suggested that she should purchase spring mattresses. "Yes," she replied, "if they are in season we'd better have some."

As a stout old lady got out of a crowded omnibus the other day, she exclaimed: "Well, that's a relief, anyhow." To which the driver, eyeing her ample proportions, replied: "So the 'osses thinks, mum."

A TRAVELLER, enquiring at a feudal castle whether he could see the antiquities of the place, received the simple answer from a servant: "I am sorry, sir, my lady and her daughters have gone to town."

"My daughter," said a pompous old gentleman, "you must never listen to flatterers." "But, papa," said the young lady, "how can I tell that they are flatterers unless I listen?"

AN account of East End destitution states that the match-making is almost wholly in women's hands. It is precisely the same in the West End.

MANY speak the truth when they say that they despise riches and preferment, but they mean the riches and preferment possessed by other men.

A SMART young man picked up a flower in the ball-room after all the girls had gone, and sang pathetically, "Tis the lost rose of some her."

THE seashore is a place where you can always find Sabbath-breakers.

A MASTER of free-hand drawing—A pickpocket.

KNOT-WITSTANDING.—Bachelors.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## QUESTIONS.

FLIES IN AMBER will be glad to know where he can find the following verse:

For every evil under the sun  
There is a remedy, or there's none;  
If there is one, try and find it;  
If there isn't, well, never mind it.

JOAN D. will be glad to have the names of songs in which the following words occur:

I've a cot in the valley,  
Come share it with me.

And:

Lightly beats, lightly beats  
The heart that never  
Felt the pangs, felt the pangs  
That wait on love.

Also to know where she can find a short poem entitled "The Ivy and the Bell."

## ANSWERS.

A GREAT ADMIRER OF "HOUSEHOLD WORDS" AND ONE SADLY PERPLEXED.—It is not easy to form a correct opinion regarding your trouble without a personal interview. However, the following general directions may help you. Attend carefully to your general health; if you are not well consult a doctor. Avoid indigestible food, and do not drink much tea or alcohol. Do not overwork either mentally or physically. Avoid mental anxiety as much as you can. Do not overtax your memory. Do not seek to have too many fresh impressions, for, of course, this will give you weak memory unnecessary work, whereas it really requires rest. In the meantime do not do any mental work that you find worries or annoys you. Sleep as much as you can. Take a cold bath every other morning if you find it agrees with you. Take a teaspoonful of the following mixture three times a day in a wineglassful of water after meals. Any chemist will supply it. Easton's syrup and simple syrup, of each one ounce, mixed together. Always shake the bottle before taking the medicine.

ASPHYXIA SMITH.—Apply to any first-class governesses agency, a list of which you will find in the London Post Office Directory, under the head of "Governesses' Institutions."

BWILDERED.—1. Like many other apparently incredible feats, that of the egg in the bottle is easily accomplished when you know the secret. You must take an egg and soak it in vinegar, and in process of time its shell will become quite soft, so that it may be extended lengthwise without breaking. Then insert it into the neck of a bottle, and, on pouring cold water upon it, it will assume its former figure and hardness. 2. When you cut indiarubber, keep the blade of your knife wet, and you can cut it without difficulty.

CAFÉ AU LAIT.—1. Certainly you are entitled to have the article you ask for, and to require that it shall be that which it is represented to be. At the same time, our own experience is that coffee supplied at restaurants is generally better when made from the essence than from fresh coffee. There is a great difference in the quality of essence of coffee, and some brands have a very little true coffee flavour. The Café Viorgo (Allen and Hanbury, or Ridgway and Co.) is delicious. It is guaranteed to contain no admixture whatever, and, from some experience in the use of various kinds of essence of coffee, we are able to say we know of none comparable in quality and strength to the Café Viorgo.

CARRARA.—1. Your interesting paper on the production of a marble statue is too long for the correspondence page. 2. A celebrated sculptor has calculated that the aggregate of weight thrown on the production of a life-sized statue in marble, of the most delicate workmanship, is not less than 155,520 tons, or 17,318,240 lbs. avoidupois.

CLAPTON.—We do not understand your term of "double florin." The coin called the "Godless florin," 1848, because the D.G. was omitted from the inscription, was smaller and thicker than that now in circulation, and, in deference to public opinion, the issue was not repeated. Perhaps your coin is the five-shilling piece, called the Gothic crown, 1847, the die of which broke, and, on account of the expense, was not remade.

H. A. DABBS.—The volume of the "Golden Floral Series," containing "The Curfew Must Not Toll To-night," can be had, post-free, 5s., from the Manager, New Book Court, Crystal Palace, Sydenham.

H. E. LE B.—The story of the Pastoral Staff which budded is given in a poem by the Hon. Julian Fane and Lord Lytton, and is as follows: A wicked knight desired to be absolved from his sins, and he asked a bishop to shrive him. He was told that God was very merciful, and was asked to confess his sins. He told one of them, and his bishop said that God was very good and would forgive it. He told another, and the bishop said again that God, in His great mercy, would forgive him even that. When, however, he confessed for the third time some very great offence, the bishop said: "Sooner than God can forgive so great a crime, my staff will burst forth into leaf." The knight went away in great grief, but was

soon after killed, and brought back to the place where the bishop lived to be buried. As the funeral service was being performed, the bishop's staff broke out into leaves, showing that God had pardoned all the knight's sins.

IGNORAMUS.—1. Certainly not. 2. Eisteddfod (pronounced i-steth-vöd), a sitting, an assembly, as of magistrates, etc.; a meeting, an assembly, or session of bards and minstrels held in Wales in ancient times. These meetings were revived by the Tudor sovereigns, and annual meetings for the recitation of prize poems and performances on the harp are now held under this name. 3. The Elgin Marbles are a collection of ancient statues discovered on the island of Egina, supposed to have originally decorated the temple in that island sacred to Pallas Athênê. They are before the age of Phidias, so, although true to nature generally, their faces are characterised by that forced smile which gives an unpleasant expression to the earlier Greek sculptures. They are the most remarkable ornaments of the Glyptothek of Munich.

INQUIRER C.—Your best plan will be to offer your stamps to Mr. Lincoln, 462, Oxford Street, W.

JEUNESSE DORÉE.—The following are the words of "Some Day":

I know not when the day shall be  
I know not where our eyes may meet,  
What welcome you may give to me,  
Or will your words be sad or sweet;  
It may not be till years have passed,  
Till eyes are dim and tresses grey;  
The world is wide, but love at last  
Our hands, our hearts, must meet some day.  
Some day, some day, some day I shall meet you,  
Love, I know not when or how (bis),  
Only this, only this, only this,  
That once you loved me;  
Only this—I love you now,  
I love you now, I love you now.

I know not are you far or near,  
Or are you dead, or do you live;  
I know who the blame should bear,  
Or who should plead, or who forgive;  
But when we meet, some day, some day,  
Eyes clearer grown, the truth may see,  
And every cloud shall roll away,  
That darkens love: 'twixt you and me.  
Some day, some day, etc.

ROBIN.—1. You can give the notice in writing in the form of a letter, and must take care to have an acknowledgment of its receipt from the landlord. 2. We can hardly advise about the garden matters, as we do not know the nature of the agreement. One thing is certain, you are not entitled to take away any of the soil.

WILL-O'-THE-WISP.—The epigram is generally known as Swift's, but as it is really a translation of the French of Scévole de Sainte-Marthe, the friend of Henry IV. of France, Swift can only enjoy the credit of having accomplished a most perfect rendering with the raciest and freshest of English:

Sir, I admit your general rule,  
That every poet is a fool;  
But you yourself may serve to show it,  
That every fool is not a poet.

WILY VIVIAN.—1. You will see that your enquiry was inserted last week. 2. We should hardly like to think that so well educated a correspondent as yourself is in any difficulty about the pronunciation of words in such common use as those you mention, and about which there is no dispute. 3. We cannot find the author of the quotation.

## NOTICE.

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"FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 148.]

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Miss Halkett's Pride.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

"SHALL I light the candles, ma'am?"  
"No, thank you, Jane; I will ring when I require them."

The old servant glanced at her mistress a little wistfully. Possibly she doubted the apparently cold indifference with which the words were spoken. She was turning to leave the room, but paused to look back, her hand on the handle of the door.

"It's a chilly night, ma'am; shall I have a bit of fire lighted in the grate?"

"No, thank you, Jane," Miss Halkett said again, a little more firmly this time.

Jane understood that her mistress wished to be alone. With a sigh, and a dismal shake of the head, she withdrew, closing the door softly behind her.

It was a dreary room at all times, but doubly so now in the fast fading light of a late autumn evening. Nearly half an hour had passed since the sun had set sullenly behind the rugged line of hills which marked the horizon; the temporary brightness in the west had changed to a sickly yellow, whilst leaden-hued clouds crept up one over another in the distance. The wind sighed and moaned around the old house, sometimes sinking to a mere saddened whisper, then rising to a despondent wail.

Miss Halkett shivered a little, and drew the white cashmere shawl somewhat more closely round her upright figure. Very upright and unbending always, but to-night more so than ever. There was something almost rigid in the dim outline of her form as she sat there in the window gazing out with unseeing eyes into the gathering darkness, her head held high as she had always held it, the lips a thought more compressed, perhaps, and the lines about the mouth a trifle more drawn, but to a casual observer, proud, and hard, and unsympathetic. Her folded hands rested on her lap; beneath the long, white, interlaced fingers lay an open letter.

The lawsuit which had lasted so long, and on which so much depended, was over at last, and she had lost. The law had decided against her, as it seemed to Miss Halkett the whole world had been against her always. And now she was penniless.

Beneath that cold, impassive exterior what bitter indignation raged—what angry resentment at the cruel injustice of it all. For it was not just, if legal, and between those two words, which should be synonymous, what a gulf exists sometimes!

No one doubted that Colonel Halkett had intended his only daughter to inherit all he died possessed of, yet, through some ill-worthing of the will—some quibble of law—all was to pass to the next male heir, a nephew with whom he was known to have been on bad terms. He would receive all—money, land, everything—excepting only Raven Hall itself, which Fortune, as if in mockery, suffered Miss Halkett to retain.

A large Elizabethan mansion was Raven Hall, with numerous echoing corridors in which one could lose oneself, a dining-hall capable of seating two hundred guests, and reception-rooms in profusion. Of what use could such a dwelling be to one in Miss Halkett's present position?

The same letter which told her of her defeat, suggested that Mr. Halkett would probably be prepared to purchase it on most liberal terms. Her lawyer took it for granted that she would sell it, and naturally Mr. Halkett, her cousin and successful rival, would desire to possess the Hall, standing as it did in the very centre of his property; he would be willing to offer more for it than anyone else would care to—in fact, Miss Halkett had doubtless only to name her own price.

But this Miss Halkett had not the slightest intention of doing. She was not going to part with Raven Hall either to Geoffrey Halkett, or to anybody else.

This was the fixed determination at which she had arrived. It would be a terrible struggle, she knew that—pride against poverty; but she had a strong will, and she vowed to herself that, so long as breath remained in her body, she would never leave the Hall. If she sold it, her cousin would in some way manage to gain possession of it, so she would part with it to no one. He should not even have it after her death, for she would on the very next day make a will, directing that when she died it should be converted into a home for incurables.

She almost laughed even in her agony of mind as this thought occurred to her, and as the watery light of the now risen moon came

momentarily from behind the clouds, and, creeping through the diamond window-panes, rested on her face, there was a look of triumph in the eyes usually so expressionless, and for an instant the thin lips curled into a smile.

But the corners of the mouth soon drooped again, and a sharp, short, painful sigh escaped her. Rising suddenly, as if determined to give herself no more time for reflection, she made her way across the darkened room and rang the bell.

Jane, who was anxiously awaiting the summons, entered with candles almost before the sound had ceased.

If she had expected to see any trace of emotion on her mistress's face she was mistaken.

"Desire Mrs. Brown to come to me; I wish to see her at once."

That was all Miss Halkett said, but Jane's heart misgave her as she went to the housekeeper's room to deliver the message. Never had Mrs. Brown been summoned at this hour before—something surely was wrong, as she had feared.

She awaited the housekeeper's return with the greatest impatience and perturbation.

Soon her heavy footsteps were heard hurriedly descending the stairs. She came in with flushed cheeks and panting breath, and dropped helplessly into the nearest chair.

"What is it?" cried Jane, her own face white with fear. "I knew all wasn't right, I felt it. For goodness sake, Mrs. Brown, let me know the worst!"

"And the worst it is," sobbed the housekeeper hysterically. "The whole household is to have notice this very night, and to-morrow we leave the Hall with a month's wages, every one of us, from the highest to the lowest."

Jane stepped back a step or two, gasping for breath; then, recovering herself quickly, she set her lips together with a look of determination very like her mistress's.

"That I'll never do," she said decidedly. "I've been here this thirty years, and I'll not leave her now till I am turned out by force," and with a firm step she retraced her way upstairs.

"Please, ma'am, I've come to tell you I am not going."

"Not going, Jane! I do not understand you."

Miss Halkett was seated at a table writing. She did not look up as she spoke, but, though she showed no surprise, her voice trembled slightly, if Jane's ears did not deceive her, so she took courage and advanced a few yards, then, unable to control herself any longer, raised her apron to her eyes and burst into tears.

"Oh, ma'am, what have I done that you should send me from you?"

Very slowly and deliberately Miss Halkett wiped her pen, placed it carefully on the rack, then, pushing her chair a little from the table, at last raised her eyes.

"I do not know, Jane, that it has ever been my habit to give explanations and reasons for what I do. Is it not enough that I say it must be so?"

"Not enough for me, ma'am. Oh, dear Miss Caroline, let me stay! You'll never get another woman to know your ways so well. Haven't I been your maid since you were a young lady still in the schoolroom? You'll never like a stranger about you—never. Oh dear, ma'am, I can't go—I can't, indeed!"

The words came spasmodically between her sobs, her body swayed to and fro in her grief, and now she cast herself on her knees before her mistress.

Miss Halkett turned her head aside, coughed, cleared her throat once or twice, endeavoured to rise, forcing at the same time a stern expression of disapproval to her face. But it was no use, her softer woman's nature for once prevailed over her pride. With a half-suppressed cry her overwrought feelings gave way, and she fell forward sobbing on the old woman's neck, weeping as uncontrollably and passionately as she had done many a time long ago when she was a wayward, wilful girl of fourteen, and Jane a comely young woman of thirty.

Three months had passed since the servants had been discharged from Raven Hall. Since then the only inmates of the old house had been Miss Halkett and Jane.

Only three months, yet already the Hall looked terribly neglected. Weeds had sprung up in the drive, the grass on the lawn was grown rank and wild, the flower-beds—with their frost-bitten, blackened plants still in them—were covered with withered leaves.

A storm had ruthlessly torn the Virginia-creeper in several places from the walls, and uprooted one of the chestnut-trees which bordered the terrace. It lay there on the moss-grown gravel, its gaunt bare branches stretched out like naked arms across the drive, so that in order to approach or leave the house one would be forced to step across it.

But no visitors ever came to the Hall now. Miss Halkett sternly denied herself to all, friends and acquaintances alike. She, who in her pride had counted herself so far above them, would not suffer



them to gloat over her fall, to gratify their curiosity by witnessing her poverty and then turn their backs upon her. No, she would be the first to renounce them, and so saw no one, nor took one step beyond the terrace.

But even in this isolated position whispers from the outside world reached her, and it came to her knowledge that Geoffrey Halkett was returning to England to claim his own.

Jane heard the news, and thought it right to mention the fact to her mistress. It was said that a residence was to be erected at once not a stone's-throw from the Hall.

Miss Halkett heard all in cold silence; but when her maid left her her manner changed; she became nervous and excited, and paced up and down the room restlessly.

He was coming home! Geoffrey Halkett was coming home!

That was what kept repeating itself in her mind. Twenty years had passed since he went away, yet even now the colour rushed to her very brow, and involuntarily her hands clenched as, with a sudden rush of recollection, she recalled how they had parted.

Once they had been plighted lovers, believing, trusting in each other. Geoffrey was poor; his father had been a ne'er-do-well and married beneath him. Colonel Halkett, with high aspirations for his daughter, sternly refused his consent to their union, and forbade his nephew the house. But the young people still found means of meeting, and many letters passed between them.

Things went well enough for a time, but by-and-by a cloud appeared on the horizon in the shape of another suitor for Miss Halkett's hand—a nobleman, rich, and favoured by her father, handsome, attractive, and with fascinating manners.

Perhaps it is not altogether surprising that she was a little dazzled by his attentions. She meant to be true to Geoffrey, but as time went on and the prospects for their future still looked gloomy as ever, she began to despond. If she were never to be Geoffrey's wife, she might just as well accept the brilliant position which was offered her.

One day her cousin received a little note from her, saying that it was useless fighting against fate, and that she had promised to marry Lord Daintree.

However, her faithlessness soon met with its reward. Lord Daintree's affections appeared to cool from the day of their betrothal. Perhaps he perceived that Miss Halkett had no love to give him; and when it came to his ears that she had broken off an engagement with her cousin in order to accept him, he in his turn declined the honour of her hand.

Of course Miss Halkett's pride was seriously wounded, but deep down in her heart was a feeling of relief that she was free once more to love Geoffrey, whom she had found it impossible to forget, and who in a month was to sail for India.

He need not go now; he would soon hear that Lord Daintree was gone, that they were no longer engaged, and he would write to her—yes, surely he would write.

Day by day she anxiously awaited a letter, but it never came, and one day, when by chance she met her cousin, he passed her with a distant bow.

"He does not know," she thought. And that same evening she wrote to him, a humble, penitent letter, begging him to forgive her, and acknowledging that she had never ceased to love him.

When the time passed and the days went by till but one remained, and still no answer came, she grew desperate. She could not let him go without one word. On the morrow he was to leave. Perhaps they might never meet again. See him she must, even if she had to humble herself before him, and beg him to take her with him. Accompanied by Jane, she left the Hall in the dusk and took the way through the park to his house. When they were near it, Jane went on and told him that her mistress was without, wishing to see him.

With what breathless anxiety Miss Halkett waited for him! She started forward with a glad cry of joy when she saw him coming, and involuntarily she held out both hands. But they soon dropped helplessly to her side, and she stood there trembling and with bowed head, for there was no welcome, no sign of pleasure on his face, only stern, haughty disapproval and contempt.

The words she would have spoken died upon her lips; she cowered from him, covering her face with her hands. He showed her no mercy; he loved her with all the strength of his nature; he longed even then to take her in his arms and clasp her to his breast; but he could not forgive her for all that she had made him suffer; he longed to make her suffer in her turn. So he hardened his heart against her, whilst the very smarting of his love made his words the more cruel.

"You left me of your own accord," he said bitterly. "I am poor—your inferior in every way. You were quite right to throw me over for so noble and wealthy a suitor as Lord Daintree. Whilst he was here no thought of me ever crossed your mind. Now that he has jilted you—jilted you," he repeated with cruel emphasis,

"you come to me! Oh, Caroline Halkett, you little know me if you think that I will receive you now."

It was from that day that Miss Halkett grew cold and hard. The love which she had had for her cousin turned to hate, because she had humiliated herself to him and he had scorned her.

They did not meet again, for he sailed on the following day, and had remained abroad ever since.

And now he was coming home after twenty years' absence!

Some weeks later, he presented himself at the Hall and desired to see Miss Halkett.

"He has come to treat for my only possession," she thought bitterly. "He might leave me here in peace."

And she sent down a message by Jane, saying that she would not see him, then or ever.

But when she heard the door close behind him, she went to the window and gazed after him eagerly. The same upright figure she remembered so well; a trifle stouter, perhaps, and the dark brown hair was thickly sprinkled with grey. He was five years older than she, but she noticed, with a jealous pang, that he was a handsome man still, whilst she—

She had never regretted her lost beauty before, but now she could hardly repress a groan. At the same moment he turned and glanced up at the very window near which she stood. She let the curtain fall back suddenly to its place, and stepped back, pale and ashamed.

Had he seen her? The thought dyed her white cheeks with crimson, as if she had been a girl, and set her heart beating violently.

For many days after that she did not leave the house, but at length she ventured out for her accustomed walk on the terrace.

It was a cold raw day, and flakes of snow were falling, but, lost in her own thoughts, Miss Halkett paid no heed to the weather. Wrapped in a large crimson shawl, a corner of which she had thrown over her head in lieu of a bonnet, she paced sadly to and fro.

Presently a feeble cry at her feet attracted her attention. Looking down, she perceived a tiny bird, half-starved and cramped with hunger and cold. She stooped, and endeavoured to take it in her hand, but in its fright it managed to elude her, and, flapping its stiffened wings, flew a few yards farther. She followed it, but each time, as she tried to seize it, it escaped her.

At length, faint and exhausted, it suffered itself to be captured.

She had been so eager in the chase that she had forgotten her determination never to leave the terrace, and now, to her dismay, she found that she was some distance from the house, and that she was standing on her enemy's land. Close at hand, from behind a clump of lime-trees, came the sound of voices, of hammering and sawing. Workmen were there, busy on the new building. Perhaps, even now, Geoffrey was there also, superintending the work. The thought made her turn in alarm and begin to retrace her way hurriedly.

The sound of footsteps behind caused her to quicken her pace. Gradually they gained on her. The next moment Geoffrey Halkett stood beside her.

She turned and faced him defiantly, drawing herself up proudly to her full height, waiting for him to speak.

"Caroline—Miss Halkett, I beg that you will listen to me," he said eagerly.

In his earnestness he ventured to lay his hand on her arm. She shook it off angrily, and moved a little farther from him.

"Why need we be enemies?" he implored. "Surely twenty long years should have ended all anger and resentment. I know that you have much to forgive, but we were both wrong, and now—"

"Say no more," she interrupted passionately; "you talk of forgiveness—you! You, who have made me a beggar, who have robbed me of my inheritance!"

With her right hand she waved him from her, her left still held the little half-frozen bird close against her breast.

"Listen to me, Geoffrey Halkett. I am already learning what it is to suffer from cold and hunger, what it is to lack the common necessities of life. The world does not know what I suffer, but I tell you, that you may know how impossible it is I can ever feel anything but hatred for the man who has brought me to this. Look around, right and left, almost as far as you can see is the land that was mine, that I had every right to believe would be mine as long as I lived. And now it is yours, you have stolen it from me. And I—I live there in the midst of it all, selling my jewels to obtain food, and seeing my home falling to ruin about me. Can you guess what all this is to me?"

"Is it so bad as that? Oh, my poor Caroline, if I had but known. But you must hear me, there is much that I can explain. Believe me, I am not so much to blame as you think. Do not judge me until you have heard all."

But she turned from him angrily, and holding up her hand to forbid him to follow her, she continued her way towards the Hall.

Miss Halkett was seated at breakfast—a very mengre breakfast of bread-and-milk, but the table was laid with as great care and neatness as of old. A large bowl of roses filled the room with their sweet perfume, and the bright morning sunshine came streaming in through the open window.

For winter had passed, the spring had come and gone, and summer was here with its blessed light and warmth. How blessed, Miss Halkett had never fully realised until now.

When Jane came in to remove the cloth, her ordinary staid demeanour was changed to one of unusual excitement.

"Oh, ma'am, forgive me for speaking, but there's something you ought to know. They say that Mr. Halkett never meant to take the property. He was away in Africa, or some outlandish country, where he got no papers nor letters, nor knew nothing of what was going on here at all. It was his brother who acted for him. And only when it was too late did he learn what had happened."

She spoke so rapidly that her mistress could not have stopped her even if she had wished to do so. Turning very pale, she enquired in a scarcely audible voice:

"Who told you this?"

Jane did not answer immediately; Miss Halkett had to repeat the question before she found courage to reply to it.

"Forgive me, ma'am," she said at length, "I couldn't help it; I knew you would be angry at my speaking with him. He has met me ever so many times, and tried to get me to give you letters. He said you only returned unread those he sent through the post. But I told him it would be all the same if I took them, for you'd be sure not to look at them."

"Of whom are you speaking?" demanded Miss Halkett severely.

"Of Mr. Geoffrey, ma'am. He looked so sad and ill, and I couldn't get away, for he held me by the arm. It was when I came back from the farm just now, where I had been for a couple of eggs. He'd been watching for me and made me listen to him, and—and, ma'am, I don't know if I have done right or wrong, but I have brought this."

So saying she took a letter from her pocket, and placing it on the table before her mistress, went quickly from the room, determined to be deaf for once if she were recalled.

Miss Halkett sat for some time motionless, thinking over this new aspect of affairs. Presently she glanced at the note, hesitated, glanced at it again, and finally, taking it up, broke the seal and read. Mr. Halkett had written asking her to be his wife.

"It is pity—pity that made him do it!" she muttered to herself, her eyes flashing angrily. "This is the only way by which he can restore to me my property. Does he think for one moment that I shall accept such a sacrifice? I am beginning to look an old woman already, but he is a fine man still, and good-looking. He might marry anyone. No one shall say that he has taken me out of pity."

So she wrote a short but decisive refusal at once, and sent Jane off to the post with it. Better die of starvation than be Geoffrey Halkett's wife out of pity.

And very near starvation it was getting now, for those two poor lonely women. Luckily they suffered no longer from the cold with which they had had to battle more than once through the long and severe winter, but Miss Halkett's last jewel was sold, and the only available articles which could be disposed of were some flounces of old lace which had been on her mother's wedding-gown, and with which she had been loth to part.

One by one, and for shamefully small sums, these had to go too, and with great economy a few more months passed over.

Soon the furniture would have to be sold or they must starve. Jane believed the shame of it would kill Miss Halkett. She turned over in her mind some means by which the evil day could at least be postponed.

At length a thought struck her. Taking up a candle she made her way to the long-disused drawing-rooms. The curtains were of heavy satin brocade; she could easily make them up into a bundle and send them to London the next morning. The same dealer who bought the jewels and lace would be sure to offer something for them, and no one need know but they were going to be cleaned.

Fetching some steps, she mounted them, and unhooking the curtains, threw them over her arm and left the room. But loaded as she was she carried the candle—a common dip, one with a flaming wick—crookedly. A sudden draught blew a spark from it towards the windows against some light muslin curtains which had hung there with the others. Jane went out, closing the door after her, little knowing the mischief she had done.

That night the whole neighbourhood was aroused by hearing the great bell ringing at Raven Hall, and seeing volumes of smoke rising from the midst of the park.

Miss Halkett and her maid slept in adjoining rooms in a comparatively new wing of the building, and the farthest side from where the fire first broke out; consequently it had already made rapid progress before they were aware of it.

At last Jane was awakened by a strong smell of burning. Throwing a shawl over her head, she went downstairs, and to her horror and dismay perceived that the house was on fire.

To arouse her mistress was the work of a moment. In a few frightened words she told her what had happened.

Miss Halkett got up and began to dress.

"Oh, ma'am, don't wait! For Heaven's sake, come!"

Jane tried to throw a dressing-gown over her, but Miss Halkett put it aside deliberately. She showed no sign of fear.

"It wanted but this," she was thinking. "I had only the house, and even that will be taken from me!"

In a calm voice she told Jane to go down to the yard and ring the big bell. She supposed it was her duty to summon assistance, but in her heart she felt that fate was against her and no help could avail.

If she were to die here in the old house, would it not be better? Her troubles would be over then, whereas if she lived she would be houseless and a beggar! The thought almost maddened her. Horrible visions of ending her miserable days with paupers in a workhouse came to her; she could not bear it. Better death a hundred times than that. She would perish in the fire!

Once this fearful resolution was taken, she became strangely calm—the calmness of despair, perhaps, but still calmness. Going to her dressing-case, she took from a secret drawer in it a packet of letters, her only remaining treasure. All, with one exception, written over twenty years ago. No need to read them, she knew them all by heart. Then, kneeling down beside the bed, she tried to pray.

To pray! when she was about to commit so great a sin.

But it was no use, she knew the falseness of her reasonings. It was pride—pride alone which tempted her to choose death rather than face the world. There were many—many who would willingly help her if she could bring herself to accept their help—she had known it all along.

No, no; she could not die—she dared not die!

Staggering to her feet, she groped her way to the door.

Too late! As she opened it, clouds of hot, suffocating smoke drove her back. The staircase and corridor were on fire. She had delayed too long!

Rushing to the window, she threw it open and looked out. Crowds of people were on the terrace below. They waved their arms and shouted to her, but their voices were drowned by the roaring and crackling of the fire.

Flames were issuing from a window beneath her; they curled upwards towards her greedily, as if eager to reach her. Already their scorching breath enveloped her. With a wild, helpless cry of despair she tottered back, and fell fainting to the floor.

Slowly Miss Halkett opened her eyes. She was too dazed to realise anything as yet, but she had a sort of dim consciousness that she was lying amongst soft cushions, that there was a strong aromatic scent in her nostrils, and that Jane, with tears streaming down her wrinkled cheeks, was kneeling beside her.

Someone behind her said "Thank God!" If the supposition had not been absurd, she would have thought it was Geoffrey Halkett's voice.

A glass of some strange-tasting drink was held to her lips. It must have been a strong opiate, for after that she remembered no more.

When she awoke it was morning. Jane stood beside her bed with a cup of tea. Mechanically she took it in her hand, then looked around.

She was in a handsome apartment—one she had never before seen. A sweet, subtle odour stole in through the window, which was partly open—the scent of limes. There was but one place in the whole neighbourhood where limes grew—near Mr. Halkett's new house!

She was here, then—beneath his very roof! Who had dared to bring her here? She must go at once. Not a moment longer than was absolutely necessary would she remain. She insisted on getting up, but without telling Jane of her intention.

Jane talked volubly of all that had passed. Her mistress suffered her to chatter on unrebuked; she even appeared to listen with interest, but she put no questions to her.

At last she was alone. Going cautiously downstairs, unperceived by anyone as she thought, she opened the door and passed out—a little way down the drive and through a side gate; she did not ask herself where, only away—somewhere. Then a sudden giddiness seized her, and she was forced to lean against a tree for support.

Mr. Halkett had seen her leave the house, and had forbore to follow her, but now that he saw she was ill and faint, he went towards her.

She recovered herself with an effort, and advanced a step or two to meet him.

"I ought to have thanked you before I left," she said in a trembling voice. "Jane tells me you risked your life to save mine. The risk was too great. Still, I would thank you. I—I— Oh, Geoffrey!" she cried hopelessly, "why did you not let me die? It would have been so much kinder—so much more merciful!"

"Why? Because I love you, Caroline."

"No, no," she interposed; "it is not love, but pity."

"It is not pity, but love," he corrected. "Caroline, why will you not believe me? If you only knew what these twenty-one years have been to me. How daily I have repented the words I said to you on that day long ago. I knew your pride—that you would never forgive me—"

"My pride!" exclaimed Miss Halkett mournfully, extending one trembling hand towards the smoking blackened walls which were all that remained of Raven Hall. "It lies there, Geoffrey—buried in the ruins."

He seized the hand exultingly and raised it unrebuked to his lips.

"Then there is nothing to come between us now?" he cried gladly.

But she shook her head, though she smiled sadly through her fast-gathering tears.

"You forget that I am nearly forty-five—almost an old woman."

"And I am fifty," he replied, drawing the hand he still held through his arm. "The world will think it a most suitable match, I am sure."

Miss Halkett could not repress a little smile to herself. How little a thing the world's opinion seemed to her now!

## The Two Champions.

A KNIGHT in sable armour drest,  
Rides on by flood and field;  
The snow-flakes gather on his crest,  
And on his lifted shield.  
Above him darken, far and near,  
Grey clouds and stormy skies,  
And, withered by his icy spear,  
The foliage fades and dies.

Across the brooklet's rippling course  
A frozen band he throws;  
The stately river's stronger force  
With slackening current flows.  
The wood and glen, the vale and height,  
Their verdant robes have lost,  
And barren hedgerows glitter white  
With countless points of frost.

Around, a tremor in the air,  
Above, a rosy glow;  
And where the land was brown and bare,  
A myriad buddlings show.  
As rides a knight by hill and dale,  
The sombre trees between,  
Bright emerald green his burnished mail,  
His trappings emerald green.

The sable rider frowns askance,  
And spurs across the track;  
The emerald knight, with dauntless glance,  
Sends swift defiance back.  
They meet, they part! with joyous calls  
The wakening woodlands ring,  
As stubborn Winter reels and falls  
Before the spear of Spring.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book III.

#### CHAPTER IV.

Thou hast stilled  
Now thy little lamb's brief weeping.

IN after time Ivor Grant could look back on those days and nights of terror and suspense with a sense of wonder and unreality.

He told himself that he would rather face a regiment of foes than live through such days and nights again. A cable-message had been dispatched to Beryl, and doctors from London had been telegraphed for, and all that skill and love could do was done for the two little lads as the fever ran its course.

The house was dreadfully still now. Even the major had been sent away. Miss Crawley remained from a sense of duty which had become as much a part of herself as her spectacles, but inwardly she was very irate at the loss of her holidays thus entailed by the insubordination of her scholars. Miss Cheape—poor drudge!—remained to keep her company, and also because in her secret heart she had grown to love the quaint, old-fashioned little fellow who lay battling now against a foe more dread than any fears of his had ever realised. It was Miss Cheape, too, who fed the "bunnies," and took care of Fluff, and gave him his daily run in the garden as little Jack had been wont to do. And, perhaps, no one would have been more astonished than little Jack himself could he have seen the tears she wept in secret over that comical little woolly head, or known how she longed to hear the questioning of its master's little voice, which so often she had rebuked by order of her superior in command.

The very servants crept about with hushed and anxious faces, or listened with their aprons to their eyes at the door of that room, whence issued the weary, restless murmurs of the little voice that day by day grew only weaker now.

One might have thought it tired out by reason of that endless questioning to which no answer came. For all "mummy's" love and frenzied longing could not lend wings to her hurrying feet, or bridge the rolling miles that held her from her darling's side.

With every day Ivor Grant's heart ached with deeper dread, and hope grew fainter and more faint. As the sun sank to rest after its daily journey, he could not but see how the little life that had grown to him a golden link between despair and happiness seemed also fading into the shadows of a longer day. Cyril was very ill also, but no one seemed to have the same dread and fear about Cyril as about Jack. He had always been so strong, and brave, and bright, and he had a better constitution than his brother; but Jack—how they all remembered his odd ways now, and told tales of his life among them, and were never tired of repeating his quaint speeches, and found that unconsciously to themselves he had wound himself about their hearts, and grown so dear that every hour was filled with one incessant longing, questioning, wondering about his welfare.

One sultry evening Ivor Grant left the sick-room and went out into the garden for a breath of fresh air. He lit his cigar and paced to and fro along the gravel walks, his face pale and anxious in the evening light. A noise in the hedgerow parting the garden from the adjoining lawn at last attracted his attention. It seemed as if something was moving in the bushes. He approached nearer, and saw a face looking at him from between the close and prickly boughs—a pale, sickly face, with long, unkempt hair straying from beneath a ragged cap.

"What do you want?" asked Ivor quickly.

"Your pardon, sir," said the boy, who seemed to have fixed himself in the hedge in so ingenious a method that he could neither advance nor retreat, "but I've been waiting here this mady a day without courage to speak to ye. I heard down at the village that the little gentleman was sick. Is it true, sir?"

"What do you want to know for?" demanded Ivor, looking with extreme disfavour at the unsightly object before him.

"I ain't got no call to trouble ye, I know," said the lad humbly; "only if it was the little gentleman as bought the lop-eared uns, I'd like to say as I'm so sorry if he's took it from me. He stayed a talking to me; bless him! how he did talk, so wise, and so pretty, and he such a little un—"

"What?" cried Ivor fiercely. "It was you gave him the fever. How dared you let him come near you?"

"I didn't know, sir. Gran let him in, and he would talk, and no one told me it 'ud hurt him, and he said I wasn't to be miserable, and that he'd pray for me, and I've thought of him ever since; and then I got better, and I heard how he was took with the fever, and I've come here and hung about the place, wanting so bad to ask somebody about him. Don't be angry, sir; indeed I can't help it."

Angry! Was it anger that choked the strong man's utterance, and shut out the radiant mist of sunlight from before his eyes?—anger that showed him that little figure and its rapt, earnest face, full of the wondering sorrow that any sight or touch of others' troubles brought?—anger that bent his head and paled his lips as he heard in those rough, eloquent words the influence of the child's gentle sympathy?

"I am not angry," he said at last; "only we all wondered how the child took the fever, and he is very, very ill. Is it you he speaks of when he talks of the poor boy who was miserable?"

"Does he say that, bless him?" muttered the lad hoarsely. "I can't help it, sir," he added, drawing his ragged sleeve across his eyes. "It—it makes a babby of me when I think of him standing there and looking at me with his beautiful eyes. 'What's miserable?' he says, and puts his little hands so. 'Does you feel bad here?' And now he's feeling bad, and I—I just wish I was

dead, that I do. What for should such as I live, and he— But you don't think he'll die, sir, do you?"

"God knows," groaned Ivor. "He gets worse and weaker every day. But come," he added, "get out of that hedge, and I'll talk to you. Are you living in the village?"

The lad struggled out and stood there before him—a ragged, wretched object enough; an object that Ivor Grant knew would have given little Jack food for a host of sorrowful fancies had he seen him now. He stood with such a pitiable air, and his clothes hung on his gaunt form with so forlorn and tattered an aspect, that Ivor Grant's wrath melted, and only a feeling of intense compassion overwhelmed him.

"Yes, sir," said the lad, in answer to that question.

"And are you very poor?" continued Ivor Grant.

"Yes, sir. Gran's very old—nigh on a hundred, and Nell don't do much work; and this fever laid me up a mortal time, and I lost the harvesting. Still, we do, sir, somehow—" He ceased abruptly, then broke out into a miserable sob: "Don't think I'm come to beg, sir; I don't want nothing, only to hear of the little gentleman, and say how sorry I am; sorry—" with another burst of sobs—"I wish I'd died afore ever I hurt a hair of his head. What's the good of such as me cumberin' the ground? Only 'cos we're not wanted, why, there we are!"

Ivor did not confute this philosophy, or answer it. He was looking thoughtfully at the wretched object before him, and wondering what was best to be done with him.

In the midst of that thoughtful pause, there stole through the open window above them a little, low, plaintive cry. Both started.

"I must go in," said Ivor hurriedly. "He's awake. Go home now, my poor lad, and I'll see what I can do for you. Here," and he thrust some loose silver into his hand, "take this and get yourself some food, and come here at the same time to-morrow, if you like. I'll see you and let you know how the child is."

And he was gone ere the lad had recovered from his bewilderment at the sudden possession of so much wealth. He looked at the coins till great tears rose to his haggard eyes and shut out their brightness.

"I'd give 'em all," he muttered, "and a million more—aye, and I'd lay down and die gladly this here very minute, only to know the little gentleman was well, and see him standing there afore me again!"

He moved off to his retreat in the hedge. He was footsore, and faint, and hungry, and weak. But he made no effort to return to the village, only crept back to that prickly shelter, and when darkness fell, and the stars came out one by one like solemn eyes that watch the night's misdeeds, a ragged, tottering figure crept out too, and made its way to the grass-plot beneath that window which stood open to the sweet night air; and all through the long hours it crouched there motionless and still, till again the sun's rays gilded the dusky heavens, and across the dread and horror of a long suspense broke forth another day.

And as that glad dawn paints out night's sombre hues, and the air grows jubilant with songs of waking birds, little Jack wakes from a long, deep slumber, and raises two dark, wistful eyes to Ivor Grant's face.

"You is come?" he says, but so faint and far away is the sound of the beloved little voice that his friend can scarcely hear it. "Has you brought mummy?"

"Not yet, darling," murmurs Ivor, his heart giving one great throb of relief and gladness. Surely he is better now—since he is conscious at last.

"Not yet!" echoes little Jack tiredly. "Is she a far way still?"

"She is coming nearer every day, my pet," whispered Ivor, pillowing the little shorn head on his arm, and looking with a swift, cold pang of arising fear at the odd film that darkens the deep eyes.

"Me will—go—and—meet her," says little Jack faintly.

The white lids droop—close; the little hands fall idly down on the sheet.

Nor human love nor human prayer can stay him now as the little feet go forth on that unseen journey.

The stillness and darkness of a great despair fall over Ivor Grant.

There is nothing to watch for—hope for—look for now. Leaving the weeping women to their work, he goes out, and there in the garden he sees a heap of rags and a shivering human form with whose misery an angel's pity is now identified. The lad starts at the sound of footsteps, and lifts his forlorn face up to the glow of the sunlight.

"How is he, sir?" he asks eagerly; "I've been waiting all night to hear."

Then something in the glance that meets his own, answers his question, and he shrinks back abashed, troubled, trembling, and his ragged sleeve goes up to his eyes.

"Not dead, sir—don't say that?"

"Yes," answers Ivor very sadly. "Don't wait here any longer, my poor boy. There will be no other message for you to hear."

"Oh," cries the lad passionately, "I didn't mean to do it, sir. Oh, I wish I was dead too—only I'm so miserable, and no one wants me, and I can't die."

Ivor Grant can bear no more. Strong man as he is, he is shaken to the core by this sudden appalling sense of sorrow. He turns abruptly away, and goes out from the garden into the quiet lanes beyond. If others—if mere outsiders—if one to whom the child had only spoken once as he had spoken to this desolate boy, could feel his loss so terribly, what would be the anguish of that mother-heart when it became conscious of its sad bereavement!

"How can I tell her? Great Heaven! how can I tell her?" he groaned as he threw himself down in the solitude of the woods to battle with his grief unseen—grief all the more terrible because he knew it must be met, and conquered, and kept in rigid self-control when the time of trial came.

He spent the whole day in the woods, now roaming restlessly about—now absorbed in the tumult of confused thought, and recurring sorrow, that every morning of this last week had brought. The first thing that recalled him to any sense of time was a feeling of faintness and exhaustion. He roused himself, and prepared to return home. As he came out into the clear space of the high-road, he saw the sky was dark with heavy rain-clouds. Long before he reached the house they broke into a regular deluge, and he was drenched to the skin.

When he had changed his wet clothes and taken some refreshment he asked for news of Cyril. He seemed better, he was told—had been calmer and more conscious. They had not dared to tell him about Jack.

"I will go and see him," said Ivor. "Is he in the same room?" he asked hesitatingly.

Miss Cheape, who was his informant, said no. He had been removed into the adjoining chamber—the major's, in fact.

Thither Ivor Grant went.

The boy was very ill, though conscious. His first question was for his brother—why had he been removed from the other room?

Ivor told him the doctor had ordered it, as the room was so small, and the answer seemed to content him.

"You say mother is coming," he said presently as he lay quietly there looking out at the dark sky and listening to the pattering rain-drops.

"Yes," answered Ivor; "I telegraphed for her."

"I hope she won't be very angry with me," said Cyril mournfully. "I did try to do my best and take care of Jack. Still, I often think I oughtn't to have gone to the cricket-match that afternoon, and then I could have kept him with me. But he'll get better, won't he?" he added hopefully. "And then I'll take such care of him, mother need never be angry with me again."

"You mustn't talk, my dear boy," said Ivor; "it excites you and brings back the fever. Lie still, and try and get to sleep."

"I—I wish they had left me with Jack," said Cyril plaintively. "I used to like to see him, even though he didn't know me. Does he still ask for mother, sir?"

"No," said Ivor huskily as he turned away to conceal his face, "not now."

"Poor little chap!" continued Cyril. "How glad he'll be to see her! Go and say good-night to him for me, Mr. Grant, and tell him he'll soon be better, like me. Why, I dare say we'll both be running about when mother comes, racing each other to meet her; only of course I shall let Jack win," he added with a smile. "He's always so pleased when he does."

The night had fallen darkly in storm of rain and wind; the house was intensely still. Ivor Grant had thrown himself on a couch to get some sleep after those long wearisome days and nights. The nurse was dozing in her chair, for Cyril had been so calm and quiet that she thought he was asleep.

But the boy was only watching anxiously for an opportunity to satisfy his ever-increasing anxiety as to his little brother's welfare. How still they all were in that next room! Usually, there was always some sound or bustle going on, but now it seemed as if no one could be there at all. Yet surely they would not leave Jack alone.

It was the coldest and chilliest hour of the morning when at last he saw that the nurse was fairly asleep, and he crept cautiously out of bed, and staggered weakly and feebly, holding on by anything in his way, to the door.

He opened it so quietly that the nurse never heard him, and then crept on tiptoe to that room adjoining his own. He turned the handle and entered. On the threshold he paused aghast. Had he made a mistake? Was this not little Jack's room? For there was no light in it save the cold, grey, straggling light that fell through the curtained window, and what was that on the bed—what?

Shivering with cold, nervous dread, he approached that shrouded

outline. A low whine greeted him, and he saw Fluff curled up beside that little still figure. He snatched off the sheet.

"Jack!" he cried. "Jack!"

There was no answer.

He rushed and drew up the blind, and then in an agony of terror flung himself beside his brother.

"Jack," he whispered entreatingly, "it's me—Cyrrie! Can't you hear? Are you asleep?"

His own fevered lips touched those of the little brother, and shrank back, terrified afresh by their coldness and silence. What was this?—what had come to him, and why had they left him here alone?

His heart gave one convulsive shudder, then seemed to grow chill and cold as the little figure he embraced.

"What shall I say to mother?" he suddenly cried. "Oh, Jack—Jack, let me go with you!"

It might have been an hour or so later that the nurse awoke, and going over to look at her little charge, found the bed empty. Rushing to the door, she met Ivor Grant just coming in.

"Sir—Master Cyril—where is he?" cried the terrified woman. "He's got up and left this room by himself."

Ivor did not wait to question or waste words. Instinctively he hurried to that other room, the woman following and wringing her hands in a helpless, grief-struck fashion.

And there, with the early sunlight falling on their still, white faces, lay the two little brothers—cold and dead.

#### CHAPTER V. BREAKING THE NEWS.

"How shall I tell her? Great Heaven! How shall I tell her?"

That had been the burden of Ivor Grant's heart through all the desolate, sorrowful days that intervened between the children's deaths and their mother's arrival.

It seemed all so sudden and so awful. His hasty summons, that week of agonised suspense, and then—then this dreary blank, filled only with the terrors of a greater trial in prospect, when he must face that desolate mother-cry, and stifling his own pain—made greater by her sorrow and her loneliness—tell her of the blow that had fallen on her life.

Battling with his weakness he had stood beside the coffin that held the little brothers—together in death as in life, so he had ordered them to be laid in their last resting-place. Battling with it as with some fierce foe struggling for supremacy over his life, so he had watched the earth fall over the closed lid; battling with it still, he had crept there in the silence of the night, and with stern brow and folded arms stood gazing on the little mound already heaped and covered with white flowers, whose exquisite breath stole up to the silent watcher like a message from the little voices he should never hear again.

And now there was no more to be done. The simple marble cross had been ordered, but the inscription was to wait for the poor young mother's directions, and Ivor Grant went back to the Court to wait, with what patience he could, until news should reach him of Beryl Marsden's arrival.

Would she come, after all? Might not her husband forbid it, just as his tyranny had chosen to part her from her darlings at a time when most they needed a mother's care and love?

Ah yes, she would come. Something told him that. Some inward recognition of the strength and tenderness of that woman—nature he so revered, into whose clear depths his eyes had gazed.

There are women—let us thank Heaven for it!—here and there in this sad, sin-stained world of ours, whom a man is all the better for loving, be it ever so hopelessly, even as there are others for whose influence he is ever so much the worse.

It is a solemn thing to think how much responsibility lies in those weak, frail hands. The power to ennoble or debase, to lift a life they love out of the mire of selfishness and sensuality, or drag it down to deeper depths, and stifle it with poisoned kisses. If the world were wise it would not be the outer shell of mere personal loveliness that it would crown and glorify as womanhood, but the brave true souls alive with gentle sympathy; the faithful and long-suffering; the great hearts, whose very weakness is beautiful, and whose errors might shame man's greater virtues. It is a womanhood that is high and noble, yet humble and true, that has so much of what is beautiful in it, bearing pain so bravely, stifling selfish desires because of hurting still more that deeper selfishness of man, cheering, encouraging, working on in weariness and hopelessness, and ever keeping something of divinity in its core amidst so much that is evil and vain; lifting tear-blind eyes to Heaven in prayers that ask all for what is loved, and naught for her who loves. Womanhood pathetic, mistaken, erring, foolish, it may be, but we

believe Heaven gave it and Heaven loves it, despite a thousand such errors and frailties, and the man who cries it down is but a coward and a fool!

Ivor Grant knew that no woman on the face of the earth could ever be to him what Beryl Marsden was. He had known it from the hour when he first looked into her eyes in Madge Dunbar's ball-room. She had called up emotions, feelings, aspirations, that till then had been a dead letter to him. Swiftly she had come into his life, and as swiftly had she passed out of it; but all the same, no other woman had held that power, or won from him such thoughts as she had done. She was one of those women—rare enough, perhaps—whom to love once is to love always—who get into a man's dreams, and take possession of his heart by force of strong individuality, so that looking at and listening to other women he finds himself always wondering what this particular one would have said and done under similar circumstances, and convincing himself that it would have been sure to be better, or more graceful, or more charming than the others contrive to make it.

An unfortunate state of affairs, and apt to bring resentful, and miserable, and self-reproachful thoughts in its train—a state of affairs into which Ivor Grant had half consciously and half helplessly drifted, and from which he saw no escape and no hope.

Carrying this new sorrow side by side with the old pain of regret which every memory of his ill-fated attachment brought, he went back to the Court in a most unhappy frame of mind. His mother's sympathy only seemed to irritate him. She had been fond of little Jack, but not fond as he had been, noting in the childish face and deep, soft eyes the characteristics of the woman he loved so vainly, and seeing her glorified and made sacred in his sight by that pure, bright halo of motherhood which no true man ever yet could help reverencing and admiring.

The nearer the time came for that meeting, the greater grew the dread in his heart. He was no coward, but he fairly trembled at the thought of what was in store for him. At times he felt he could not face her—he would write, and then go away and leave his mother to comfort her; but then again, when he pictured her desolate, heart-broken, it seemed to him cowardly to shrink from her presence. He understood so well what the little lads had been to her, and he alone could bring her the sorrowful consolation of Jack's last words.

The telegram had bidden her come direct to the Court; he had hoped when he sent it that the children would have been removed there by the time she landed in England. So one hot August night, as he paced to and fro along the terrace, he was not surprised to hear the sound of wheels, and to see a carriage driving rapidly along the avenue. Now that the moment he had dreaded so long was here close at hand, a stony calmness seemed to settle on his heart. He threw away his cigar, and went to the entrance to meet her, glad almost that suspense was over, that he need no longer wake in those chill, grey dawns to ask himself: "Will she come to-day?"

The dusk had fallen, a light wind blew some over-ripe rose-leaves along the terrace, and their scent seemed to touch him and bring back that vision of a little mound in a quiet churchyard where white blossoms lay heaped in a fragrant pile.

As the memory came to him with something of beauty and solemnity, like a low, hushed strain of music falling across the discord and sorrowfulness of life, the carriage stopped, someone sprang out, and in the deepening twilight they two stood face to face.

"I have travelled night and day," she said, and the voice had so worn and weary a sound that it hurt him even more than the look upon her face. "How are they?"

For an instant he was silent. How hard words are to find when they can only speak desolation, suffering, death!

Perhaps the silence answered her, or the look upon his face, or that indescribable instinct which flies straight to the heart, and realises grief by signs too slight and uncertain for explanation.

For an instant Ivor's arm went out to catch the slender figure that reeled and swayed like a sapling in a storm; but, almost as he touched her, she seemed to recover, stood upright, faced him with wide and stony eyes.

"Too late!" she moaned. "I knew it. Oh, why did I ever leave them?"

He thought to see her weep, or sob, or faint; but no. She only stood there, dry-eyed, white as marble—an image of despair more terrible than ever his fancy had dared to paint. The sight of her face, the memory of this scene, stood out in sharp outline to his mental vision, and then her voice smote him with a fresh sense of pain:

"Take me in; I want to be alone!"

He led her into the great hall, and to the room prepared for her, and there left her with one stifled entreaty:

"God bless you, and help you to bear it!"

He saw her throw herself on her knees by the bed, and bury her



face on her arms, while all the rich glory of her hair fell round her like a cloud.

Then the door closed; all was silence. Some hearts bleed inwardly, and the wounds are the harder to staunch.

The warm August night had died out in a passion of colour, and light, and glory. Hours had passed since Beryl Marsden had thrown herself there on the floor too broken-hearted for tears, too despairing for thought or care of what might chance to herself. In the great loveless wilderness of life she seemed to stand quite alone. Some prophetic instinct had told her that, from the very moment that ominous message had reached her. There had been a fierce battle with her husband, and only her declaration that she would sell her jewels, or work her passage home as a nurse, if still he refused to let her go to her children, had wrung from him a reluctant consent.

It all seemed an awful dream to her now. The hurried preparations, the voyage, the crowning agony of the news for which she had been preparing herself. And now all was over. Life was a blank, an emptiness.

Never again would she feel those warm arms around her neck, and the childish kisses on her lips, or hear the sweet babble that had made up the richest music of her life. Never again would she watch that wondrous light dawning in her darling's eyes, the light that deepened and intensified with each new discovery of the wonders of life as day by day it unrolled itself to the wondering gaze. The house was horribly still, the room was chill and sad. She rose in a dazed sort of way to her feet, and mechanically wound up her long hair, and then opened the door and looked out.

Ivor was pacing up and down the corridor. He had never left it these three long weary hours.

He approached, and she looked up at the kindly face with her dazed and sorrowful eyes—looked up—then suddenly something in their soft compassion and wordless sympathy seemed to pierce through the mists that clouded reason and obscured thought. She stretched out her hands:

"Tell me all," she cried; "I—I can bear it now."

And the ice melted, and the tears gushed to her eyes, as that gentle, manly voice told her the simple pathetic words that had been little Jack's last message to "mummy."

Perhaps that saved her reason and her life.

#### CHAPTER VI. "THE SHADOW OF ANGEL'S WINGS."

WHEN, as briefly and gently as possible, Ivor Grant had told that sad history, he took the weeping woman to his mother's room, and there left her.

The ordeal was over, and had left him shaken to the core. To see her so desolate and stricken—to read in her broken, sorrowful words the loneliness of her loving heart—to know that she knew he shared her sorrow, yet keep all token of his sympathy within bounds whose fierce restraint tore his very heart-strings—this had been his task; and now it was over, and, weak and spent as any woman, he rushed to solitude as to relief. His vow of friendship had entailed no small penalties upon him, and for the first time he seemed to recognise the fact.

When a man's heart aches with love and longing for a woman, it is a hard thing to beat those storm-waves back and fence them off with the breakwaters of honour and self-control.

Meanwhile Beryl sat by Mrs. Grant's side and listened to her gentle sympathy, and felt that she was realising the slow torture of motherlessness with every beat of her tortured heart.

In all this year of weary months, and weeks, and days, how empty and dreary her life had seemed. How often had she wakened with tears wet upon her cheeks, or started from dreams through which had thrilled one plaintive little voice with its tender call for "mummy."

And she thought now with agonised remorse that her love for her youngest child had in some measure doubled her loss, for had not Ivor told her of Cyril's refusal to be parted from his little brother, and was there not always before her eyes that pathetic picture of the two little dead forms clasped in a last embrace that bespoke the fidelity of her first-born's memory, and showed her what a noble little heart had treasured her parting words?

Her brain seemed on fire, and the fall of tears scorched her eyes, but could not ease that terrible aching. In vain was sympathy now—in vain prayers that would have led her sorrowing soul to look up for Heaven's consolation, and read in God's will some wiser, nobler purpose than her passionate human love could see as yet.

In vain—in vain—in vain!

"If you only knew how I have longed to hear them laugh," she wailed brokenly, "to see them running to meet me over the meadows as they used to do—to look at Jack's dear little face and Cyril's noble one! What scenes I have pictured, what hopes! And now it is all gone from me—all!"

Mrs. Grant could only listen and weep too. Amidst her own sufferings of mind and body, through the dark cloud lowering and closing itself around her life, this sorrow pierced with a sense of unrealised anguish. She had had but one child, and she knew how deep-rooted and passionate her love for him had been, how even now it had led her into a fatal error, and still more fatal bondage; and here was this poor desolate creature bereft of both her sons by one fell blow. Truly to speak of consolation seemed a mockery.

"They made a better woman of me," continued Beryl wildly. "A woman may be unhappy, you know, and her life be utterly wretched, yet a child's touch will purify her heart and keep away thoughts of wrong and desperation. No lover's or husband's lips can thrill her soul with so pure an ecstasy as that unasked kiss of her little one—no man's or woman's love on earth hold such sweet regenerating influence as the love he gives. And then to have it and lose it, and see life stretch on through years that are only full of endless pain. God pardon me if I say I only wish He would take me too!"

"Poor soul!" said Mrs. Grant, wiping away the tears from her own eyes that only gathered again at every sound of the piteous heart-broken voice. "What can I say of hope or comfort? Only time can heal a sorrow like yours—time and the mercy of Heaven."

"I can't realise that mercy now," moaned Beryl heart-brokenly. "No one knows what my little ones were to me. There is no comfort possible. Fancy, to leave them well and beautiful, and picture them as such, and count the hours before I held them in my arms again, to hear their voices in every wind that blew, to feel that the whiteness of their innocent souls kept mine innocent too, and brought me nearer heaven than any creed or philosophy, human or divine—to fancy and to feel all this, and come back to—nothingness. Not even a last word, a kiss on their dead faces—only a grave and their memory! Oh, I think my heart will break! How can I live out such misery—how can I?"

And so on from passion to despair, from dull apathy to fiery rebellion, went on those first hours of agony. At last came utter stony resignation. Nature revenged itself on physical weakness, and worn out and wearied with grief, she lay down and slept.

Ill and worn as Mrs. Grant herself was, she did everything for the poor stricken creature, and only left her when she had swallowed a strong sedative and sunk into a slumber too deep for even dreams of her loss to penetrate.

So passed that dreaded day, and not till noon on the next did she wake, numb and frozen now, but outwardly calm. The storm had spent itself; the havoc of its sweeping breath would only appear as the dull and dreary years bore her life along in their train, to battle with other woes, and yield or conquer in that strife of human weakness and temptation which is old as time, and, like time, seems endless to the weary hearts that throng life's battle-field.

"You will come with me?" she had said to Ivor, and he had answered her gravely, "Of course;" and the sunset hour of the next day found them standing beside that little mound where still some thoughtful hands had strewn flowers—wild ones now, and strange and new for graves, but telling of a tender memory that held that tiny spot enshrined even amidst the coarseness and unloveliness of life, for the hand that gathered those flowers and laid them there each day was the hand of Tom—Tom, who never forgot the "blessed little gentleman," and whose heart bled with incessant self-reproach as he thought of his own unfortunate part in that sudden early death.

Limping feebly and weakly to that sacred spot as the day draws to a close, he sees two figures standing there, and instinct tells him whose is the bowed and drooping head. He is shuffling out of sight and keeping behind tombstones. He does not want the lady to see him—he does not want to see her. How she would hate him if she knew!

His intentions, however, are frustrated by Ivor Grant, who to spare himself the sight of Beryl's grief strolls away from her side, and all unwittingly comes upon that wretched woe-begone figure, and with a sudden pang of self-reproach remembers how utterly he had forgotten him, and the promises he had made regarding his future welfare.

"You here, my poor lad," he cries suddenly. "Are you better?"

"Thank you, sir," says the boy shamefacedly. "I'm very well, sir. Is—that the lady?" he asks abruptly, turning very pale.

"Yes," says Ivor Grant huskily.

"The little gentleman's mother?" continues Tom. "Does she—does she take on terrible bad, sir?"

"She is in great grief," says Ivor. "Do you bring those flowers?" he adds kindly.

"Yes," answers Tom, looking dismally over to where they lie, watered now by a rain of tears from that kneeling figure outlined

against the rosy evening sky. "It's all I can do, sir. I can't never forget him. Does she—know, sir?" with a nod in the direction of the little mound.

"No," answers Ivor sharply. "There is no need to make her sorrow worse by thinking how easily it might have been avoided."

"It's very kind of you not to tell on me, sir, though I never went for to do it," says Tom mournfully. "And if I might just look at her, 'cos she's his mother, it would give me a power of comfort, sir."

"I will tell her," says Ivor, thinking that to rouse the mourner's interest by some external sympathy would take away that first sharp edge of grief. "Wait here until she leaves the grave."

And they sit down side by side, and Ivor asks all particulars of the lad's sordid and miserable life, and finally offers to take him to the Court, as assistant to one of the gardeners, an offer which overwhelms Tom's heart with speechless gratitude, and points again to that strange gentle influence which a child's brief presence has left behind, an influence which, serving and succouring the misery he has once compassionated, speaks with richer eloquence than any words, of the pure and tender soul from which that influence springs.

And Tom, who has never known any sensation in his life that did not seem rooted and grounded in the capacity for being "miserable," is taken suddenly out of himself and that crushing sense of despair, which has before now moulded such misery into crime, and feels that he owns a friend on earth and an angel in heaven in one blessed moment of gratitude and relief.

And when, with sad face and weary steps, the solitary figure leaves the little grave and comes towards them, and, looking up in the fading sunset light, Tom sees a glorified and sorrowful image of the face he loves, all his heart seems to go out to the pale, beautiful mourner, and falling on his knees there at her feet, he tells her that simple story of her darling's pitiful nature, and seeing how moved and stirred, and yet gladdened by it, she is, vows in his homely, rugged fashion to love and serve her all his life, if only she will let him.

"I couldn't die for the blessed little gentleman, but I'd like to live for you, ma'am," he says; and Ivor Grant, seeing how deeply she is affected by this scene, bids him rise, and promises he shall do so.

And the memory of those grateful prayers, and the consciousness of granted relief, gives to Beryl Marsden's heart the first faint thrill of comfort it has known for many a weary day.

So here again that childish ministry asserted its tender power, and while the sharp sense of sorrow and loss still stabbed her with recurring pain, that desolate mother-heart turned with unspoken prayer to where one angel memory led her with its gentle hands.

And in the years to come she could look back on this scene, and trace that influence, even as others traced it too, and, with wet eyes and soft hushed breath, thank Heaven that her trouble had not made her hard, and pitiless, and unthankful, as, indeed, it might, and once had threatened to do. But, like a broken strain of music, sweet even in its uncertain tones, the words, and wishes, and compassion of the little lad seemed hovering about those paths his childish feet had trod, and their echoes rose and thrilled the hearts of those who loved him, and comforted their pain as time moved on, bearing them along with it to the future's storms and shadows, and hallowing even grief, and loss, and pain with an angel's love.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Adieu, My Love!

THE breeze blows lightly from the south,

The anchor hangs aspeak;  
Our ship moves on with swelling sails,  
Another clime we seek.

Adieu, my love! In one brief year  
Our vows we shall renew;  
By day, by night, I'll think of thee;  
Adieu, my love, adieu!

What cheer, my hearts? The best of friends

Must often part awhile,  
And if a tear we sometimes shed,  
It speeds the coming smile.

So forge ahead! let Hope's bright star  
Our guide be o'er the main;  
The sooner gone, the sooner home  
Shall we sail back again.

The gloaming closes in apace,  
The sunset pales to grey;  
But after night once more shall rise  
The golden sun of day.  
The white cliffs in the distance fade  
Like shadows lost to view;  
I wave thee now my last farewell,  
Adieu, my love, adieu!

## Through No Fault of Hers.

(A STORY IN FOUR WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER VII.

HUGH had perception enough to be aware on his return home that something had happened during his absence. He jumped to the conclusion that Venables had been proposing to Muriel without success. He reached this conclusion by finding Muriel in an unusually excited and agitated state, and it was strengthened by what Connie said, though she endeavoured to put off his enquiries as much as possible.

It was unfortunate for Hugh that he lacked judgment. With considerable belief in his own acuteness he yet was wanting in ordinary sense when acting on the dictates of his reason in certain matters.

He judged that it was quite possible that Muriel had refused Venables because she preferred himself. He was not so certain of that point as of another, namely, that now was the best time for him to offer his hand. If she for any reason regretted refusing his rival it would be wise to clench the business at once. In her frame of mind she would be only too glad of an opportunity of settling for ever the painful questions which agitated her so.

As to his being accepted he felt no doubt. He was rich, would be so at any rate, whilst she was poor. He was conscious of making a considerable sacrifice in proposing to her; if any one a month ago had told him he would make an offer to a penniless companion, he would have thought him out of his mind. But he had not known her then.

However, Muriel was not well that evening, and retired early. It was not till the next day that he had his opportunity.

Some one has said that every man is a poet once in his life—when he tells a woman he loves her. Certainly Hugh was seen at an advantage during the first few minutes of his interview. He spoke strongly, and to the point, and Muriel listened with less impatience than she had anticipated. For she had known what was coming.

She gave him the reply which might have been expected. She was not prepared for its effect on him.

"You refuse me?" he said in bewilderment.

"Yes; you must see yourself that it is impossible for me to accept your offer. What would Sir Joseph and Lady Pankhurst think?"

"Oh, they can think what they like," he replied. "If I choose to marry beneath me it's no business of theirs."

Muriel turned on him with flashing eyes.

"What did you say?"

"I beg your pardon," he said confusedly. "I only meant that it's no business of any one except myself whom I marry."

"Not even mine?" asked Muriel.

"Yours, of course. I should have thought you would have been the last to consider what anyone else might think when you had a chance of making a good match."

Poor Hugh! opposition had been the last thing he had expected, and under it he was letting his real nature become manifest. It was enough to make him angry, after sacrificing himself to the extent of braving his father's wrath, and stooping to offer his hand to a companion without a penny in the world; it was too much to expect he would endure a refusal without feeling it. He began to get angry. So did Muriel, but she kept her temper whilst Hugh lost his.

"A good match!" repeated Muriel. "Are you under the impression that I imagine I should raise myself by accepting you? I would not marry you if you were the only man in the world."

"Then what do you mean by leading me on in this way?" cried Hugh furiously. "You have flirted with me freely enough, and tried your best to trap me, and now you throw me over."

"Stop!" said Muriel; "don't say another word. Let me go!"

But Hugh was beside himself, and caught her arm.

"Don't touch me!" she cried. "I hate and detest you!"

Hugh released her arm, and stood before her for a moment.

"Very well, Miss Leigh," he said with concentrated rage; "you shall repent this. If you won't stay here as my wife, I swear you sha'n't as anything else."

"You may be certain of that," retorted Muriel as she ran past him and disappeared.

Hugh stood the picture of anger. All the baser passions of his nature were aroused, his chief desire now was to pay out Muriel for the insult she had put upon him. He would get her turned out of the house; that would not be difficult, for he was aware of Norman's communication with Connie through her, and if his father learned it, there would be no doubt of the result.

He was about to seek Sir Joseph when a thought struck him. Another sort of revenge was also in his power. He believed now

that Muriel loved Venables; perhaps, after all, the proposal had not been made as he imagined; in that case, if he informed Venables of the disgrace of Muriel's father, there was small doubt that he would never propose to her. It was a wonder now to Hugh himself how on earth he had ever done so. It seemed impossible that anyone else could do so, knowing all.

He resolved to tell Venables everything at the first opportunity.

# CHAPTER VIII.

MURIEL fled to her room and burst into a flood of angry tears. She had been insulted grievously, and had no redress. Oh, if only Venables had been present!

One thing she was firmly resolved on: she would not stay in the house another day. Even her affection for Connie was not enough to enable her to endure Hugh's hateful presence any longer. Then came the thought of Venables.

"Never mind," she soliloquised; "if he loves me, my going away will make no difference to him. If he wishes to avoid me, it will be better for both of us to be far apart. I have stayed here too long as it is."

One question had to be settled, however—what excuse was she to give to Sir Joseph for leaving so abruptly?

She was ignorant of Hugh's intention to report her innocent but unwise interference with his plans for Connie's marriage. She was still wondering what reason she could find when there was a knock at the door, and a servant brought in a letter. It was from her aunt. It furnished the excuse she needed in a serious fashion. Her father had been released from prison before his time, on a medical certificate that his life was in danger from confinement; he was now with her aunt, dangerously ill. Muriel must come at once.

An hour later Hugh entered his father's study, still burning with a sense of wrong and desire for revenge. Before he had time to explain his errand, Sir Joseph said:

"This is somewhat sudden, isn't it, Hugh?"

"What, father?"

"Miss Leigh's going. It seems her father is ill, and she's off in an hour."

"She's saved me the trouble of telling him," thought Hugh. "There's Venables left, though."

"Why have you come here?" asked his father.

Hugh muttered something about wanting a book, and departed, to spend the next hour as far away from home and Muriel as possible.

When Muriel arrived at her aunt's house, she was met with a warmer welcome than usual.

"How is papa?" was Muriel's first question.

"He's very ill, my dear—very ill; he seems to have something on his mind. He's been asking for you over and over again to-day. He wants to tell you something which he won't tell me."

"Can I see him now?"

"The doctor's upstairs; I'll see."

Muriel was soon admitted. She was shocked beyond measure to see the terrible alteration in his appearance.

"Thank Heaven!" he ejaculated as she entered, "you are in time."

Muriel kissed him again and again.

"Kiss me once more," he said; "perhaps you won't to-morrow."

"Oh, papa," she sobbed, "don't talk like that."

"No, no, my darling, I don't mean that I'm going to die so soon as that. I have a few days before me yet. Let us spend one more evening together as we used to in the old days."

He seemed to rally somewhat during the evening, but the next day was rather worse. The doctor made no secret of the fact that his death was only a question of days. He had persistently denied his illness till it was too palpable to be ignored, and now it was too late to hope to cure it.

In the afternoon he sent for Muriel, and told her he wanted to talk to her. She sat near him, and held his thin hand in hers.

"Muriel," he said, "I have been a weak and selfish man, but not a bad one. I have a confession to make to you. I have done you a great wrong."

Muriel looked up surprised.

"Yes, my darling, and I have to ask you to forgive me. Listen: Years ago, when I lived in another town, and my wife was still alive, we decided, as we had no children of our own, to adopt one. We had an opportunity of taking into our home an orphan child, left without aid of any sort, whose fate must have been the parish had we not stepped in. We treated it as our own, gave it our name, and when we moved to this town no one knew that it was not our own child. When my wife died all my affections centred round you, for you were the child we adopted. I worked for you, I did all I could to make you happy. And when the crash came, and I knew it was my duty to tell you everything, I shrank from it. I could not cut

myself adrift from your love. I believed you still loved me, and I had a wild dream that when I was released we could go away together to some place where I was not known, and there I could end my days in peace, with some one to love me. It was wrong, very wrong, and I have been punished for it. But you must forgive me, my child. Do not let me die unforgiven."

Muriel silently kissed him. Then she rose and went to her room.

She sat for an hour or more without moving. The revelation had taken away her power of thought. When she began to think, her first feeling was one of gladness that she had kissed Mr. Leigh.

"I owe him so much," she said to herself, "that he has a right to claim everything from me. A few months' misery is a cheap price to pay for the kindness and love of twenty years."

After a long period of thought and wonder she returned to Mr. Leigh's room. The anxious glance with which he met her was too much for her; she rushed to him and threw her arms round his neck.

"My darling!" he whispered; "now I shall die happy."

The next few days were spent in tranquil happiness in spite of the near approach of death. It was such a joy to the sufferer to see his child once more that he seemed to forget his pain. He gave Muriel all the details he could of her real parentage, from which it appeared that she was the child of an Indian Civil Servant who had sent his wife back to England on the birth of her child, in the hope that her health might be re-established. Instead of that she rapidly declined, her husband returning only in time to see her die; the shock of her loss, coupled with a financial disaster which left him penniless, so preyed on his mind that he sank under the strain.

The necessary papers for proving Muriel's birth were in Mr. Leigh's possession; he added to them a statement of his own.

Muriel, in spite of her wish to devote herself wholly to Mr. Leigh during the remaining days of his life, yet had to answer a long letter of Connie's. In her reply she told her the wonderful news which had recently come to light, secretly hoping that Connie might tell Venables of it. Then she tore her letter up.

"No," she said to herself, "if he does not love me enough to marry me as I was, he does not love me enough. I will wait."

Her letter after all was a short one, informing Connie of the approaching death of Mr. Leigh and giving no news beside.

The catastrophe was now nearer than was anticipated. Two days later Mr. Leigh died.

After the funeral and all the sad details in connection with it were over, Muriel had to decide what she intended doing. It was impossible she could live on her aunt; it was equally impossible she could return to Como Hall; she must try and get a fresh place with Lady Pankhurst's recommendation, which she did not doubt would be given.

She felt more forsaken and miserable than even when Mr. Leigh was taken to prison. She had had glimpses of a possible happiness which only left her the more unhappy.

She had almost given up all hope of hearing from Venables. Why did he delay so long? He must have learnt the whole truth long before this. It was clear he could not face the disgrace attaching to her, that he meant to quietly let her drop.

She would never make another move, of that she was determined. She would never enquire after him in her letters to Connie. She would forget all about him.

This was her state of mind when one morning she received the following letter from her friend:

"DEAREST MURIEL,

"I have some news to tell you; first about myself and then about you. I give that about myself first, or else I believe you would never go on to it. You will never credit it. I am engaged to Lewis now with papa's consent. This is how that marvellous change has occurred.

"You heard before you left us that Lord Falkirk was expected to come into our neighbourhood soon; he is the man who had papa made a knight, so you can imagine how he adores him. Papa wrote him a letter asking him to come and stay at our house, and to his immense joy he accepted. Lord Falkirk is a very artistic nobleman, and is always talking about art. You can imagine how comfortable I felt when he asked papa if he had the privilege of knowing Mr. Norman, who was then staying in the neighbourhood. Papa made some blundering reply, and his lordship went on to praise him most enthusiastically, and asked permission to bring him to our house the next evening. Papa could not object; in fact, the praise of this great man has quite turned papa's ideas on the subject of Lewis, and the result is that at last he has permission to come here as often as he likes, and that is rather too often, I'm afraid.

"Now about your affairs. Your going away in such a hurry put everything into confusion. I find that Hugh was stupid enough to bother you; you must accept my apologies for him. I really never

thought he would so far forget himself. I'm sorry to say that now you're gone he never seems tired of abusing you; he cherishes a most despicable rancour against you; we are constantly having words about it.

"Mr. Venables came here the day after you left, as I mentioned in my last letter. I told him that your father was dying, and he was much shocked. He asked me if I thought he might come and see you; I told him he had better leave it for the present; he agreed it would be best.

"He called again soon after, but I was out. Hugh saw him and told me that Mr. Venables said something about writing to you. I haven't seen him since, but I had a note from him to say he was going away for a week or so.

"Have you heard from him? Write and tell me everything. I am so sorry to think of you having all this terrible trouble; it seems wrong for me to be so happy with dear Lewis. I wish you could come and stay here. Hugh is going away soon; will you come then for a long visit?

"Ever yours affectionately,  
"CONNIE."

The pleasure of the good news about her friend died away as she read that part of the letter relating to Venables. It was clear to her mind that when he called the second time Hugh had taken advantage of his visit to tell him all about her father's disgrace.

Her letter to Connie would not have reached her till some time after she had seen Venables. Up to the present time not even Connie knew the fact that Mr. Leigh was not her father, and that she was therefore free from any disgrace attaching to his name.

She resolved that no one should know it for the present.

She would wait a few days to see if a letter came from Venables, if not she would look out for another situation.

Two days afterwards she received another note from Connie, saying that Hugh had gone away earlier than was expected, and urging her to come at once, and have the change of scene which she was in need of. She showed the letter to her aunt.

"Well, are you going?" asked Miss Leigh.

"I don't know, auntie; what do you think?"

"I think you ought not to go so long as this is all they know," remarked Miss Leigh, pointing to the envelope, which was addressed to Miss Muriel Leigh. "Why haven't you told Miss Connie about it? What is the matter with you? You ought to be gay enough to find that you needn't be ashamed of your name, and you mope all day. Not that I'm ashamed of the name of Leigh," she added; "it would be a good thing if half the world were as good men as poor Robert."

The tears rose to her eyes as she thought of her brother, but she quickly brushed them away, as one who had done with weeping.

"My dearest auntie," said Muriel, "I'm only half glad that I have another name now. I should have liked to be your niece always, and I will be, too, if you will let me. And Mr. Leigh was so good to me that I must always think of him as a father."

"That's as you like," said Miss Leigh; "I'm sure I'm ready enough to forgive him for never telling you who you were, though I think he might have trusted me. But now why don't you go and visit your grand friends? Who's that Hugh she speaks of?"

"Her brother."

"He fell in love with you, I suppose?"

"Yes, auntie."

"That is why you don't want to go there?"

"Partly, auntie," confessed Muriel.

"What's the other reason? Is there another young man in the question?"

"I don't know," replied Muriel half pettishly. "I'll go and visit these people if you like, auntie, or I will stay with you, or do anything you like."

"I should say go there," was the practical reply. "You'll be no good till you've had a change, and I shall be going to Glasgow next week, so that you won't have any company here."

Muriel acquiesced, and sitting down wrote an acceptance of Connie's invitation. She would come next day by an afternoon train.

Her things were packed and the cab was at the door when a telegram arrived.

It was from Connie:

"Please postpone your visit. You will know why in an hour or two."

"Well," said Miss Leigh, "she's a nice young person. I wonder what that means?"

Muriel did not answer, but a glad hope sprang up in her heart, a hope which she dared not acknowledge the existence of. What could the telegram mean but that someone was coming?

#### CHAPTER IX.

THE afternoon had not passed before her hope was fulfilled. There was a knock at the door of the little house; a manly voice asked if Miss Leigh were at home. Muriel recognised the voice, and heard Venables shown into their little sitting-room.

The door was left open; Muriel listened as Miss Leigh entered the room.

"Do you wish to see me?" she asked.

"I beg your pardon, it was Miss Muriel Leigh I wished to see."

"You mean Miss Rivers," said Miss Leigh. "I will send her to you."

She left the room, Venables remaining in wonder as to the meaning of what she had said.

Muriel was trembling with excitement when she entered the room, but it was not so painful an experience as on the last occasion when she was alone with him.

He held out his hand, she took it with apparent calm, mastering her agitation more successfully than she hoped.

"I have come, you see," he said, still holding her hand. "If you dismiss me, it shall be by word of mouth. You must forgive me for intruding on you in this way, but there are times in a man's life when he forgets all the laws of courtesy."

"What do you mean?" asked Muriel.

"I mean that, although your silence forbade me ever to see you again, I could not rest satisfied without once more meeting you."

"My silence?" asked Muriel.

"Yes; you did not reply to my letter."

"I have received none," she replied.

"Received none?" he echoed in wonder. "Do you mean to say you have never had the letter I wrote to you nearly a fortnight ago?"

"I have never had a letter from you in my life," replied Muriel.

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed; "what does it mean? After seeing you last time, I went home, resolved to find out the secret which you would not tell me. I came back to Como Hall next day, determined to discover it by some means. Miss Pankhurst refused to tell me. She was the only one I found at home. But she told me that you had gone—that your father was ill. I waited a day or two, and then called again, hoping to have news of you. She was out, but I saw her brother. Without invitation from me, he told me all Mr. Leigh's unhappy story—told it with such evident pleasure that I could scarcely listen to him. It shocked me beyond measure, but only made me the firmer in my determination to see if you would let me spend my life in trying to console you for the terrible sorrows of the last few months. He seemed to guess from my agitation that I had more than a friendly interest in you, and asked me point-blank if I meant to propose to you."

"He proposed to me himself," said Muriel faintly.

"I guessed as much," said Venables. "I had no reason for concealing my intention, so I owned that I meant to do so, and asked him if he knew your address. He did not, but promised to ask his sister, suggesting that if I liked to send any letter to him he would forward it to you. I thanked him, and carried out his suggestion. I wrote to you, offering you once more all that was in my power to offer, and asking you to write me an answer at the earliest possible moment. I waited day after day. Nothing came. I could not bear the suspense, so went away for a fortnight. I scarcely stayed a week. I came back more wretched than I went. I went to see Miss Pankhurst—found her alone, as Hugh was gone to London. She told me your address, and that you were coming to Como Hall to-day. She suggested that I should come here and see you. I made up my mind in a moment. She sent you the telegram that I suppose you have received, and here I am."

"I never had your letter," repeated Muriel.

"Then that scoundrel never posted it!" exclaimed Venables.

Muriel was silent. Venables paced up and down the room for a minute, then he returned to her side.

"Muriel," he said, "try and suppose that you had received my letter. What is your answer? I know all now; you did me an injustice if you thought that it could make any difference to me. What does it matter what anyone else has done? You are you, and that is all I care to know."

"I must tell you something first," she replied, though she made no attempt to withdraw her hand from his. "I am Muriel still, but I am no longer Muriel Leigh."

"What is this mystery?" he asked quickly. "Don't tell me there is any further obstacle to my winning you. Surely I have had probation enough!"

"It is for you to judge," she replied. "I have found out since I saw you, that I am only the adopted child of Mr. Leigh; my real name is Muriel Rivers."

"I do not care who you are," cried Venables, "I know what you are, and love you for it. Will you be my wife?"

Muriel had but one answer to give, and it satisfied her lover.

Long and earnest was their talk together; it was some time before they sufficiently descended to things mundane to give Muriel an opportunity of explaining her history. When she did, Venables listened intently, and with evident satisfaction.

"You don't know, my darling," he said when she had finished, "how very glad I am to hear this. As you know, I should not care a bit about your relations so long as I had you; but now that it is all over, I confess that it is a tremendous relief to me to find that you are free from any connection with the unhappy man who was so disgraced. My relations would have felt it keenly, and what is of more consequence, I am afraid you would have done so."

"I did," said Muriel; "I must have felt it deeply, or how could I have refused you when you first asked me?"

After some further talk, of more interest to themselves than to the rest of the world, Venables said suddenly:

"By-the-bye, we have no time to lose. Miss Pankhurst expects you to-night."

"To-night? What did she tell you?"

"She said that you were to come in any case, and that I might bring you if you would let me. Will you?"

"Perhaps," smiled Muriel as she ran away to tell Miss Leigh of what had happened.

In another hour they were in the train, on their way to Como Hall.

"I shall have an account to settle with Master Hugh," said Venables after a moment's silence. "What a mean-spirited dog in the manger he must be!"

Muriel laid her hand on his arm.

"Don't say anything to him," she said. "You can afford to forgive him."

"So I can," replied her lover; "and, poor fellow, when I think of what he has lost, I'm more inclined to pity him than be angry with him."

"Is it such a loss?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied earnestly; "the loss of the best woman in the world."

(Concluded.—Commenced in No. 145.)

## Our Explosive Machine.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

It was a brilliant morning in August. We know how to value sunshine in Ireland, and congratulate each other on a fine day as if some rare good-fortune had come.

This day our breakfast-room, facing the east, was filled with sunshine, and every bright thing on the table reflected it and helped to dazzle both mother's eyes and mine, as we made those countless little arrangements that render the morning meal so pleasant. Mother always had a way of providing for everybody's own peculiar little fancies.

"Ask your uncle to come in," she said, glancing through the open French-window to the grass garden outside, where that gentleman was going through morning drill with his large dog, just then on his tail, blinking in the sun, with biscuit on his nose. "And where is Ruth?" she continued.

No need to ask that at the same hour in the morning, for latterly Ruth had taken a fit of watching for the postman.

Mother might have known that as well as I did, still, as she seemed to intend I should call her, I went to do so.

Ruth was coming in from the hall-door. It was nothing new to me to see a vexed look in her face as she brought in the post-bag; but this day she had quite a scared expression. The open bag lay on a chair in the hall, and she was holding up, as if out of anyone's reach, a small wooden box.

"Nora," she gasped, "here's something dreadful come to uncle. Don't touch it! It's one of those machines—dynamite or something."

It was our uncle's fortune to be an Irish landlord. He had property in two counties. Happily, one was in peaceful Ulster, and there we lived.

I say "we," for when my father's early death left mother alone in life while still little more than a girl, her brother, Colonel Lyons, to whom this Ulster property had recently come by our grandfather's death, left the army, and insisted on my mother's coming to live with him in the old place where they had all been reared.

There was a great difference in their ages, he being the oldest of a large family and she the youngest. I was then only two years old, and Ruth as many months.

People wondered—as people will wonder about what doesn't concern them—that Colonel Lyons did not marry, instead of bringing his sister and her children to live with him; and I believe mother herself said something like this to him before deciding on

making her home in his house, and he told her he did not intend ever to marry.

No second woman, he said, should have it in her power to deceive him, or to break in upon his peace of mind; his sister might take his assurance as final, and he wished never again to enter on the subject.

Of course the inference from this was that some lady had acted by uncle in an unworthy manner, but nothing more was known about it, by mother at any rate, and of course not by either of us two girls, to whom even this would never probably have been told, but that mother, who was indulgence itself, wanted to smooth over to us our uncle's excessively strict and punctilious notions about the delicate refinement and propriety of conduct by which he considered young girls should be distinguished.

We were certainly neither of us inclined to be fast, and we used slang no more than we did Arabic; but we did enjoy the unrestrained freedom of tennis, and a dance, when mother took us and uncle stayed at home. Not that we were not very fond of him. We loved and revered him as a father, but when girls have "come out," and are supposed in many ways to be judging for themselves, they like to escape from the feeling that a kind of criticising watchfulness is always over them.

Our cousin, Kate Burroughs, took an amount of license in many ways we never thought of. She stayed with us sometimes, and I know uncle thought this was not to our improvement, but in spite of himself he often had to laugh at her saucy ways. She had been at school in Paris, and certainly she brightened us up a good deal.

At the back of the hall a glass door opened out on the grass garden, and over it was a deep arbour-like arch, covered with roses, and all sorts of climbing plants.

Kate Burroughs was standing there carpeting a tame blackbird's cage with fresh moss, and giving him fruit, water, and worms for his day's supply.

Looking over her shoulder as Ruth came down the hall, she asked her if she was crying forfeits, and certainly the way she held up the little box suggested the old cry of "A pretty thing, and a very pretty thing, and what shall be done to the owner of this very pretty thing?"

In a terrified tone Ruth replied:

"Oh, it's a machine for blowing up; it has the same postmark as that dreadful letter. Don't tell uncle until I get water put on it!"

I should mention that some weeks before a letter had come to uncle, threatening him with death if he dared to let the grazing on part of his Meath property, and he, defying all such threats, had let it by auction, whereupon the cattle were driven off and cruelly maimed.

These circumstances, taken along with the fact that several small neatly-packed infernal machines had just about that time been received by people who objected to the "no rent" doctrine, accounted for the dread that seized upon Ruth when, as she emptied the post-bag, she came upon a box so exactly like some of those the newspapers had been describing, that its identity with them seemed complete.

Ruth was always rather timid, and at this moment her pale, parted lips, and strained eyes full of fear, might have won a more sympathetic rejoinder from Kate, even if that cynical young lady had not, as she very well might, have gone for some water.

With both her hands still inside the bird's cage, and looking coolly over her shoulder at the box Ruth held so cautiously by one corner, "It's wedding-cake," she said.

"Oh no, it's too large for that, and nobody has been married; I want to wet it before uncle sees it," for, as Ruth told us afterwards, she felt sure that uncle, who had so defied the threatening letter, would open the box forthwith.

Here mother came out of the breakfast-room to see what we were about. She, too, turned pale at the sight of the box, and being near the door of the room, she turned quickly to the breakfast-table, and brought out the slop-basin full of hot water, saying, "Dip it in here."

I caught her hand. Not knowing what explosives might be capable of, I thought the heat of the water outside the box might set the thing off. Just then, uncle, having given the dog the last of his drill and biscuit together, came in through the arbour and asked what we were all about.

There was a little difficulty in making him understand.

Ruth, whose fear seemed to be increasing, would let no one but herself touch the box.

"Don't shake it," she cried, as if it had not got shaking enough to test it in the post-bag.

"Let me see the address at any rate?" said my uncle.

Yes, there it was: "Colonel Lyons, Killunghter House, Ballyronan." The words printed evidently with a brush and black paint, and the postmark not very perfectly taken up by the wood, but still almost certainly the dreaded Moat Hill.



Uncle, acting now with decision, took the box gently but firmly from Ruth's trembling fingers.

A chorus of voices screamed: "Don't open it!"

"Certainly not," he said. "I don't intend to open it. Look here!" and while we all followed him, he strode out and across the garden to a corner where the spouts round the stable fed a large water-butt, kept there for the convenient watering of the flower-beds.

Stepping up on the stand of the butt, he cautiously dropped the dreaded box into it, and we all breathed more freely after we heard the splash.

"And now to breakfast," he said, turning to us and trying to laugh, but I saw a sort of pale quiver pass over his face. Perhaps he thought how it might have been had that box been opened among us at breakfast.

"Say no more about it," said he, "and let it lie there until I go for it;" and putting his arm affectionately round Ruth, he called her his wise little guardian, and bade her come on quickly and pour out his coffee for him; he wanted to go up the river and get some trout, and breakfast was late this morning.

We knew my uncle's ways too well for any of us after that to continue the subject that had been so exciting us, or even to return to it unless he did himself. It had been the same when the threatening letter came. We understood then that after the first discussion of the matter no more was to be said.

On this day, as soon as the explosive machine had been thus effectually disposed of by drowning, and we had breakfasted, and uncle had gone off to fish, we became engrossed in a very charming occupation, and one well calculated to banish the unpleasant feeling that the escape from a great danger leaves behind it, when one's imagination keeps conjuring up all the possibilities that might have been, had not that one fortunate circumstance settled things the other way.

Our occupation was the arrangement of dresses for a ball about to be given at a neighbouring residence to celebrate the coming of age of the eldest son.

The Norburys were the leading county people. Great entertainments had not often come within our experience, for during the last two or three years, and that was about the time since we were old enough to go out, nothing had been heard of but unpaid rents and lessened incomes, and the difficulty of getting on at all without ever thinking of giving parties.

There was not any pecuniary anxiety among us, though uncle's Westmeath rents had been so long unpaid; but still mother liked us, even when we were "on pleasure bent," to have "a frugal mind."

Consequently, having liberal supplies of tulles and ribbons and flowers, a fashion-book of the current month, and Kate Burroughs's recent Parisian ideas and clever head and hands to help, there was little doubt but that we would be able to devise ball dresses of the tastefulness and elegance required by the occasion.

The back drawing-room was given up to us as a work-room, and soon every chair and couch was covered with the airy fabrics that were to be looped, and festooned, and trained in so many different ways, while flowers and frills, ribbons and pins, covered the table, and mother's cheval-glass, placed in a convenient light, was seldom without one of us trying some effect by its reflection.

I once heard mother say to my uncle that Ruth's feelings were "too sensitive to wear well in life," and I thought of these words as I observed how quiet and almost pensive she was that day, though as busy as any of us.

It seemed as if she had not recovered the fright of receiving the dynamite box, and of seeing how near our uncle was to serious injury—probably, indeed, to death; but the danger had been completely averted, and I wished she would forget about it, and not be so dull.

Next day she watched for the postman, and brought in the letters again, but there was no cause for further alarm among them.

Still, Ruth seemed to me not to be like herself; indeed, I had been thinking her dull before the explosive affair arose, but she had turned the subject off whenever I said so.

Then suddenly the very possible cause of her apparent loss of spirits occurred to me, and I connected it with Frank Merton's prolonged absence, for latterly I felt sure that Ruth loved him.

This was not a satisfactory idea to me, for I thought Ruth was entitled to marry someone very superior to a country dispensary doctor, and this was the position to which Frank was gravitating.

I liked him sufficiently well, no one could do otherwise. He was a great, tall fellow, with straight features, and a heap of brown curly hair, bright eyes, and a pleasant smile, and manners that were well described by his christian-name. I had known him nearly all my life, for he had been brought up by two nice old aunts who lived near us, and who had delivered him from a terrible stepmother, their brother's second wife.

All Frank's vacations while at school and college had been spent with them. This last year had completed his medical studies, and

for several months before the time I write of he had lived wholly with these aunts, being on the look-out, so they said, for some opening in his profession.

My dear sister Ruth was the object of my deepest love and admiration. Artless, gentle, and refined, she never seemed to know that she was fair beyond the common lot of women—fair, with a perfection of feature, and a soft feminine loveliness, rarely met with. Her slight figure was a very model of gracefulness, and her strangely musical voice was an added charm.

The dispensary doctor of a country district in Ireland is apt to have a rough life.

Not only has he his ordinary weekly duty to attend to, but he is liable to be called on at any hour of the day or night to visit the poor in their own houses, or rather, in most cases, huts.

He has to meet infectious diseases unalleviated by cleanliness, and to attempt their cure unassisted by needful nourishment and comfort, and thus painful feeling must continually be roused by dealing with poverty too extreme for individual charity to meet.

Now this was not the lot we could have wished our cherished Ruth to share.

It was understood that Frank Merton was to be back from wherever he had gone, if not sooner, certainly in time for the ball at Norbury Hall.

His aunts, dear simple creatures, tried to look mysterious, and never said where he was, as if we didn't all know he had gone "to look for an opening"; but they could not bear that anyone should think their darling Frank had been a rejected candidate for any place, and had on a previous occasion tried to veil disappointment in silence. At all events, Frank had not returned when the day of the ball arrived.

We three girls appeared at it under the protection of my mother. Our uncle had just enough gout to keep him at home.

Our dresses were a miracle of success. Kate said they had "a true touch of Worth about them," and as our country neighbours knew that our cousin had lately come from Paris, they probably thought the dresses had come with her.

At any rate, there were no girls in the room more tastefully arrayed, and without doubt there was not one whose appearance could compare with that of our lovely Ruth.

I do not, however, wish it to be thought that either Kate Burroughs or I were at all ugly.

Ruth was paler than usual. Latterly I had seen, with pain, a half-sad, patient look about her that an occasional forced gaiety of manner did not hide, at least from me.

I felt that any enquiry into the cause of this would be ill-timed. Ruth was always quiet and gentle in her ways, but never dull till now, and as the least allusion to her being so seemed to hurt her, I waited, not without anxiety, until either circumstances or she herself should reveal the cause.

On the day of the ball I twice saw her struggling with tears, and during the afternoon she told mother her head ached, and she would rather stay at home.

But this was not to be thought of. All known remedies for headache were produced, and Kate suddenly became possessed with a frantic desire for a drive.

We had been too much in the house with these dresses, she said; she wanted fresh air, and could not go for a walk, considering she intended to dance all night; Ruth must take her out in the pony-phæton.

Now Kate being our guest, this request for a drive could not, of course, be overlooked, and as she professed to be afraid to trust herself with me, because I had once met with a trifling accident while driving, and she was not herself used to hold reins, Ruth had to go, and whether or not the drive did Kate the good she professed to require, it certainly brightened Ruth a little, and that, as I suspected, was its real object.

The ball was a very bright, well-got-up affair. Everybody one had ever heard of in that part of the world seemed to be there. Some of the men may, however, have found it a little stupid, for there were too many of them, and consequently a difficulty about partners. Our programmes were filled up as fast as possible.

The heir, to whose majority we were doing honour, led off with a very great lady who happened to be in the neighbourhood, staying at a country place her family had in the next county. There were also other important people to whom it was right he should do his duty, and then his next partner was Ruth. He had secured her soon after we entered the room.

Just as that dance was ending, I saw, among a group of unoccupied men standing near the door, the tall form of Frank Merton. He could only just have entered, or I must have seen him sooner, for during that waltz I and my partner had several times passed that place, and he was not there.

When next I saw Ruth she was sitting by my mother; young Norbury was standing beside them laughing and talking, and through the crowd Frank Merton was progressing towards them.

An evening such as this was not likely to come often. I was making the most of it, and dancing continually, being, like most girls of my age, exceedingly fond of this amusement. The next dance, a gallop, was the last before supper, to which I went with my partner.

Glancing up and down the long table, I looked for any of our party, and saw my mother near the upper end, my cousin Kate in another place, but Ruth nowhere. Some time afterwards I heard from my mother that she had gone home. She did not dance again, it seemed, after the time when I saw young Norbury lead her to a seat beside my mother.

Frank Merton had asked her, but she declined, saying her previous engagements compelled her to do so. My mother said Frank seemed vexed and disappointed, and soon after he disappeared, and she did not see him again, and then Ruth told her she wished to go home, her head ached so she could not stay, but she did not like to hurry mother, and so compel all of us to leave. Might she go with Mrs. MacMahon, who intended to slip away before supper, and would leave her at home?

Mrs. MacMahon was our nearest neighbour, her husband's place adjoined ours—"marched with it," as the Irish say. She had one little girl, an object of great solicitude, as she was often ill, and this being the case at present, Mrs. MacMahon was anxious to go home early. In fact, she would not have come to the Hall, but that from the nature of the occasion she was unwilling to send an excuse.

So Ruth went home with her, to the astonishment of our uncle, who was sitting up reading, and nursing the gouty foot that had made him stay at home.

When, some hours afterwards, we returned, Ruth was asleep. The next morning Kate and I lingered over our late breakfast, recounting all the little events of the ball. My mother, who with my uncle had long before breakfasted at our usual early hour, came in, and Kate at once began to ask her about Frank Merton, what had made him come and go so suddenly; but mother only knew that he seemed grave or vexed when Ruth declined to dance with him, "which was unreasonable," she continued, "for I knew the only blanks on her card were for dances she does not like."

With this Kate went off to write letters, declaring everybody was scolding her for her silence, and I went to look after Ruth, who was still complaining of headache, mother said, when she took breakfast to her some hours before.

Ruth, however, was up. I found her sitting on the low window-seat of a room that was appropriated to our studies in the days when a governess ruled over us, and it had ever since been peculiarly our own.

Our desks and book-shelves were there, the second-best piano on which we still sometimes practised, and our baskets of work that gave a littered and home-like look to the room.

Below its windows lay the grass garden, hedged round by dense evergreens, and away in the upper corner of the enclosure was the old water-butt, in which the dynamite box lay safely.

Sitting down in the other corner of the wide window-seat, I naturally began to talk of the ball.

Ruth, gazing out of the window with an open book on her knee, answered in a dreary sort of way, and neither of us spoke of the person whom we were both at the same time thinking of most.

I was rapidly turning over in my mind that this forced silence about Frank Merton implied too much, when our attention was attracted by the sound of voices immediately below, and in another minute my uncle and Frank issued from the arch at the glass door which led out of the house, and, crossing the garden, made straight for the water-butt.

Turning my astonished gaze from them to Ruth, I saw that she was deadly pale, and that she had shrunk back as though to be out of view if they should turn.

But they neither turned nor stopped until, reaching the butt, Frank sprang up on the block of stone where it stood, and throwing his hat on the grass, began loosening his cuffs, and pushing up the sleeves on his right arm he thrust it down the butt, and we distinctly saw him lift from it the fatal box.

Ruth was standing now, with parted lips and strained eyes, watching their proceedings. I put my arm around her.

"Don't be foolish," I said; "the thing is too well soaked to do harm."

Frank threw it on the grass beside his hat, and dried his arm. Then lifting it, he and my uncle returned to the house.

Very soon after, mother came into the room smiling, and yet looking a little agitated.

"Ruth," she said, "Frank Merton is below, asking to see you; will you go down?"

The colour went and came over Ruth's fair face.

"That box, mother!" she said; "they've got it."

"I know, my dear, but there is no harm in it now;" and in a

few minutes Ruth, struggling hard to look calm, descended to the breakfast-room, near the open door of which Frank was standing.

Going with her half-way down the staircase, I just got a glimpse of his tall figure as, taking her hand, he drew her into the room and closed the door, and when next I saw her she was his promised bride.

Our uncle's notions about propriety as a leading characteristic of young girls who had been rightly brought up were always much enforced upon us by my mother, to whom indeed he chiefly communicated them.

There was an especial point that since we grew up had been driven in upon our slightly indignant attention—namely, that the permission of parents or guardians should always be obtained by a gentleman before he ventured in the slightest manner to convey to a young gentlewoman the idea that he was alive to her attractions, and solicitous of her notice.

Such a clause in the code of manners really will not work, and were it universal, parents and guardians would have perplexed lives.

We, however, were supposed to be bound by it, and thus Frank Merton had been kept for some time either in a dilemma or on the horns of one.

Whichever of these positions is the worst had been his, since in an unguarded hour he had poured out to Ruth the story of his love for her. And this with the full knowledge of the punctilio in our family on this very subject!

He knew also, knew well, how she was loved and valued at home, and that she was the favourite niece of the just a little stern and uncompromising Colonel Lyons, besides being the prettiest, and in every way most attractive girl in the neighbourhood.

What had he to offer, when the matter became known, against all this, and also against the fair worldly prospects which appertained to Ruth? for our uncle was rich, and had no relatives so near as we were.

All he could put in the opposite scale were his love and his profession.

The first he had most unadvisedly made known without any warrant for doing so, and the second was at present of no value, as, though qualified for a profession, he had as yet no standing in it, and was only "looking for an opening"—had, in fact, looked for several, and failed in getting any.

Thus it was that when he went off suddenly to Yorkshire to confer with an old doctor, who, from ill-health, was about to resign a good position, he arranged with Ruth that if he were successful in obtaining the reversion of this gentleman's practice, and also had the prospect of succeeding him in a public appointment which he held, he would at once write to Colonel Lyons and state these things, and asking his permission and our mother's to pay his addresses to Ruth, would enclose a letter for her to be given with their permission.

Of course there was something of a plot in all this, but what could they do, hedged in by our uncle's proprieties? And all the time Ruth had given Frank no promise, only a silent permission that he might do as he said.

They told me all about it afterwards, and I thought they had both behaved extremely well, though I could not but see the half-audacious way in which Frank seemed to have assured himself he would be accepted by all parties; but, of course, he must have known how handsome he was, and clever, and sure of getting on when once he got a start.

How long they had the breakfast-room to themselves that morning I am sure I do not know; it seemed to me for hours. Ruth said it was only a few minutes; but luncheon was always laid in that room, and probably Ruth remembered that a servant armed with a large tray might soon be expected, for she came to the first turn of the stairs and softly called "Nora."

Feverish with waiting to know what was going on, I was not far off, and springing down the stairs after her I was in the room as soon.

On the table lay the dynamite box, open; beside it an envelope directed to Ruth, a bunch of white-blossomed heath, and a heap of damp green moss.

Frank, who had seized my hand, telling me he was to be my brother, now began to laugh at the blank, puzzled way in which I gazed at the table.

"The whole affair has exploded," he said, "and it's all right."

So this was what the box contained! White heath for Ruth to wear at the ball, to be handed to her, along with the letter that accompanied it, by my uncle, provided mother and he were satisfied with the contents of a letter from Frank, which he laid on the moss that was to keep fresh the pure white bells of the heather.

So much for living in a land of conspirators! One can't get even the flowers for a ball in peace.

Both they and her lover's letter had been drowned by Ruth's own earnest entreaty, and she all the time fretting and thinking Frank

had either failed in his mission or had forgotten her; whilst Frank, the very hour the matter was secure, had written in all due form to our uncle, giving him a highly favourable but true account of the position he had secured, and saying, as he did also in his letter to Ruth, that he might not be able to leave for some days, but as soon as his business was complete he would hurry back and still hoped to be in time for the Norburys' ball, on which occasion he begged Ruth to wear the white heath.

No reply he knew could reach him, his start for home being so uncertain, so if he could not know his fate sooner, the heath in her hair and dress would tell him all was right.

And Ruth wore damask roses, and so mistook his seeming silence that she grew faint and ill at the sight of him.

True to his name and nature, Frank came to our house next morning, and asked Colonel Lyons for an answer to his letter.

Then came mutual explanations and a visit to the water-butt.

Frank and Ruth are settling themselves now in their Yorkshire home, having lately returned from their honeymoon, spent in Switzerland.

## The Editor's Note Book.

THAT Lord Salisbury should have had an overwhelming majority in the House of Lords was so certain beforehand that very little importance attached to the division, and the debate itself was regarded almost with indifference, seeing that it was really only a formal demonstration, and that the main battle was at the same time being fought out in the House of Commons. The most remarkable incident in the debate was the rebuke which Lord Derby administered to "dissatisfied and disgusted" Liberals. Truly there is no zeal like that of a convert!

FORTUNE has not favoured the Government in connection with Egyptian affairs, and it was certainly unlucky for them that the news of Baker Pasha's defeat should have arrived just at the opening of the session, and that of the massacre of the garrison of Sinkat a few hours only before the debate on the Vote of Censure. In South Africa, however, the accident of the death of Cetewayo has cut a knot which it seemed impossible to untie, and, for the moment, the Zulu Question ceases from troubling. Now that the sable monarch is out of the way, colonial opinion seems to think the easiest and safest way out of the difficulty lies in the annexation of the country. But it will be time enough to think about that end of Africa when we are not so urgently occupied with the other.

AT the eleventh hour the Government—driven into action either by the fall of Sinkat and the massacre of its brave garrison, or by the remonstrances of many of their own supporters—have determined to attempt the relief of Tokar, and, if it is not too late, the attempt will no doubt be successful.

BUT if it is right to relieve Tokar, why was it not right also to save the lives of Tewfik and his men at Sinkat? Why, if the extensive publication in Egypt and the Soudan of the fact that we have undertaken this enterprise is going to do as much good as Lord Wolseley expects, was not such an announcement made weeks ago? Procrastination, hesitation, compromise, half-heartedness—these are the evil geni of the Cabinet just now. It is quite time that the constituencies had an opportunity of expressing their views on the situation.

THE annual Parliamentary Bradlaugh farce was performed last week, and, as usual, nobody came out of it with flying colours. Perhaps the most noteworthy point in the ridiculous proceedings of the evening was the proof which was given of the extreme weakness of Mr. Gladstone's influence with the Radical members of his party. Mr. Bradlaugh is now to be prosecuted by the Government for illegally voting, but it is not to be supposed that anybody looks upon this step as being intended seriously.

So far, the upshot of the matter is that Mr. Bradlaugh has resigned his seat; much, it would seem, to the surprise of most of his friends; and that the electors of Northampton will have another opportunity of re-electing Mr. Labouchere's late colleague, if they still feel desirous of the honour of being represented by him.

It is a great testimony to the enormous power and influence which are still possessed by the *Times* newspaper that the death of its editor should be regarded as a public event of great, if not indeed of national, importance. Abler editors even than Mr. Chenery, who died last week, might cease to conduct other great newspapers, and their disappearance would meet with a mere passing comment, but the *Times* still remains the greatest paper in the world, and its editor fills a place in English public life which is, in all our journalism, without a parallel.

THE restless energy of the Prince of Wales is being utilised by the South Kensington wire-pullers without much regard to consequences, but it is time that His Royal Highness should be warned that the never-ceasing sending round of the hat under his auspices is rapidly becoming a nuisance. The Royal College of Music, the Fisheries Exhibition of last year, and the Health Exhibition of this, have all been worked in season and out of season with an eagerness which has been both tiresome and irritating, and the heir to the throne has "pushed" his wares with an amount of industry and persistency which many a commercial traveller from Manchester or Birmingham might have envied.

THE latest idea involves the sending round of two hats at once, one for a new Wellington Statue, the other for the decoration of Wellington Place, as Hyde Park Corner is in future to be called. Courtiers and people who want to stand well with "society" will probably subscribe as much as is wanted, but I do not think that the general public will trouble themselves much about the matter. And I am very much afraid that some day, when that general public's money is really wanted, it will be found that a willing horse has been very injudiciously over-driven.

I SHOULD recommend any one who is going to read the Queen's new book carefully to avoid the notices in the papers. The book itself is a very simple record of family life, which will be interesting to people who like to know how Royalty manages its domestic affairs, but it stands in much danger of being made absolutely ludicrous by the gushing adulation which has been poured out upon it. Indeed, if candour did not seem to savour of disloyalty, I think that most people would confess that they find the latest addition to Royal literature somewhat tedious.

THE difficulties of the London Steamboat Company are perhaps explicable to some extent by circumstances of a more or less private nature, which are not patent on the surface, but there can also be no doubt that the Company has suffered because it has not had the good sense to keep itself abreast of the times.

THE competition of the District Railway and of the Charing Cross branch of the South Eastern ought to have called into existence something better than the inconvenient little boats, which have for so long been thought good enough for travellers above bridge on the Thames, but the Company has been content to go on in the old way, and to offer to the public nothing better in the way of shelter from the weather than the dirty, stuffy little dens which represent the cabins of its boats, and the equally insufficient accommodation of its landing stages. If the re-constituted business is to have a chance of success there must be reform all round.

A MEETING of representatives of metropolitan vestries and district boards was held last week, and Mr. Boulnois, the chairman, in opening the proceedings, expressed his conviction that, although the present system is not perfect—I suppose he found it impossible to avoid admitting so much, at least—yet one centralised corporation would not prove a remedy. Other speakers were eloquent in favour of local self-government, and there was no difficulty in passing a resolution to that effect.

MR. BOULNOIS happens to be chairman of the Marylebone Board of Guardians, which is one of the best in London, and apparently judges all other vestries by his own. But to talk of "local self-government"; in face of the notorious fact that, with scarcely a couple of exceptions, the elections to these bodies are in the hands of small cliques, which take advantage, for their own ends, of the indifference to such matters which has grown up in the minds of ratepayers; is ridiculous.

NOR is it altogether fair to blame the ratepayers for their apathy and to say that the misgovernment of which they complain is their own fault. The contemptuous indifference with which most local authorities are regarded is, to a great extent, the outcome of the ingenious tactics by which a certain class of local politicians has contrived to drive almost all but themselves out of the field of local politics. What man of any position, for instance, with any feeling of self-respect, would care to be a member of the Clerkenwell vestry?

So much license has been given the Salvation Army, and so many opportunities have been afforded its members of making themselves a nuisance to their neighbours, that "General" Booth may be excused if he began to think that he might do pretty much as he liked, and that the excellence of his motives would effectually atone for anything not quite straightforward in his proceedings.

A VERY severe shock has been given to this idea by the judgment of the Court of Appeal, which declares that Mr. Booth must be bound by the ordinary rules of law and equity—not to mention commercial morality—and cannot be permitted to buy the lease of a public-house,

covenanting to keep it up as such, and then wilfully to do what would have the effect of entirely destroying its business. Mr. Booth is held to have forfeited his lease of the Eagle Tavern, and the only relief that is given him is the permission to re-demise it to its original holder at a rent of £100 a year—the purchase cost the Salvationists a matter of £16,000—with the additional privilege of paying all damages and costs.

FURTHERMORE—and this is perhaps the most disagreeable part of the business from the point of view of the Salvationist Head Quarters—an injunction was granted to restrain Mr. Booth from any acts tending to injure the plaintiff's interest in the rest of the Grecian Theatre property. The defeat of the "Army" is complete, and now, perhaps, there will be peace in the neighbourhood of the City Road.

It is reported that the Duke of Marlborough is going to sell his pictures. The Sunderland Library has already been cleared out of its quarters at Blenheim, and, without books or art decorations, the great, gaunt palace will be a more melancholy place of residence than ever. The Duke would probably not be inclined to refuse any reasonable offer for the house itself, if he were allowed to sell it. A nation's gratitude never took a more costly or unsatisfactory form than when Blenheim was built for the great soldier.

MR. LABOUCHERE, in *Truth*, deals with the question of smoking in theatres in his usual confident and trenchant manner, and declares that no danger can arise from the smoking of cigarettes in passages and halls; that very few ladies are incommoded by the practice; that the ladies who do not like it are behind the age and nuisances; and that the one respect in which music-halls are better than theatres is that smoking is allowed in them. Regard for other people's ideas and wishes is not usual with Mr. Labouchere and his friends, but more cynical selfishness than this I have not often met with.

C. D.

## Western Yarns for Travellers.

As last Tuesday's west-bound train passed Cape Horn, a large party of Englishmen, of the "direct-from-Lunnon" variety, crowded out on the platform and loudly expressed their dissatisfaction at the scenery, which was "not at all up to the guide-books, you know, by Jove!"

As they returned to their seats to enjoy a jolly good British all-round grumble, entirely oblivious of the indignant glances of the native passengers, a meek-looking, gentle-voiced journalist from 'Frisco approached from the other end of the car and volunteered to give the tourists some valuable facts concerning the country. In an ingenious and plausible way, he answered their questions in a manner that reduced our critics from over the pond to a condition of profound amazement, not to say awe.

The next morning the journalist was informed by the porter that a committee of gentlemen wished to see him in the baggage car. As he entered the latter, he found a dozen travellers, all native, and to the manner born, waiting to receive him, hat in hand. The spokesman advanced and said:

"You are the party who was giving those globe-trotters in the rear sleeper some pointers about the coast, I believe?"

"I am, sir," said the quilldriver modestly.

"You told them, I understand," continued the chairman, "that Mount Shasta was seventy-six thousand feet high?"

"The same."

"You divulged the well-known fact that trains on this road were often detained four days by herds of buffalo, and that they frequently have to use a Gatling gun on the cow-catcher to prevent the locomotive being pushed off the track by grizzly bears?"

"Yes, sir."

"You further acquainted them with the circumstance that the Digger Indians live to the average age of two hundred and four, and that the rarification of the air on the plains is such that an ordinary pin looks like a telegraph-pole at the distance of forty-two miles?"

"I think I wedged that in," responded the newspaper man.

"And we are informed they all made a memorandum of your statement that at the Palace Hotel an average of two waiters per day were shot by the guests for bringing cold soup—eh?"

"They did."

"And, finally, we believe that you are the originator of that beautiful—that b-e-a-u-tiful—fact regarding that fallen redwood-tree up at Mariposa—I mean the hollow one into which the six-horse stage drives, and comes out of a knot-hole one hundred and sixty-five feet farther along?"

"I told them all about it."

"Just so, just so," said the committeeman, grasping the patriot's hand and producing a well-filled buckskin bag; "and I am instructed by this committee of your fellow-countrymen to present you with this slight token of our appreciation of the noble manner in which you have vindicated the honour of our native land. Heaven bless you, sir!"

## Fashions.

FIRST, as to new colours; and, as the traveller said of the snakes in Iceland, there are none. We are bringing out all the old reds, light and dark, hard and soft, and giving them new names—the ugliest of these being a dirty pinkish-grey, which is called "Old Tongue," and looks as if the dyer had been uncertain whether the stuff would come out red or grey. Grey in slate and mouse, rather darker than last year's shades, is as popular as ever. Royal-blue, *gros bleu*, as the old china-makers called the beautiful ultramarine shade, will be very much worn during the spring months. "The Sara Bernhardt blue" is a bold grouping of several blues which were never supposed to have the slightest affinity for each other—peacock-blue, sapphire-blue, and turquoise-blue—in narrow strips, or arabesques, or spots, which at a little distance seem to blend together into one very odd colour. A few Gloire de Dijon roses upon the original dress gave the blue decision.

BONNETS will be small, made of plush, velvet, and silk cased, with the horse-shoe crown. In front they will not fit too close to the face, but rise with a half-coroneted front from the hair.

THE latest mystery of Paris is unquestionably the new pelisse, made of brocade, ottoman, stamped velvet, or silk and wool brocade. So artfully is this garment cut and fabricated that not even a jury of English ladies could decide the question whether it should be considered a dress or a dolman. The severity of outline given by a tight-fitting dress is altogether avoided in the pelisse, and it is yet sufficiently elegant to be worn in a drawing-room when other ladies have left their wraps in the cloak-room. The fronts are cut in one, from shoulder to hem, and also part of the backs, allowing for drapery to be let in. The sleeve is a modified jacket-sleeve, set in high on the shoulder. The trimming laid on is of a simple character, a rich silk cord at the edge, and knots of it on shoulders, at the waist behind, or looping across the front like a hussar jacket. One of the subtle niceties of the Parisian pelisse is its adaptation to either house or street wear; to make it suitable for the former the side can be drawn up, and fastened with a cord and buttons, thus becoming a pointed tunic looped up at one side.

OTHER pelisses, less artistic than that to which allusion is made, are being produced every day, the chief characteristics of which are the draped backs, quite a sudden change from the plain jacket of the earlier part of the season. Not a few of these have full bodices, pleated or gathered, and are confined at the waist by broad belts fastening in front with a large buckle. Sleeves rather full at the shoulder and drawn in half tight at the cuff. All kinds of materials seem to be used; even homely serge is pressed into service, but such simple textiles can only be employed for short pelisses which allow the frill of the underskirt to be revealed quite five or six inches in depth. Handsomer overalls, of slate-grey or mouse-coloured velvet, are to be seen on fashionable ladies, but most of these have the dolman sleeve falling over the hand, so cannot take rank as pelisses in the strict meaning of the word.

JACKETS are either very long or very short; that is to say, the long casaque completely covers the skirt, and is cut proportionately wide, or its place is taken by a short tight jacket, with short basque, fur-bordered. The latter requires to be well cut and well finished, good tailor style, to be even tolerable. The substitution of very narrow fur trimming for the deep sets of last year has been necessitated by the increased length of the jackets, which made so much fur a burthen when the bordering was from nine to twelve inches deep. One of these sets of fur, intended originally for a jacket of medium length, is only enough when cut into two to edge the long casaque as at present worn. The same width of the fur answers for dress tunics.

ABOUT twenty years ago, perhaps more, a pretty crimson cloth cloak was worn, with a double cape caught up behind with a bow or rosette of ribbon. Nothing more seasonable, either as regards colour or shape, was ever worn than the Galway cloak, the idea of which was borrowed from the Claddagh fishwives, who had a warm cloth, native made, the wool being shorn, spun, dyed, and woven near home. The crimson-coloured cloth has once again come into use for dolmans, and also for short tight jackets, the latter bordered with grey fur. The fashionable shade for the red cloth is soft and pleasing to the eye, nothing of the hard, aggressive, military scarlet, which does not assimilate with other colours in the rest of the costume.

THERE is no change compelled by fashion which is more unpleasant to us at first than an alteration in the everyday style of our hair-dressing. It is not so much the strange appearance presented by the looking-glass—that one may forget—but there is always a feeling that the erection, whatever it may be, is coming down. From a week to a fortnight is required to inspire confidence in the change, and even at the expiration of this time there are daily reminders of the new conditions in the hats and bonnets, which were chosen to suit the old mode of hair-dressing. Ladies would therefore be well-advised to begin early in the season to habituate themselves to change before the time comes round for choosing spring bonnets.



THE Grecian knot lying low on the neck behind must be abandoned. Paris always disapproved of it, and never sufficiently considered this English fashion in designing new bonnets. Now we are constrained to accept new conditions ourselves, and it is merely a question of how high upon the head the coil of hair is to be arranged. The bonnet with the horseshoe back seems to require something to fill the centre, and we daily see plaited rolls of hair visible under the bonnet. When hair is luxuriant and with the brightness of youth, a little display is a natural desire. Later on in the year these young ladies will resign themselves to have all their back hair concealed under their bonnets.

As there must be no projections at the back, but all the loops, twists, and plaits up on the top, firmly fastening with tortoiseshell or wire pins is necessary to ensure comfort. Make a parting straight across from ear to ear, brush one part to the front and one to the back. From the centre of the front half take a little piece and twist it into a firm little knot on the top of the head, to which the back part is to be fastened eventually. Use the rest of the front for small curls, fringe, or frizz, as seems most becoming. Take the centre of the back portion, comb up from the nape of the neck until it is so high that it can be twisted round the little foundation. Hold the switch of hair in the left hand, and roll round with the right, pinning firmly. Take up the sides, one after the other, comb up, twist again, and pin. When the hair has thoroughly taken this change of direction varieties of top-knots can be tried. A large loose plait of hair is sometimes added on if Nature has not been too bountiful. A figure of 8 is also a good arrangement. The coils must not be twisted tightly, but allowed to mingle with the curls on the top of the head.

THE hair in front is being dressed much higher during the last few months. A light fringe of short hair falls low on the forehead, softening the hard outline given by drawing up or combing up the rest of the hair. The coil on the top of the head supports the bonnet and prevents the front falling down too low upon the curled hair in front. The top-knot allows of a great variety of ornament being added besides fancy combs and pins, strings of pearls, brooches, aigrettes, and artificial flowers, buds or blossoms. Butterflies, some closely resembling nature, and other bold flights of the manufacturer, tinselled grasshoppers, golden beetles, and humming-bird moths, are among the pretty ornaments worn on the head.

THE great art of this style of hair-dressing is to consider the size of the head in proportion to the body, and treat accordingly. Among the Greeks the oval head was the ideal of beauty; and though it may not be possible to bring heads not conformed like the Venus of Milo into a pure outline, the top-knot should give the idea of narrowing, not broadening, the head, and whatever fringe is allowed should be kept within limits. This is the reason for making the combing of the sides a distinct stage of the arrangement.

EVENING gloves are long again, as long as ever they were, and necessarily so as sleeves are shorter. The arm is much softened in effect by the double frills of lace which are sewed at the top of the glove, especially when the latter is drawn up over the elbow.

## The Cup and The Lip.

ONE of the early Italian novelists has left us an anecdote of a pleasant old Florentine gentleman, Scoliao Franchi by name, which, if the proverb had not been as old as the Greeks, or probably as philosophy itself, might be supposed to have originated the famous admonition about "the cup and the lip."

Signor Scoliao, the story goes, was entertaining some friends at a tavern; and the wine had been flowing for some time, and the company very merry, when the old gentleman, who had the spirits of a young one, and who was gifted with a corresponding flow of words, wound up a panegyric which he had been making on the juice of the grape with the following peroration:

"So much, gentlemen, for the glories of wine in general; and now for a sample of them in particular, and that, too, in connection with my own glory, and in the shape of this particular glass of wine which I hold in my hand, and which I am about to have the honour and felicity of drinking.

"Gentlemen, it is a very remarkable circumstance, and worthy, if you reflect on it, of your deepest consideration, that this particular glass of wine—look at it, if you please, and observe it well, as a thing contemplated in the decrees of fate—was destined from all eternity to be drunk by me, simple as I stand here, Scoliao Franchi. Moot as you will the point; bolt the matter to the bray; sift, with all the enquiries on such subjects, from Aristotle to St. Austin, every particle of evidence left in the respective sieves of your subtleties out of the whole grinding and trituration of the great question of fate, free-will, foreknowledge, liberty, necessity, and unavoidability; and you will find nothing in the whole rounds of certainty more certain than the drinking and imbibition of this particular glass of wine by me, Scoliao Franchi.

All the folios that could be written on the other side—all the armies that could be brought against me to hinder me, though they were bigger than Charlemagne's or than Agriean's—all the eclipses, comets, and earthquakes, gathered together—if that were possible—from all time—or whatsoever else might turn, terrify, and annihilate a man from his purpose, if it were not absolutely decreed as in this instance, could turn, terrify, or in the least degree interfere with, or obstruct, the passage of this particular pre-ordained glass of wine into the throat and stomach of Scoliao Franchi."

The orator had no sooner uttered these words than the friend who sat on his right, and who had been nicely calculating the mode of doing it, snatched the glass out of his hand, and swallowed the wine himself.

## Postage-Stamp Collecting.

OF the many ways in which the almost instinctive love of collecting manifests itself there is none, perhaps, which is more generally popular than that which selects as its objects the postage-stamps of the world. It is comparatively rare, indeed, to meet with a family some member of which is not a philatelist, either on his or her own account, or on that of a friend, while the trade in foreign stamps has assumed proportions so large as fairly to entitle it to distinction as a recognised branch of commerce. And the pursuit, if we may so call it, has this great advantage over the accumulation of crests and similar objects with which it has often been compared, that it is not only interesting but is also instructive, almost forcing its votaries to acquire, albeit unconsciously, a certain acquaintance with modern geography and history, and also with the relative value of the coinages of different countries. Considered from an educational point of view, therefore, philately is decidedly a taste to be encouraged, while viewed merely in the light of an amusement, it is a capital occupation for whiling away a leisure hour, for young and old hands alike can always find pleasure in the arrangement and comparison of the treasures which adorn their albums.

IN the hope of assisting any of our readers who may meditate enrolling themselves as recruits in the already large army of stamp-collectors, we venture to offer a few hints as to the most successful method of setting to work. In the first place, of course, an album of some kind must be procured. The most perfect collection of stamps, if left unsorted and unarranged, would be valueless, just as would be a museum of geological specimens if the objects were merely stacked in heaps upon the floor. In choosing the album, however, some difficulty will very likely be experienced. If we go into a stationer's shop and state our wishes, we are probably shown a gorgeous volume, with pages devoted to each of the stamp-producing countries of the world, and with a variety of more or less uninteresting statistics printed in brilliant colours at the head of each page. Both sides of the paper are ruled into formal squares, and no allowance is made in the binding for the greatly increased thickness which ensues when the book is filled with stamps and post-cards. Consequently, a neat appearance can never be obtained, and there is a monotonous regularity throughout the album which is far from pleasing to the eye.

By visiting a stamp-dealer, however, an album can be procured which is in every way superior to this, and which, were it more generally known, would soon drive all other competitors from the field. This is the "Imperial" Album, which is issued in two handsome and well-bound volumes, and ranges in price from about twelve or fourteen shillings to a couple of guineas, according to the quality of the binding. Expensive, perhaps, but so great an improvement upon all others as to be more than worth the additional cost. Each country has one, two, or more pages to itself, ruled upon one side of the paper only with a space for every variety of stamp issued up to the date of publication. These spaces are of the exact form and size of the stamp, and are arranged in artistic patterns, so that a well-filled page has a remarkably pretty appearance. The spaces, too, are numbered, while upon the opposite page is a full description of the stamp for which each is intended. So, when a new stamp is procured, its place is waiting for it, and all the collector has to do is to compare his acquisition with the printed description in order that he may be sure of relegating it to its proper position.

New stamps, of course, are constantly being issued, and from time to time additional sheets are published for their reception, which after a time can be bound into a separate volume. At intervals of eighteen months or so, too, supplements are published, containing spaces for every stamp issued meanwhile. If these be used, of course all newly-issued stamps must be laid aside for a time until the publication of the supplement. Or, the new issues may be neatly arranged in the blank space in the original pages, care being taken to place them as near as possible to those stamps which they supersede without spoiling the effect of the design. This latter is, perhaps, the best system, as the stamps of each country are then kept together, and the inconvenience of loose sheets or an additional volume avoided. If the expense of this album is thought too great



Edited by Charles Dickens.]

there are several others which meet with more or less patronage, such as the "Lincoln," the "Crown," the "Universal," etc. Purchase none, however, which are ruled upon both sides of the paper; neatness in such a case is unattainable.

A STAMP should never be fastened in its place by the primitive plan of besmearing the whole of the lower surface with gum or paste. If this be done, the paper contracts into unsightly creases, is sure, sooner or later, to become discoloured, and, more important still, the stamp cannot be removed without damaging the page. If each corner be lightly touched with strong and clear gum it will be found amply sufficient, and removal may then be effected without difficulty. With stamps torn from envelopes it is generally necessary to soak for a short time in water, in order to remove the thick paper adhering to the back, which can hardly ever be induced to stick nicely upon the pages of the album. Certain stamps, however, must never be allowed to undergo this treatment, as their colours will not stand the action of the water. Some of the Russian issues are terrible offenders in this respect, the colours washing off with the greatest facility at the least suspicion of moisture.

POSTCARDS should always be preserved uncut, and spaces are now left for them in all the principal albums. They may be fastened by the unstamped end to the narrow sheet of stout paper introduced between the pages, but require the very strongest of gum to hold them firmly. Envelope and wrapper stamps must be cut, but should not be clipped too closely; spaces are provided for these in the "Imperial" Album, just as for those of an adhesive character.

IN selecting stamps for the album, care should always be taken to choose the most perfect examples. The perforation, for instance, should not be damaged, and the postmark should obliterate as little of the surface as possible. Some stamps, again, are more faded than others, although printed from the same die; choose always the most brightly-coloured specimens. Unused stamps, of course, are preferable, when they can be obtained, to those which have passed through the post; but at the same time it must be remembered that these are more often counterfeit than are those which are defaced.

AND this brings us to another branch of our subject. Forgeries, unhappily, are only too common among postage-stamps, and the imitation in some cases is so close and exact that it can with difficulty be detected. Beware of the cheap packets of "rare stamps" which are so largely advertised; were these what they purport to be they could not be sold for three times the money. If you wish to buy stamps, go to a well-known and trustworthy dealer, who has a reputation to keep up. You will have to pay more highly for what you purchase, but will also have the satisfaction of knowing that your money has not been thrown away upon worthless imitations.

MANY forgeries can be detected at a glance, owing to the coarseness of the execution, the blurred and smeary appearance of the lines, or by slight inaccuracies in the minor details. Photographs, too, have a peculiar glossy appearance and a brownish tinge which at once betray their character. Others, again, require the testimony of an expert before a definite opinion can be pronounced upon them. Perhaps the most difficult of all forgeries to detect are "reprints," as they are called—i.e. impressions taken from the original die after it has become obsolete. Most of the old French Presidency and Republic stamps, for example, have been reprinted, as well as those of many other countries. Some of these, strange to say, have been reprinted in different colours from those of the original stamps. These, of course, may be easily detected, provided that the philatelist knows what their true colours should be, as may those in which perforation has been wrongly introduced, as is the case with some of the reprints of the British Guiana stamps of 1853.

THERE are many stamps which can rarely be met with except upon the dealer's sheets; these, of course, you must either buy or go without. It is astonishing, however, to find what large numbers of stamps may be obtained with but trifling expenditure, and luck will sometimes throw in one's way the chance of adding a quantity of rarities to one's collection for next to nothing. But, on the other hand, there are others which exist in but few only of even the best collections, and these, of course, are unprocurable. For some reasons, perhaps, this is scarcely to be regretted. With the impossibility of procuring new specimens, one's interest in a collection is pretty certain to languish, while so long as there are blank spaces to be filled there is a sure incentive for further work. Again, if every philatelist could be tolerably certain of obtaining a perfect collection in course of time there could be no rivalry, and rivalry and energy are sometimes interchangeable terms.

"LOCALS" are by some admitted into their albums, but even if genuine, which is not always the case, it may be doubted whether they should find place therein. They are not issued by Government, nor are they recognised by the regular postal authorities, so that their claims to insertion are very small. It may here be mentioned that all the stamps known as "Hamburg Locals" are pretenders, although they may be seen in many an album; many, if not all, of the American locals must be placed in the same category. There are

some few locals, however, which may fairly be considered as postage-stamps, being issued by certain States for local use. Among these may be mentioned those of Brunswick, Cashmere, Hanover, La Guaira, Shanghai, and the Pony Express. Many of these, and especially the last-named, have been extensively imitated, and caution must therefore be exercised in accepting them for the album.

THERE are certain other stamps which are occasionally seen in albums, but which, undoubtedly, have no right to be present—such, for instance, as telegraph and receipt stamps, the old newspaper stamps, and the stamp now used upon registered-letter envelopes. The two former of these are not postage-stamps at all, and are therefore at once put out of court. The newspaper-stamps, now obsolete, combined tax and postage, and are therefore doubtfully eligible, while the registered-letter stamp refers to the amount chargeable for registration only, and though it passes through the post, has no claim to consideration as a postage-stamp. Still more inadmissible specimens are contained in some albums, belonging principally to collectors who hold that the great object in philately is to obtain as many stamps as possible, without reference to their value, authenticity, or claims to insertion; these, however, need not be further characterised.

## An Eccentric Pigeon.

IN his "Mental Evolution of Animals," Mr. Romanes gives an instance of an odd perversion of instinct in a white fantail pigeon that lived with his family in a pigeon-house in the stable-yard. "He and his wife had been brought originally from Sussex, and had lived, respected and admired, to see their children of the third generation, when he suddenly became the victim of the infatuation I am about to describe. No eccentricity whatever was remarked in his conduct, until one day I chanced to pick up, somewhere in the garden, a ginger-bottle of the ordinary brown stone description. I flung it into the beer bottle of the ordinary brown stone description. That instant yard, where it fell immediately below the pigeon-house. He a series of genuflections, evidently doing homage to the bottle. He strutted round and round it, bowing and scraping and cooing, and performing the most ludicrous antics I ever beheld on the part of an enamoured pigeon. Nor did he cease these performances until we removed the bottle; and, which proved that this singular aberration of instinct had become a fixed delusion, whenever the bottle was thrown or placed in the yard, no matter whether it lay horizontally or was placed upright, the same ridiculous scene was enacted. At that moment the pigeon came flying down, with quite as great alacrity as when his peas were thrown out for his dinner, to continue his antics as long as the bottle remained there. Sometimes this would go on for hours, the other members of his family treating his movements with the most contemptuous indifference, and taking no notice whatever of the bottle. At last it became the regular amusement with which we entertained our visitors, to see this erratic pigeon making love to the object of his affections, and it was an entertainment which never failed, throughout that summer at least. Before next summer came round he was no more."

## Sleep.

WHAT is sleep? We do not know. We can only say that it is a condition belonging to almost every animal organism, which seems naturally brought about by the activities of that organism, and which in some unexplained manner helps to reinstate the exhausted energy of brain and muscle. As to the sleep of plants, the true phenomena of sleep are restricted to the brain and the higher senses; there can be no sleep where these are absent.

Certain phenomena concerning sleep have been well observed; but the organic condition, or sum of conditions, on which these depend, remains so entire a mystery that we cannot venture on a tolerable definition of sleep. Let us be content with defining some of its leading characteristics. Look at that child; wearied with play, he has thrown himself upon the ground, and, resting a flushed cheek on one arm, he lies there breathing equally, with motionless limbs, eyes closed, brain shut out from lights and noises round him. If you touch his hand he withdraws it; if you tickle his cheek he will impatiently turn his head aside; but, even should he turn his whole body round, he will not, perhaps, open his eyes—will not know who it is, or what it is, that molests him; he will not wake. His mind, engaged in dreams, is disengaged from external things; they may make impressions on him, excite sensations in him, but these sensations are not wrought up into knowledge. His senses are dormant, or but feebly active, and his brain is busy with dreams; his limbs motionless, his fingers relax their grasp, and the muscles of his neck support his head. But the heart beats vigorously, and pumps the blood incessantly all over the body, the chest expands and contracts, the stomach and intestines digest, and all the secretions are going on.

We thus perceive how superficial is the analogy of sleep and death, supposed by the ancients to be brothers, and even by moderns supposed to resemble each other so closely that death is called an

eternal sleep. But, strictly speaking, there is not only no true antagonism between sleep and life, there is not even an antagonism between sleep and waking. In death all the activities peculiar to the vital organism cease; in sleep, they all continue. Sleep is a form of life, not a cessation of life.—*Lewes's Physiology.*

## Household Gardening.

### ROSES IN GARDENS AND POTS.

EVERY year the queen of flowers increases in popularity, and never before have so many young trees been planted as during the present season. They have been planted in the form of standards on lawns and in borders, as dwarfs in beds, and as climbers for covering walls and fences. The choicer varieties are now also largely grown under glass, the growths being trained up the roofs of greenhouses after the manner of vines, while many thousands of the dwarf-growing sorts are established in pots for forcing.

### ROSES ON LAWNS.

A row of standard Roses, all of the same height and planted at regular distances apart in a lawn, about two feet from the margin of the walk, can never fail being admired when seen in a clean, healthy condition, and bearing their handsome and deliciously perfumed blooms. Thus arranged they are distinct ornaments, and convenient for being enjoyed, as little or no stooping is needed for examining the charming arrangement of their delicate shell-like petals, nor for inhaling the refreshing fragrance of the flowers.

Roses of this character are established on briar-stocks by budding, and a very great mistake is made by numbers of persons in having the stocks too tall. In ordering Roses with stems four feet high, it seems to be forgotten that the blooms must be from eighteen inches to two feet higher still, and at that altitude it is obviously impossible that the full beauty of the flowers can be seen, as, being above the line of vision, they must be viewed from beneath. The stems on which standard Roses are established should not exceed two feet in height, and then if the Roses are two feet higher they will be at a quite sufficient altitude to be effective, while the centre of each flower can be seen.

With very great care in keeping the roots moist, even wet, during transit, Roses may still be planted. If desired to flourish in lawns, an excavation should be made at the least eighteen inches wide and deep for each standard, which must be planted in rich soil—two-thirds of strong loam and one-third of rich manure well mixed, forming an excellent compost.

Turf should not be laid over the roots quite to the stems, but each Rose should stand in the centre of a small circular bed at the least a foot in diameter, and six inches wider will be better. These miniature beds are not unsightly, but the reverse, when neatly formed and kept clean, with the grass edges smoothly trimmed.

Roses already established on lawns, and not flourishing as is desired, will be greatly benefited if a portion of the soil is dug from over the roots, a layer of very rich manure, three inches thick, added, and this covered with an inch or two of earth. If good manure cannot be readily obtained, soak the soil containing the roots with liquid manure. There is nothing better than household slops, nothing so good and so cheap; but stimulants of this kind are not needed by newly-planted Roses.

### ROSES IN BEDS AND ON WALLS.

When these fail to produce luxuriant foliage and a profusion of beautiful flowers, the cause, in nine cases out of ten, is impoverished soil. Liquid manure poured on now with no unsparing hand is the remedy. Near walls and fences especially, the soil is usually dry below. Examine it a foot below the surface, and if it is in a crumbling state when crushed, pour in the liquid—soap-suds and household slops, guano-water, made by mixing an ounce of guano in two gallons of water, or soot-water, until the earth, instead of being dry, is quite saturated. The good effects of this treatment will be apparent throughout the season. It is a cheap and simple method of renovation that can be adopted by all.

### ROSES ON ROOFS.

To see the magnificent yellow *Maréchal Niel* Rose in all its glory, the growths should be trained to wires under the roof of a greenhouse. The great golden blooms then hang down with their transparency unimpaired by wind or rain—festoons of them in such condition as can rarely be equalled in the open air. Grown in this manner, three thousand blooms have been gathered from one tree, representing a greater money value than if the roof had been covered with grapes. The favourite creamy-fawn-coloured *Gloire de Dijon* and the soft yellow *Belle Lyonnaise* are suitable for the same purpose, as is the American gem, *Isabella Sprunt*, small canary-yellow, and perhaps the most charming of Roses for button-holes.

Roses for this purpose are prepared in pots by nurserymen, and only need planting in a rich border either inside or outside the house, the roots well supplied with water, and the foliage kept free from insects, to grow luxuriantly and flower profusely. If the border be outside, the growths must be passed through apertures in the wall the same as vines, and the exposed stems covered with neat hay-bands from the hot sun in summer and severe frost in winter.

### ROSES IN POTS.

There are probably few persons who rejoice in the possession of a light greenhouse or other suitable glass structure who do not grow Roses in pots, with the object of securing flowers before they expand in the open air. Indeed, so much are the blooms cherished that they have to be produced throughout the winter, and the result is that there is not a day in the year on which charming half-expanded Roses are not to be seen in Covent Garden Market.

It is very easy to have Roses in winter when well-prepared plants and suitable structures for growing them are provided. For this purpose the tea-scented Roses are the best, and they are established in pots by nurserymen for flowering under glass. But they will not succeed in a shaded house. A very light position is imperative; therefore only those whose greenhouses face the south, or at least receive a large share of sunshine, can successfully force Roses in winter.

The larger and richer-coloured hybrid perpetual Roses also flower under glass when not placed in too much heat very early in the season. That is where many amateurs fail. The present is an excellent time for placing Roses in greenhouses, and they should have a position as near the glass as possible. If the roots are kept constantly moist, the plants syringed daily in bright weather, and the growths kept absolutely free from insects, healthy foliage and beautiful blooms will be produced long before any can be cut from the plants in the open ground.

Half-a-dozen excellent varieties for flowering in pots are *La France*, peach; *General Jacqueminot*, crimson; *Jules Margottin*, deep pink; *Niphetos*, white; *Madame Falcot*, coppery-yellow; and *Marie Van Houtte*, creamy-yellow. Roses that have been established in pots for a year or more should have an inch or two of the surface soil removed, and fresh rich compost added, a mixture of two-thirds turfy loam and one-third decayed manure being the right kind; failing this, give liquid manure as advised for plants in beds, but only of half the strength named above.

A few Roses flower very well in the very light windows of rooms. The best for this purpose are the very dwarf crimson *China* Roses, and the lovely diminutive pink *Fairy* Roses. A comparatively new variety, appropriately named *Little White Pet*, is a gem of a Rose for window decoration, and it is not surprising that it is becoming popular.

### PRUNING ROSES.

Roses in pots should be pruned now by shortening most of the shoots closely; in fact, all that are weak may be cut to within an inch or two of the base of each shoot; but some of the strong growths may be bent or coiled round if this can be conveniently done, and a greater number of flowers will be produced.

Roses on walls or in sheltered places may also be pruned. When trained for covering a surface the main stems should be about eight inches apart, and the side-growths that spring from these be cut off within an inch of the branches that produce them. Thus managed, and the plants well supported, also kept scrupulously free from insects, Roses on walls become like sheets of flowers, beautiful and sweet.

Roses in the open borders, although growing freely, should not yet be pruned. The early growths will in all probability be killed by late frosts, but the buds on the lower portions of the stems are yet dormant, and will remain so for another month if the shoots are not shortened; by that time the plants may be pruned and the lower buds start with impunity, as they will then stand a good chance of evading the effects of spring frosts that are often so destructive.

## Queer Marriages.

THERE is no end to the laughable stories that the American clergy tell about the queer marriages they solemnise, and the queer fees which they receive, or sometimes do not receive.

One of the latest of these is told by the Rev. Samuel E. Appleton, of Philadelphia, and is to the following effect:

A young couple called on him not long ago and asked him to marry them, which he did. The happy groom then walked reluctantly to him and asked: "Doctor, how much is your fee?"

"I have no fixed price, but generally receive a couple of pounds," was the answer.

The bright smile of the groom seemed to leave him then, but bracing himself, he said:

"You see, doctor, I am a little short at present, but would like very much to pay you. I am a bird-fancier, and am importing a lot of educated parrots from London. Now, instead of paying you in cash, suppose I present you with one of these parrots on their arrival?"

"I should be glad to have a parrot," admitted the doctor.

"Well, it's agreed then. I will send you one in a few days; but have you a cage to put the bird in?"

"No, I have not. How much does a cage cost?"

"Oh, you can get a good one for ten shillings," was the reply.

Dr. Appleton handed the young man the amount required to buy the cage, and that was the last he ever saw of the groom, bride, parrot, cage, or the ten shillings.

## Odds and Ends.

THE Rev. Stephen Mix, of Wethersfield, made a journey to Northampton in 1693 in search of a wife. He arrived at the Rev. Solomon Stoddard's, informed him of the object of his visit, and that the pressure of home duties required the utmost despatch. Mr. Stoddard took him into the room where his daughters were, and introduced him to Mary, Esther, Christiana, Sarah, Rebekah, and Hannah, and then retired. Mr. Mix, addressing Mary, the eldest daughter, said he had lately been settled at Wethersfield, and was desirous of obtaining a wife, and concluded by offering his heart and hand. She blushing replied that so important a proposition required time for consideration. He replied that he was pleased that she asked for time for reflection, and, in order to afford her the needed opportunity to think of his proposal, he would step into the next room and smoke a pipe with her father, and she could report to him. Having smoked his pipe and sent a message to Miss Mary that he was ready for her answer, she came in and asked for further time for consideration. He replied that she could reflect still longer on the subject, and send her answer by letter to Wethersfield. In a few weeks he received her reply, which is probably one of the most laconic epistles ever penned. Here is the model letter, which was soon followed by a wedding: "Northampton, 1693. Rev. Stephen Mix: Yes.—Mary Stoddard."

MADAME RUDERSDORFF was a great favourite with the Princess Royal of England, who is now the Crown Princess of Prussia. A few years after the marriage of the Princess, Madame Rudersdorff sang at a Court concert at Berlin, and was invited by the Crown Princess to breakfast with her. They breakfasted together informally, and afterwards madame sang several songs of Handel's, the Princess's favourite composer, her Royal hostess playing her accompaniments. After a while the Princess proposed a visit to the nursery. As madame was sitting on the floor, with one child playing with the charms on her watch-chain, another hanging over her shoulder, and the baby in her arms, the door opened, and the Crown Prince walked in. The Princess arose and introduced her visitor. Madame looked up, and, with her ready tact and wit, said: "Your Royal Highness, I must either disregard Court etiquette or drop the baby." The Prince bowed courteously, and said, with a smile: "Do what you like with etiquette, but regard the baby."

IN England a coach journey is regarded as one of the most charming and delightful methods of locomotion, given good roads and summer weather, of course. A gentleman was in the company of some Australian friends the other day. A Queenslander was boasting that his district was far ahead of any other known place in the accommodation, comfort, and variety of its coach travelling. "Variety, certainly!" replied a Victorian. "This was the variety when I travelled there lately. You could book first, second, and third class. Where the roads got deep and awkward, first-class passengers had the privilege of walking on ahead; second-class kept by the horses to beat them up with long saplings; whilst the third pushed the coach from behind."

JOHNNY had come home from school several times within a month with various bruises on his face and body, received in fights with his schoolmates, and on the last occasion his mother threatened him with severe punishment if he ever engaged in a fight again. Only a few days after, the lad appeared with a black eye, and, scared by the stern maternal greeting, "Well, sir?" he departed from his usual truthful ways and stammered: "I fell down and hit my head on a stone." "And which got the worst of it?" asked his big brother. "Oh, the other fellow," answered Johnny briskly. "He's gone home with two black eyes."

THE effect of Lord Coleridge's visit among the club dudes in New York has already resulted in the addition of several legal terms to their society vocabulary of slang. When they call the waiter they say: "Waiter, what's the retaining fee?" "Sixty cents, sir." "Sixty cents? Weally, Jones, I must enter a bill of exceptions and tax your costs."

Two gentlemen having a difference, one went to the other's door, and wrote "Scoundrel!" upon it. The other called on his neighbour, and was told by a servant that his master was not at home. "No matter" was the reply; "I only wished to return his visit, as he left his name at my door in the morning."

DURING the time that the late Sir Robert Peel was Premier, Lady Jane Peel was in the habit of pasting on a screen all the articles that appeared in the newspapers opposed to him. "There is nothing very singular in that," remarked Peel. "It is the duty of every good wife to screen her husband's faults."

"WHAT'S the price of this article?" said a deaf old lady. "Seven shillings," said the draper. "Seventeen shillings!" she exclaimed; "I'll give you thirteen." "Seven shillings is the price!" shouted the honest tradesman. "Oh, seven shillings!" the lady sharply rejoined; "I'll give you five."

A CLERGYMAN tells the following story: "I once married a handsome young couple, and as I took the bride by the hand at the close of the ceremony and gave her my warmest congratulations, she tossed her pretty head, and, pointing to the bridegroom, replied: 'I think he is the one to be congratulated.'"

A RICH miser has a niece whom he proclaims to be his sole heiress, but who has never seen any of his money. "Your niece is twenty years old," says a friend; "you ought to do something towards getting her settled." "Well," replied the miser after reflection, "I will pretend to be ill."

"PLEASE, sir, give a poor blind man a copper?" said a tramping beggar to a gentleman. "But you are not blind," remarked the gentleman. "No, but my partner is. He is standing down there round the corner watching to see if the police are coming."

A WICKLOW advertiser informs his customers that he alters their furs to suit the fashions, as follows: "N.B.—Capotes, victorines, etc., made up for ladies in fashionable style out of their own skins."

THE trouble with people who do nothing is that they are a long time about it.

WHAT is the average length of a London back-garden?—One yard.

DID you ever see a woman throw a stone at a hen? It is one of the most ludicrous scenes in everyday life. We recently observed the process—indeed, we paid more attention than the hen did, for she did not mind it at all and laid an egg the next day as if nothing had happened. In fact, that hen will now know for the first time that she served in the capacity of a target. The predatory fowl had invaded the precincts of the flower-bed, and was industriously pecking and scratching for the nutritious seed or the early worm, blissfully unconscious of impending danger. The lady now appears upon the scene with a broom. This she drops and picks up a rocky fragment of the Silurian age, and then makes her first mistake—they all do it—of seizing the projectile with the wrong hand. Then, with malice aforethought, she makes the further blunder of swinging her arm perpendicularly instead of horizontally—thereupon the stone flies into the air, describing an irregular elliptical curve, and strikes the surface of the earth as far from the hen as the thrower stood at the time, in a course due west from the same, the hen then bearing by the compass north-north-east. At the second attempt the stone narrowly missed the head of the thrower herself, who, seeing any further attempt would be suicidal, did what she might have done at first, started after the hen with an old and familiar weapon. The moral of which is: Stick to the broomstick.

"SAY, Bill, what is this I hear about your getting up an artificial Niagara out on Pigeon Creek? You folks seem to be going ahead!" "You're on. Going ahead! There isn't such a state as Indiana in the Union!" "But about them falls?" "Oh, we're raising 'em." "What, got to work already?" "More'n four months ago." "And how far have you progressed? What have you done?" "Well, they ain't exactly completed. Still, we've made a considerable start." "As how?" "Why, we've bought the frowsiest old carriage we could hang on to, hired the cheekiest chap in the state to engineer it, and charge thirteen dollars an hour to let it out. And, if that's not a good start towards the establishment of a local Niagara, I'd like to know what is."

"PAT," said his reverence, "I shall be very busy this afternoon, and if any one calls I do not wish to be disturbed." "All right, sor; will I tell them you're not in?" "No, Pat; that would be a lie." "An' phwat'll I say, yer reverence?" "Oh, just put them off with an evasive answer." At supper-time Pat was asked if any one had called. "Faix, there did." "And what did you tell him?" said the priest. "Shure, an' I gave an evasive answer." "How was that?" queried his reverence. "He axed me was yer honour in, an' I sez to him, sez I: 'Was yer gran'mother a hoot-owl?'"

WHEN the frightened haymakers fled from the British over Kingston Flats (near the Hudson River), in 1777, one Dutchman among the fugitives trod on a rake, the handle of which flew up and struck his head as smartly as does the staff of a policeman. Throwing up his pleading hands, he shouted: "I gives up! Hoorah for King Sheorge!" His sudden conversion was only known to a companion just ahead in the race, through whom it probably leaked out.

The New York *Nation* records an amusing incident at a book sale in that city. The owner of the collection gave five thousand dollars to ten several public libraries to be spent at the sale. The natural result was that the libraries bid against one another, and many of the books were run up to nearly double their market price.

"MISS Q.," said a professor at the college, "you will have an oration next Friday, and you may take as a subject 'The King of Spain.'" "Oh, professor, I cannot. That would be impossible." "Impossible! Why?" "Because it is impossible for a king to be a subject." Intense excitement in the class.

"Is this the way to Ryde?" said a traveller, who was as ignorant of horsemanship as of the place for which he was enquiring. The countryman to whom the question was addressed, carefully surveyed the horseman for a minute or two, and then replied: "Na, na; thee turns out thee toas too much."

"ARE ye going to start soon, Mr. Pilot?" said a cockney on board a steamer lying-to during a fog. "As soon as the fog clears up," replied the pilot. "Well, it's starlight now overhead," said the cockney. "Oh yes!" said the pilot, "but we are not going that way."

THE young man who is ashamed of his mother because she doesn't "put on style," and of his father because he doesn't use elegant language, is a baby that had no business to have ever grown up. An overdose of soothing syrup would have been a blessing to him.

COBDEN once threw the House of Commons into convulsions of laughter by an unconscious joke at the expense of Mr. Bright, who had just obtained a seat in Parliament. "The business of my honourable friend," said he, "is spinning yarns of low quality."

THIS was Jones's reply to a friend's intimation of his approaching marriage: "I should make my compliments to both of you; but, as I don't know the young lady, I can't felicitate you, and I know you so well that I can't felicitate her."

IF the young lady who cleans her kid gloves with benzoline, and wears them to church before they are thoroughly evaporated, knew what effect it has on the Christianity of those near her, she would probably go fishing for one Sunday.

A POPULAR writer laments the fact that American poets are declining. It is different with the American poets themselves. They lament the fact that the editors of magazines and newspapers are declining.

THE wedding service has been so arranged that the bride responds to the usual questions after the groom has responded. So we see even in the outset of married life woman is bound to have the last word.

"MY brethren," said Swift in a sermon, "there are three kinds of pride—of birth, of riches, and of talents. I shall not speak of the latter, none of you being liable to that abominable vice."

"You had better ask for manners than money," said a finely-dressed gentleman to a beggar who asked for alms. "I asked for what I thought you had the most of," was the cutting reply.

A LIVELY Hibernian exclaimed at a party where Theodore Hook shone the star of the evening: "Oh, Master Theodore, but you're the hook that nobody can bate."

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### ANSWERS.

**ALSTER.**—1. It was the custom formerly, when ladies themselves used to spin, for the bride to provide the house-linen. It is now not expected that she should do so, or supply any of the furniture. 2. It is impossible to tell you exactly what to get for your *trousseau* without knowing what your circumstances will be. As regards linen, you had better get a dozen of everything. 3. The bridegroom waits at the altar with his best man until the bride appears. She walks up the church on her father's arm, followed by her bridesmaids.

**CAMBRIA.**—We cannot possibly tell "what should be the rent of a furnished house in a picturesque northern county" unless we know the exact locality and all the circumstances of the case. Sometimes people will let a house for the sake of having it taken care of, and others may wish to make money of it. Much also depends on whether the place is one frequented by visitors, near the coast, a railway, and so on.

**D. D. D.**—You could rub the head with a little vaseline on flannel, or frequently apply a soft brush. You do not say what kind of wash you require, and therefore we cannot give you a recipe. There is a little book treating fully of the care of the hair, which would be useful to you—"Toilet Medicine," by Edwin Wooton, 2s. 6d. (W. Upcott Gill). Also see an article by the "Family Doctor," *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 124.

**E. L.**—We are not aware that there is any law to prevent your carrying out your intention. However, you should apply for information at the nearest police-station. Many things are tolerated in France against which there is in England a strong and wholesome prejudice.

**ETNA.**—1. You probably mean Mrs. Anna Jameson, who was born about the beginning of the century, and died a few years ago. She wrote on Art. 2. If the terra-cotta is well-sized, you can make etchings on it with a pen or fine brush, using either oils or water-colours.

**G. P.**—We believe that Howell and James are likely to have an exhibition of China-painting. There are no competitions for designs of Easter and birthday cards going on at present. They have competitions of that kind at the Female School of Art in Queen's Square, but of course these are limited to the pupils of the establishment.

**JEAN.**—The best plan would be to send your mackintosh to the maker. You might try rubbing the spots with brown soap, applied on a damp flannel, leave for a few hours, and wash off with care. Many cleaning stuffs are solvents, and would injure your mackintosh.

**KING ARTHUR'S EXCALIBUR.**—1. This question was answered last week. Please keep one pseudonym. 2. Your question about "mold" is both illegible and unintelligible. 3. From thirty to forty. 4. "King Arthur's Excalibur" is well able to decide this point for himself.

**MARGUERITE.**—1. Mr. Ruskin only gives lectures occasionally, and tickets of admission are generally pretty much in the hands of members. Mr. Ruskin's lectures are always well reported. See the *Times* of February 5th for that given on "Storm Clouds," at the London Institution on the previous evening. 2. "The Guardian Angel" and "Elsie Venner" are charming books by the same author. 3. It is difficult to obtain such an engagement, but you might advertise in the *Queen* or the *Guardian*. As you wish to be an amanuensis, we hope you will receive in good part the suggestion that your handwriting should not be so left-handed or so decorative. A plain hand easily read is indispensable for such a position.

**M. H.**—Jane and Ann Taylor flourished from about 1780 to 1860. Ann Taylor was about eighty years of age when she died. M. H. should see Josiah Gilbert's "Life of Jane and Ann Taylor," 2 vols. (H. S. King and Co.) The book is out of print and scarce, and can be obtained at most good circulating libraries—at any rate, can be seen at the British Museum Library.

**N. M.**—The materials for making the "Brass Repoussé Work" can be obtained of Barkinton and Krall, 291, Regent Street, London, W.

**PENCE** will find what she requires at Jevons and Mellor's, Worcester Street, Birmingham, who will send her a price list on application.

**SPENCER.**—We regret that the directions for knitting the shoulder-cape would take up too much of our space. Enquire for the instructions at any good Berlin-wool shop.

**SWEET TOOTH.**—1. The paragraph to which you refer respecting the value of cocoanut as an efficient food, was given in the "Odds and Ends" page in *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 139. We cannot vouch for the truth of the statement; you have the tale as it was told to us. 2. Challen's Crystallised Cokernut answers admirably for all purposes to which freshly-grated cocoanut is applicable, and is very nice as a sweetmeat for dessert. It should be soaked in either hot or cold milk, and can then be eaten alone, or used for any of the recipes which have been given in this journal for cocoanut-cakes, rock, etc., etc. The following is a novelty and very good: Cocoanut cream: Soak an ounce of Challen's Crystallised Cokernut in a gill of cold milk for a few hours, or all night if convenient; also soak a

sixpenny tin of "Nelson's Blancmange" in half a pint of milk for an hour, or more. Put both cokernut and blancmange into a stewpan over the fire, and stir until the latter is dissolved. Do not boil the mixture. Turn into a basin and stir occasionally until setting, in order to prevent the cokernut sinking to the bottom. Put the cream into a mould. This is a beautifully white and rich cream.

**TIRED ANNIE.**—1. Where do you find the quotation in Tennyson's works, and have you given it correctly? 2. We cannot trace this quotation.

**T. L.**—We have not received any letter of January 12th respecting John Brown's tombstone.

**W. S.**—Several correspondents kindly write that the part-song, "Evening," is by L. de Call. It is published by Novello and Co. in the "Orpheus," New Series, No. 54. The price of the part-song is 2d. It is also published in the old collection styled "Orpheus."

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 149.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## A Fountain of Fire.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

SHORTLY after sunset one evening in December, 1852, a couple of stalwart fishermen, while walking along the road from Port Erin to Castletown, were earnestly discussing a scene they had just witnessed, and at the entrance to the town they chanced to pause and look back. At the same moment, beyond the Mull Hills, which lay about five miles to the westward, there leaped high into the dusky air a huge fountain of fire, surmounted by a glowing target of smoke that quivered with red and blue and purple, and the landscape far and wide flashed with the same brilliant colours, much to the bewilderment of the shadows which had come to claim their own until morning, and were now fitting to and fro in a state of fantastic terror. Startled from his repose, Cronk-ny-Irey-Lhaa (the Hill of the Rising Sun) sprang out of the gloom that had been gathering around him, every feature of his weather-worn face becoming as distinct as the cloudy cushion on which his head was pillowed; while Barrule away in the north was almost as clearly defined as the deep gulf between Slieu Carnane and Bradda Head in the south; and the intervening patchwork of meadow, and moorland, and fallow, with the ruins of the old windmill in the foreground, and white-washed cottages dotted here and there in the distance, passed into view like the painted slide of a magic-lantern.

While the fishermen were gazing at this marvel in the same stupid way as a storm-driven puffin at a lighthouse window, there burst upon them the roar of a mighty thunder coming up in billows from the sea, and booming among the mountains, and the calm air was suddenly stirred by a wind that whistled dismally through the branches of the leafless trees, and the earth trembled in the throes of some fearful agony. Then followed a darkness, and silence, and stillness, intensified by the sharp contrast, and pervaded by unknown horrors.

They were no poltroons these two tall fellows in knee-boots, blue guernseys, and sou'-westers; only set them in a crank old lugger to ride out as fierce a gale as ever lashed the shores of the Isle of Man, provided that it followed the groove prescribed by custom, and neither of them would have shown the slightest signs of discomposure; but the strangeness of this terrible phenomenon turned their hearts to water, and instead of making for the open country, they rushed wildly along the narrow street and so into the market-place, in the centre of which a frightened, wondering crowd was already collected.

It was a curious scene, showing with tolerable accuracy the idiosyncrasies of those who took part in it. Mothers were as readily discernible as clucking hens with their young broods gathered around them; the unmarried ladies displayed a marked affection for their jewel-cases; some of the men had cash-boxes, others cheque-books, and one old fellow hugged a cabinet of fossils under his arm. The windows were broken in many of the houses around; there was an incessant fire of questions which no one could answer; and from the ivy upon the walls of the old castle came the terrified twittering of hundreds of sparrows and starlings, as if a severe thunderstorm were in progress.

Later in the evening there arrived a traveller from Douglas, eight miles towards the north-east as the crow flies, and another from Peel, eleven miles towards the north-west, and both brought accounts of an earthquake that had produced the greatest consternation for a time. This theory began to gain ground, though such disturbances had probably not troubled the island since the misty days—countless ages before St. Patrick banished the magician king, Mannanan-Mac-y-Lheir, across the wave—when the Stack of Scarlet was a submarine volcano, which set the limestone rocks around writhing in a torment they have never forgotten, for Castletown was the seat of government then as it was until recently.

But in order to ascertain what really had been, it will be necessary to go back to the previous evening and to transport ourselves to the hamlet of Cregneesh, lying among the Mull Hills at the extreme south of the island.

A strong easterly gale had been blowing all day; and although it had somewhat abated, it was still screaming through the rock-girt Sound, and the surges were pounding desperately at the cliffs, and the sad-faced moon, coming to peep between the long black bands of cloud that barred her dismal prison, would glide swiftly away, as if affrighted at the turmoil below. The gulls and gannets were inshore, cowering under the hedgerows; and only the puffins and

cormorants clung to the most sheltered spots of their rocky ledges. But the rain had ceased when Callow Dhone—or Callow the Fair-haired, as we should call him—opened the door of his little thatched stone-cottage and looked out.

He was a tall, square-shouldered man, rather short in the legs, perhaps, with long powerful arms, and a pleasant, good-humoured face much bronzed and furrowed. While his yellow hair and beard showed here and there a trace of silver, which in this way comes to most of us in time, he was as active as many a young fellow of five-and-twenty; and his scarcely perceptible stoop was due, not to the weight of his sixty years, but to toiling over a heavy oar in a rough sea. Farming his own patch of ground during the months of winter and early spring, and during the rest of the year fishing in a lugger, of which he was part-owner, his dress was a singular mixture of a sailor and a landsman—knee-boots, blue guernsey, black coat, and an antique, brownish top-hat, very high, very narrow, and very flat in the brim. But if this costume gave him an odd appearance, one look into his clear blue eyes was enough to show that here was a man whose hand no one need be ashamed to shake—who would stand by his duty in all weathers; and, indeed, the downright honesty of Callow Dhone's grip sometimes brought the tears into one's eyes.

His wife was seated upon a bench with a tall, upright back, which stood on one side of the peat-fire, an old Dutch clock occupying the recess at the other side. She wore a large white cap, a jacket of unbleached wool, and a coarse brown dress, partly concealed by an apron; and the rushlight flickering upon the round table in the centre of the paved floor enabled one to see that she was spinning with an old-fashioned shuttle.

"What kind o' a night is it?" she asked in Manx.

"Just middlin'. It looks to be clearin' away to the east'ard, an' I'm thinkin' it's not blowin' so hard."

"Do you think you could find that botherin' goat for us?"

"Anyways, I can step out an' have a sight roun'," answered Callow Dhone, closing the door and going away down the road.

On either hand thatched cottages, facing every point of the compass, were scattered about in picturesque confusion; and among and around them were tiny fields, cut in the quaintest shapes, sloping this way and that, and surrounded by low walls of loose stones. Callow Dhone had heard of Douglas from some wonderful traveller, but had never been farther than Castletown, which, besides being a grand place for the sale of herrings and lobsters, was to him a town of surpassing magnitude and grandeur; and, though he was familiar with Port St. Mary, where his lugger and Norwegian skiff lay, Cregneesh might be called his world; for its inhabitants were all in all to one another, being bound by ties of kinship, and friendship, and sympathy, sharing their goods in time of need, and never marrying beyond their own small circle. So from every cottage at which he called to enquire about the truant goat, came offers to assist him in the search; but, unwilling to give trouble about so slight a matter, he shook his head and went away through the gorse and heather that carpets the moorland stretches of the Mull Hills, and at last arrived within sight of the Sound.

The ground trended away gradually for about a hundred yards towards the east, and then stopped short in sudden terror at the brink of the stupendous black precipice of Spanish Head; but southwards the hill dipped more sharply to its base of cliffs, less awful in height, yet presenting a bold front to the boiling sea that wind and tide were driving through the Sound as through a funnel, while the reefs and gulleys here only stirred the waves in a white fury. Beyond this half-mile of seething water lay the Calf, rolling upwards from its bristling walls of schist in grand sweeping curves, which, had they been produced downwards, would have met those of the mainland, so that it looked as if the channel between had been sliced out bodily. The grass-crowned rock-girt islet of Kitterland in the centre of the Sound was hidden beneath dense showers of spray, and beyond rose the sharp black point of the Thousla Rock from a caldron of foam, hissing as if it were a live thing. At the best of times, this is a tumultuous spot; for not only does the current gallop by like a racehorse, but also the bottom is so rugged that the waves spring up in the most disorderly manner, hustling and struggling with one another, leaping into the air in an angry embrace, lashing the rocks that stand in their way, and bent only on crowding through either of the two narrow passages. But on the wild December evening when Callow Dhone gazed down upon this scene, with the moon timidly dropping a streak of silver here and there, and the east wind tearing along in leaps and bounds, and the waves tossing their manes aloft and madly hurling themselves westward in their desperate endeavour to escape his scourges, and the white smoke flying from them in clouds as he mercilessly thrashed them onward, and mingled with the din of this strife of waters a hollow, moaning sound coming up from the caverns whither some of the fugitives had been driven—all this bore a weird resemblance to the maddened, resistless stampede of a drove of wild



horses over the prairies. Accustomed though the old fisherman was to many a worse storm than this, he could not repress a shudder; and as he turned seawards, he muttered, "It would go hard with a boat on the Thousla Rock this night."

He had scarcely uttered these ominous words when he was startled at beholding a small brig staggering along through the waste of waters off Kione-y-Ghoggane. As far as could be seen in the uncertain moonlight, she had suffered no damage beyond the loss of her fore-topmast, the wreck of which had been cut away; and though it was clear that she was deeply-laden, she was under such short canvas, and came through the waves so bravely, that no great danger was to be apprehended from that quarter, especially as both wind and sea were undoubtedly falling. But in another respect she was in the utmost peril, for she was making so much leeway that by no possibility could she weather the Calf; indeed, it seemed probable that she would run foul of Spanish Head, and sink in the deep water at its base.

Callow Dhone's breath came fast and thick, and, gripping his yellow beard, he pulled at it as if it were a hawser; and then he gave a great sigh, and started off at a run for the edge of the precipice, where he looked down at the breakers, bursting like enormous bombs against the huge wall of rock that rose sheer out of the sea, four hundred feet below. He tried to calculate the brig's distance from the Head, and the rate at which she was travelling towards it, and he devised a dozen schemes for extricating her from her terrible dilemma, and he rejected them all as useless. Every moment was bringing her nearer and nearer; every gust was pushing her towards the grave; even now she was so horribly close to the rocks that on a calm day she would have been within hail. Callow Dhone groaned aloud. It was a fearful thing to stand there, and watch his fellow-creatures drifting to destruction, and to be unable to stretch out a hand to help them; and he clenched his fists until the nails were piercing his flesh, and shouted he knew not what.

But just as he had made up his mind that the brig would be battered to pieces against Spanish Head beneath his very feet, it almost seemed as if the wind, rebounding from the high cliffs, was sheering her off a little, or perhaps it was the drag of the current lifting her forward; at any rate she narrowly cleared the Head and stood across the entrance of the Sound, which gleamed like a snowy chasm in the moonlight. And now there was a bustle on board of her, and her skipper showed that he was a courageous man, capable of grappling with an emergency, for seeing that there was but one chance of safety, small though it was, he put his helm up, squared away his yards, and drove his vessel for the larger of the two channels between the Thousla Rock and Kitterland. This was a bold manoeuvre that Callow Dhone could well appreciate, and standing there alone on the cliff he took off his hat and waved it, and raised a lusty cheer, which the wind carried away like thistledown. Still, the danger ahead was almost as great as that which lay astern, and while he knew that he could be neither heard nor seen, such was his excitement that he ran along the cliffs, signalling with his hand and shouting, "Beware of the Thousla Rock!" which by this time was under water.

The brig was slashing along at a tremendous pace, regularly ploughing her way through the sea, and scarcely lifting at all. Wind and tide were both trying their strength upon her, both hurrying her westward, but she had so small a spread of canvas, that the latter, having the most to lay hold upon, proved the stronger of the two. When she reached the seething eddy off Kitterland, the current caught her by the keel, swung her round, and hurled her on to the reef. With a crash the foremast fell, and one poor fellow was gone for ever; and a huge sea poured over her, and three black specks were struggling in an avalanche of foam, which soon swallowed them up. This dreadful catastrophe seemed the work of a moment. In the twinkling of an eye, a fine shapely vessel spurning the waves right and left, and proudly defying the winds, and bearing a crew of brave, hopeful men, had vanished; and instead, there was a battered, groaning hulk, with a few miserable wretches clinging desperately to her torn rigging, and the wild seas sweeping triumphantly over her, and the rocky spikes piercing her poor strained sides. The awful contrast would have made a landsman shudder; but for a sailor it was something terrible to contemplate. "God help them, poor weak things!" was wrung from Callow Dhone's heart as he turned and fled up the hill towards Cregneesh.

Although his eye had been caught by a white object which he knew was his missing goat, perched on a dangerous crag close to where he had stood, it was no time to delay for anything of that sort when his fellow-creatures were in deadly peril. Had he not been a seaman well acquainted with the tricks of the Sound he would certainly have attributed a disaster of such magical suddenness to some malicious evil spirit. As it was, however, he saw that natural causes were at the bottom of it, and his thoughts were concentrated upon the rescue of the survivors. Given only time, a life-boat could have managed the business easily enough, but Castletown being

the nearest station, this was out of the question. Although his best plan would have been to go to Port Erin, take a boat there, and row up in the comparatively smooth water under the lee of the land, his Norwegian skiff was lying in Port St. Mary, and she was such a fine, handy, reliable boat that he determined to make use of her and chance the rough sea.

When he arrived at Cregneesh, he briefly explained what had happened, and what he intended to do; and as the news spread from cottage to cottage, every man came forward and begged to be allowed to go with him.

This, of course, being impossible, he selected three powerful young fellows, whose brown cheeks glowed at the honour conferred upon them. The principle of "doing unto others as you would be done by," though long ago elbowed out of more crowded communities, still possessed a healthy vitality in this old-fashioned hamlet, where it was regarded as a mere matter of ordinary duty that lives should be risked on the chance of saving other lives.

Mothers and wives, sisters and daughters, issued from their cottages, and stood around, trembling and keeping back the tears with difficulty. Yet they wore brave faces, and, if their voices quivered, their words were words of encouragement, and not a syllable of remonstrance fell from one of them. They were proud of these fine fellows who were marching away so dauntlessly, carrying their lives in their hands; and it was not for them to show fear and cause needless trouble, but rather to help and invigorate. And if you had seen them waving their aprons, and heard them cheering huskily, and telling the very babies in their arms to cheer, as shoulder to shoulder the four in the yellow oilskins and sou'-westers walked down the mountain road without daring to look back for fear of being unmanned, and if you had afterwards seen them sobbing pitifully by their peat-fires, and shuddering at every gust of the wind without, I am quite sure you would have admired the heroism that enabled them to point out the path of duty, though its end were death, while all the time their yearning love was pulling so hard the other way.

But it was only a short time that they remained indoors. Putting on their quaint old bonnets, and wrapping shawls around them and taking the arms of husbands, or sons, or brothers, some went away to Fistard Head, and others as far as Perwick, to look down upon one of the most agonising spectacles it is possible to imagine—their dear ones for a whole hour or more in the very jaws of death. The period of waiting seemed interminable; but at length a shiver ran through the group on Perwick, for coming along through the white waters of Poolwash Bay was a small black dot, and then another. Here was a strange thing, the meaning of which they did not learn until afterwards.

It turned out that the men of Port St. Mary were not to be outdone by the men of Cregneesh, and when Callow Dhone ran his skiff into the harbour, they hurried away to another boat, and four of them jumped in and shoved her off also. So there were two boats travelling in company, which, at any rate, made it all the safer if an accident should happen to either of them.

Fortunately the gale had nearly blown itself out, and as the current, running like a mill-race in a clearly-defined line about a mile off the land, acted upon the sea somewhat as a taut rope does upon a swelling sail when pressed against it, the waves were much less boisterous than a few hours earlier. For all that, gnashing their teeth, and roaring, and plunging, and struggling, they led the two boats such a dangerous dance, that only careful management saved them from being swamped; and when at last they crept into the moonlight under the headland, it was clear that they had shipped a considerable amount of water.

It was a grand sight to see Callow Dhone and the three fine fellows behind him, tearing their oars through peaks of seething foam and gulfs of green water; and it was easy to imagine the grim, set look that a stern conflict with death always brings into the faces of brave men. One accustomed to handle the light sweeps of an outrigger upon the sheeny surface of the Thames, might possibly have found fault with their style—their curved backs, their tumble-forward over their hands, their habit of getting the weight on at the end instead of at the beginning of each stroke, occasionally their erratic time, and a dozen other things; but, while the wonder was that they were able to row at all in that wild medley of green valleys and snow-capped hills, their heavy oars came through the water with a powerful rip that made them bend like whips, and the boat sprang forward as if impelled by machinery, and, so far, the sea had been unable to harm this cockle-shell, which it tossed up and down so scornfully. The old fellow's nerve was as steady as if he were on shore. Half-turned round in his seat so as to be able to look ahead, he was humouring the waves like so many women, turning aside to let the more spiteful pass by, pleasantly coaxing and cajoling others of a more gentle aspect, and going slap-dash at others that showed claws not too dangerous. It was beautiful.

But the watchers on the cliffs saw only the danger of the thing.

They knew that a single false step, or it might be an unavoidable misfortune, meant death; and every foaming crest that bore down upon the boat, and every gulf that opened before her, and every plunge and spring she gave, sent a responsive thrill through their veins. Oh, how painfully their hearts throbbed! Their ruddy cheeks were bleached to a whiteness that looked ghastly in the moonlight, which now streamed from a clear blue sky. Yet knowing from frequent experience of such sad matters the value of encouragement, they actually compelled their voices to cheer; and when the cheers came back in their faces and flew away landwards, refusing to do their bidding, they took off their shawls and hats, and waved them aloft, and so followed the coastline.

However, Kione-y-Ghoggane and the Sugarloaf were reached safely, then Black Head, then Spanish Head, and at last the brave fellows were in the Sound, where the sea would have puzzled a life-boat. But Callow Dhone and the Cregneesh men knew its fretful ways; and so did the Port St. Mary men; and here taking advantage of a sheltering reef, and there slipping through an eddy, and twisting in a marvellous manner through the more peaceful spots in the rough water, and always treating the waves like rational beings to be coaxed and argued with, if high and mighty, or to be trodden upon, if humble, they gradually edged their way up the channel remote from the Thousla Rock, and eventually ran into the smooth water under the lee of Kitterland. And then you should have heard the mighty cheer that rang out from the cliffs and startled the puffins, and cormorants, and guillemots sleeping on their rocky ledges! And you should have seen those pale, worn faces now, with tears of joy streaming down their cheeks; and the men looking out mistily from eyes that refused to be manly! They clasped one another's hands and stood there quivering and voiceless, exhausted by the terrible strain and the supreme effort afterwards; and mingled with their love and gladness was a great pride for those who had done this deed. For the moment the shipwrecked sailors on Kitterland were forgotten—Callow Dhone and his brave crew occupied all their thoughts.

The brig seemed to be in much the same condition as when Callow Dhone had seen her from the mainland. As she was stoutly built, her hull was unbroken and her mainmast still standing. But the survivors of her crew had abandoned the rigging, and had managed to clamber up into a place of safety beyond the reach of the waves, though it subsequently appeared that her captain, failing in the attempt, had been washed away and drowned. These poor shivering creatures were perched upon the grassy platform on the top of Kitterland, where they were joined by the crews of the two boats, and after a while there came to the shore a signal that they all intended to remain there until the sea had somewhat abated. So, as there was nothing further to be done, and no good to be gained by waiting, the group on the cliffs went up the hill to Cregneesh to snatch a few hours' sleep, and in the early morning the four fine fellows who, to the music of cheers and throbbing hearts, had marched away to confront death, came back again to receive a greeting as warm, and proud, and loving as ever was bestowed upon a conqueror. They had landed the shipwrecked sailors at Port St. Mary.

I would gladly end my story here, but it was not to be; the worst had yet to come, when all danger seemed over. Though Lloyd's agent arrived at the Sound about mid-day, it was not considered safe to visit the wreck until pretty late in the afternoon. He found no difficulty in obtaining hands for the work of saving as much of the cargo as possible, for many had been attracted to the spot by the chance of salvage, others by curiosity, and others by interest in the proceedings of the previous evening. Among the latter were the eight brave fellows of Cregneesh and Port St. Mary, and, headed by Callow Dhone, they all offered their services, which were readily accepted. Thirty men in all crossed the Sound, landed on Kitterland, and boarded the hulk.

For a short time all went well, but scarcely had the sun set when there occurred the awful catastrophe that startled Castletown, Douglas, Peel, and, indeed, the whole island. In one moment the wreck and the thirty men on board of her had disappeared—blown into the air by the sixty tons of gunpowder that had formed the brig's cargo! It was a pitiful thing to meet death thus after braving the perils of the deep; but so it was, and so perished that fine old fellow, Callow Dhone.

## Lengthening Days.

THE days draw out, and with the gloaming grey,  
There softly mingles a faint flush of rose,  
Streaked with bright lines of gold; the chill dark hours  
Of Winter's dreary reign are on the wing,  
And new-born hopes of coming Spring-tide's joys  
Soothe wearied heart and brain.

Beneath the eaves  
The roosting sparrows dream of future nests;  
The blackbird skirls across the laurelled path,  
Waking the echoes with his startled pipe,  
Aroused from visions of a dusky mate  
By some intruder's footfall.

In the air  
There is a nameless fragrance, fresh and sweet—  
A pure elixir of life-giving strength,  
That fills the veins and makes the leaping pulse  
Beat with new vigour. In the city streets  
The busy workers whistle as they pass  
In cheery crowds toward their daily toil.  
And by the furrows, sweet with new-turned earth,  
The ploughboy plods and sings. A kindred sense  
Of winter over, and the summer nigh,  
Makes glad alike the country and the town.  
Joy for the lengthening days! and thanks to Him  
Whose wisdom gives in turn, with Father-hand,  
To all His children with impartial love,  
The changing seasons of the rolling year.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DUNDEN," &c., &c.

### Book IV.

#### CHAPTER I. "IT IS FATE."

VAUX ABBEY is a noble old place of great architectural beauty, in one of the most romantic and fertile districts of North Devon, and there Mrs. Dunbar-Vaux has assembled a large party of friends to spend Christmas.

The place had come into her husband's possession by one of those sudden failures in direct issue so welcomed by remote branches of ancient families. He had retired from the service, and taken up his abode at Vaux with all the zest of novelty, and all the pride of ownership in a place that well deserved such pride. True, it entailed some worry and annoyance, a great deal of lawyer's bother, and a necessity of altering his usual cognomen to that complex one of Dunbar-Vaux, which his friends found difficult to remember in any form of personal address; but he would have been an ungrateful man at best, to grumble at such trifles as these, seeing the substantial advantages appended to them.

It still wants a week of Christmas, and the Abbey has not received its full complement of guests. In the dusk of a late winter afternoon Mrs. Dunbar-Vaux is sitting toasting her pretty feet at her dressing-room fire, and chatting affectionately and cordially to a friend and guest who has only arrived an hour before.

The friend is Beryl Marsden.

"To think," Mrs. Dunbar is saying, "of the ages and ages since we have met like this. I owe a debt of gratitude to fate at last, though fate is exemplified by your illness and your husband's misfortunes; still, 'It's an ill wind,' you know, and I mean to cheer you up, and make you like your old self. You have been a perfect hermit for the last year or more."

It is indeed a very sad, if a very beautiful face, that looks up to her own in the reddened glow of the firelight, and the faint smile that steals to the lips has very little of the brightness and youth it ought to have had, considering that Beryl Marsden is still a young and very fair woman.

"I am so glad you are not going back to that hateful India," continues Madge emphatically. "When affairs are settled, I hope your husband will live in England altogether. You must try and persuade him."

Beryl is silent. In her heart she knows—what the world half suspects—that these same "affairs" of her husband are in a curious state of entanglement and confusion: a confusion which has not been without some stigma of dishonour, and which has never been fully explained to her in those cold, curt letters that have bidden her remain in England until further notice. And month after month has rolled by since that terrible illness which laid her prostrate at the very borders of death, and now it is sixteen months since she sped back in answer to that ominous message of Ivor Grant's—only to stretch empty arms for her lost treasures, and gaze with blank despair on the desolation of her life.

Sixteen months!

Well, time has not consoled her yet, for her heart has never lost its memory of grief, though that grief is kept in those inner chambers of her nature, that to the world at large are a sealed book.

She is altered in many ways since that glad and glorious spring-time when she trod the cowslip-meadows with her darlings by her side, and watched the skylark's flight with little Jack.

The heart's sorrows must leave their traces on the life they touch, and Beryl Marsden's had been heavy enough, Heaven knows! At times she seemed reckless, and defiant, and almost hard, but there was something about the tremulous lips, and in the sombre depths of the eyes that spoke still of the living, struggling womanhood within, asserting itself from those locked and hidden sources that grief had tried to chill into despair.

Every time Madge Dunbar looked at her, she felt an intense and wondering compassion filling all her soul. She was really and deeply attached to Beryl, and all these years of separation had not weakened their friendship. She might have wondered at the change more than she did but for the fact of herself possessing a nursery full of noisy, rosy little romps, and seeing how Beryl's face had paled and quivered at the sound of the laughing voices. She saw then how deep that wound had gone, and her heart went out in the full, strong tide of a true woman's sympathy for the bereaved mother.

It had only been with the greatest difficulty she had persuaded her to come to the Abbey, for Beryl shrank from gaiety and frivolity as from a rough hand laid upon a throbbing wound. There seemed no forgetfulness for her even in what the world calls "distraction." But Madge would take no denial, and so talked, and argued, and reasoned, and persuaded, that at last Beryl gave in, and to-day only had she arrived.

"Have some more tea," continues Madge Dunbar, turning to the *tête-à-tête* tea-table beside her. "You look cold and tired still."

Beryl accepts the cup, and stirs it thoughtfully, looking at the fire with dreamy absorbed eyes.

"Have you many people staying here?" she asks at last.

Her hostess runs over a list of names glibly enough. At one Beryl gives a perceptible start.

"Captain Grant—but he won't be from home at Christmas time, surely?"

"My husband says so. Didn't Ivor tell you? I thought you were such friends."

"He was very good to my boys," says Beryl, with a little catch in her breath. "I have not seen him often lately, though. He was away the last time I stayed at the Court, and in London we never meet."

"Well, you will see him here," says Madge cheerfully, all unwitting of the unwise action she has committed in bidding her husband give that invitation. "Do you remember," she adds suddenly, "the first time you met Captain Grant at my house, and what fun you made of him because he looked so bored and dandified?"

"Yes," says Beryl quietly, "I remember."

"He is a very good fellow, I think," continues Madge. "At least, my husband swears by him. Although they don't see much of each other, the friendship holds good, you see. What was it you called him, by-the-bye? My Lord—my Lord something?"

Beryl's face grows warm.

"Never mind," she says; "he turned out better than his looks led me to believe, and I have given up trying to judge people by first impressions. They are more often wrong than right?"

"My Lord—what was it?" continues Madge Dunbar pertinaciously. "Do tell me, dear, or I shall be puzzling my brains all night to remember."

"No, no," says Beryl hurriedly. "What does it matter? Let me forget I was ever so foolish."

"Has your opinion changed so entirely, then?" asks Mrs. Dunbar in some surprise.

"Yes," she answers very low; "he has been such a good friend to me—so thoughtful, so patient, so true, I—I hate myself when I think how once I misjudged him."

A vague uneasiness comes into Madge Dunbar's eyes. She had not expected to see her friend so moved by her jesting words. Knowing Beryl as she knows her—knowing, too, the emptiness of her life, the utter want of sympathy between her husband and herself—she feels a sense of disquietude at these warm words of praise for another man.

"He is certainly very nice," she says thoughtfully. "I wonder why he hasn't married."

"I asked him once," says Beryl, with a curious faint thrill at her heart as the magic-lantern slide of memory showed her that pale, sweet twilight when she and Ivor had paced to and fro under the trees, and he had answered her question with so sad and hopeless a voice.

"And what did he say?" asks Madge, slowly sipping her tea, with her eyes still on Beryl's face.

"He had once cared for a woman very dearly, but she was—dead."

"There are plenty others," says Madge somewhat scornfully; "I thought men were never faithful to shadows."

"I told him so," answers Beryl softly as she places her empty cup on the table. "But he said he could not care for the—others. It is a pity; he would make such a good husband."

"Oh, he will marry some day," says Madge lightly; "he must, of course. There is the Court, you know, to be kept in the family. He will bury his romance, and turn out a quiet, well-regulated British paterfamilias—see if he doesn't."

"I hope he will be happy," Beryl answers, looking straight into the fire with eyes that have grown strangely wistful beneath their dusky lashes.

"Why should he not?" asks Madge brusquely. "Don't run away with the idea, my love, that men care more for romance than reality. Prose is a much more comfortable and reliable thing than poetry, just as solid food is infinitely better for the palate than olives and sweetmeats. Romance should be taken as a sort of 'grace before meat'; we know it's necessary, but we feel very glad when it's over—men especially."

"Are you growing cynical?" asks Beryl with a faint smile. "It doesn't seem to suit you. You were romantic once, you know, when you fell in love with Cosmo."

"I dare say," laughs Mrs. Dunbar lightly; "that, too, is a necessary evil. Everyone falls in love, and we are all gods and goddesses, and angels and heroes, to each other, until marriage comes to put us right, and show us we are only very mortal after all. But as I said before, it is a more comfortable stage to arrive at, just as the plain food is the most wholesome, though it may not look so nice."

"I have had no romance in my life," says Beryl somewhat sadly, "so I ought to be happy and comfortable enough. I was very happy—once," she adds, her lips quivering, and a momentary dimness shutting out the dancing fire-flames from her gaze. "I suppose one can live on memory, though. Does that come within your definition of plain food, Madge?"

"My dearest," cries Mrs. Dunbar, throwing herself on her knees beside the slender figure, whose sorrowful face is suddenly hidden from her eyes, "pardon me if I hurt you. Indeed, I did not mean to waken the old pain. Will nothing comfort you or make it easier—"

"Nothing," sobs Beryl, as her head drops on her friend's shoulder in sudden abandonment of the grief that overwhelms her. "I can't forget, and I can't be happy, and I see nothing to look forward to in the future—it is all so hopeless, and desolate, and dark."

Two hours later, when Beryl Marsden swept into the drawing-room—a queenly figure in black velvet, with diamond stars in her rich hair, Madge looked at her, and watched her meeting with Ivor Grant with irrepressible curiosity.

But they were, to all outward seeming, only two well-bred handsome people, pleased at meeting each other unexpectedly.

What curiosity, however deep or fear-filled, could pierce into the man's heart, or hear its wild and painful throbs as the well-remembered music of the voice he loved fell again upon his ears, or who could read that fair, sad woman's face and know its soft content came from that inward inexplicable feeling of perfect restfulness and joy, that only one presence in the world had ever had power to bring?

Oh, blind human eyes that look upon the surface of all life, and think yourselves so wise, happy is it for you that you see not into the depths below—that you cannot read the woe and strife, the passion and despair, that stride into your midst, and play their part on to the bitter end!

"Captain Grant, will you kindly take Mrs. Marsden in to dinner?"

In silence Ivor gives his arm, in silence Beryl takes it. How can she tell that he is saying to himself with the very bathos of desperation:

"I have avoided her, shunned her, refused even to spend Christmas at the Court, because I was so sure she would be there, and now—I find her at my side. Heaven help me! what use to struggle—it is fate!"

## CHAPTER II. TRIED—AND FOUND WANTING.

VAUX ABBEY was a charming place to stay at.

Everyone did just as he or she liked, and that delicious sense of liberty and good-humour pervaded the establishment which is essentially necessary to the enjoyment of a visit to a country house. The party assembled was a very pleasant one. There were some pretty and delightful women, an equal number of equally agreeable men; a host who was the soul of good-nature, and a hostess who made the most liberal-minded of chaperons.

The only shadow among the pervading brightness was Beryl Marsden's sad face, but even that gained a little warmth and cheerfulness after the first few days had passed, and she, too, began to yield to the genial influence around.

It was Christmas Eve, and the house-party had assembled in the beautiful old hall, for that pleasant excuse for gossip and flirtation—afternoon-tea. The only light was that from the blazing logs, and

a small shaded lamp on the table at which Madge Dunbar was presiding.

Beryl was sitting close by her friend, ostensibly assisting her ; that is to say, she handed the cups to Ivor Grant, who again dispensed them either to the fair claimants, or their respective cavaliers.

A pleasant buzz of conversation and laughter mingled with the tinkle of the china. A discussion was going on with respect to some *tableaux vivants* to be performed that evening.

Beryl had refused to take part in them, despite all persuasion, but Ivor Grant was to be Lord Leicester to the Amy Robsart of Madge Dunbar.

She was jesting with him as to his looking the character, for as yet none of the costumes had been tried on at rehearsals.

"You mustn't look as sad as you did last night, my lord," she said laughingly as he bent down for the cup of tea she had filled for him. "Our scene is Leicester in the halcyon days of love and happiness."

"I will remember that," said Ivor in the same light tone. "I thought the shadow of good Queen Bess was hovering in the distance."

"I think she must have been a horrid woman," said Madge vindictively. "I dislike her very much—her vanities, her spite, her odious jealousy, her relentlessness, and her mania for dress."

"That is her most feminine characteristic," laughed Ivor. "You oughtn't to dislike that."

"I do, though. I always think of those fearful and wonderful be-ruffled gowns hanging on pegs in her wardrobes like dreary ghosts of herself. I wonder sometimes what they did with them all."

"I suppose the ladies-in-waiting had them," said Beryl. "I really forget if history chronicles the fact."

"What a fact to chronicle—the fate of a woman's gowns!" said Ivor Grant.

He was leaning negligently against a massive pillar of black marble that supported an antique bronze, and as he spoke both women looked up at him.

In an instant something flashed lightning-like through Madge Dunbar's mind.

His face, his attitude, brought back the clue to Beryl's laughing *sobriquet*, given so long ago at their first meeting.

"Ah," she said quickly, "I remember now."

"Remember what—the fate of the gowns?" asked Ivor, looking down at her from his tall height.

"No," and she laughed merrily; "nothing about the gowns; something concerning yourself, my lord. Really," and a mischievous light stole into her eyes, "it suited you very well."

"What suited me?" asked Ivor, somewhat mystified.

"A name I once heard applied to you," continued Madge with a glance at Beryl Marsden, who suddenly coloured hotly, and looked entreatingly at her.

"Tell me it, please," pleaded Ivor, noting the exchange of looks. "I should like to hear it."

"No doubt," said Madge demurely, "but I can't obtain Mrs. Marsden's permission to repeat it, so you must stifle your curiosity as best you can."

"I call that very cruel," said Ivor in an injured voice. "It is not the first time I have heard of that *sobriquet*, though I can't ascertain its nature. Don't be afraid of hurting my feelings, Mrs. Dunbar—I have none; or my vanity, for it was chaffed out of me long ago. I know it's no use to appeal to Mrs. Marsden, but you—you ought to be merciful!"

But Madge only shook her pretty head.

"I can't be a traitor," she said; "Beryl would never forgive me. I am sorry I mentioned the subject, only you looked so exactly like it."

"Like it! Like what?" cried Ivor imploringly. "Do you know you are putting me to the most refined torture?"

"I thought men were never curious," said Beryl gravely. Her beautiful face had regained its old composure.

"Oh yes, they are in matters concerning themselves," said Ivor quickly. "Now you might just as well confess, Mrs. Marsden, for I am determined to find out."

"It would be a pity to deprive you of some occupation," said Beryl with a faint flush. "I feel inclined to set you at defiance, and say, 'Do it if you can.'"

"You did that long ago," he said with a sudden grave look that made her tremble. "I have not tried yet to discover what you defied me to learn, but I have not forgotten."

"There are only two people in the secret," interposed Madge Dunbar merrily. "One daren't tell if she would, and the other wouldn't if she dared. Now which is the easier to deal with?"

"That sounds like a conundrum," said Ivor. "Perhaps I'll deal with you, as the man with the bundle of sticks. Taken together you are too much for me; separately—well, I might have a chance."

"Madge will not betray me," said Beryl with a glance at her friend's laughing face; "I am sure of that."

"No," said Madge saucily, "she won't. But don't you betray yourself, my dear."

Beryl had finished her tea, and now moved slowly away down the length of the great hall, her dusky draperies of olive velvet sweeping over the deep-coloured rugs that covered the oak floor, and catching rich lights from the burning logs that filled the great fireplace.

For a moment Ivor watched her in silence, then put down his cup and followed. Madge Dunbar's eyes had taken in both the hesitation which held him back and the counter force of attraction which bade him follow. She sighed involuntarily.

"What a noble pair they would have made, only I hope——"

What she hoped was cut short by her husband's voice. He had just entered, and came up to the tea-table.

"Madge, my dear, give me a cup. I am half frozen. By the way, I've got some news for you. Can you make room for another guest?"

"A dozen more," laughed his wife. "But who is it—man or woman?"

"Man. You know Guy Brookes is coming by the six o'clock express to-night? I've had a telegram to-day saying a friend of his from abroad has turned up unexpectedly; he must defer his visit a week or bring him down. Now we can't do without Guy, you know, he's such a capital fellow, so I just wired back to bring the friend too. You do not mind?"

"Not I," said his wife pleasantly; "the more the merrier. He must be a very wet blanket indeed to spoil our party."

Meanwhile, Ivor Grant had overtaken Beryl.

"You are not going to dress yet?" he said as he reached her side.

"Oh no; I am only going to the conservatory to get some flowers."

"May I come with you?"

"Of course, if you wish," she answered in a somewhat constrained voice.

They walked on together. Of late they had grown very silent. Words no longer came to their lips with the frank, easy grace of old, though, perhaps, even words were less dangerous than those long thoughtful pauses which held them embarrassed, and yet painfully conscious of the sweetness that each presence brought the other.

The conservatory had been a modern addition to the house. It opened out of a small drawing-room, and was unusually large, and furnished with a marvellous display of rare and tropical plants.

"White, as usual, I suppose?" said Ivor, standing before a magnificent azalea, whose snowy blossoms seemed to attract Beryl's glance.

"You never wear any flowers but white."

"I don't like gay colours," she answered gravely, "and Jack always used to bring me white flowers."

"Almost all you wear or do seems associated with him," said Ivor. "You have a very faithful memory where you love."

"Yes," she said, her face growing very pale and her eyes looking troubled. "You would not have me forget them, would you?" she added suddenly.

"God forbid," said Ivor with haste, "so long as the memory does not hurt you."

"Not as it did. I suppose grief, like joy, must die of its own intensity." She shuddered and half turned away. "I thought I should have died—once."

"I know," he answered, his voice sinking to those soothing tones he invariably used when alluding to that painful subject. "But even sorrow does not kill. Come, do not think of it now," he added earnestly. "Let me get some flowers for you; you have never yet allowed me to do so."

"Men have no taste," she said with a faint smile, "but I will see what you would select—if I gave you permission."

They sauntered on. From the hall beyond came a sound of opening and closing doors, of loud footsteps, and voices, and laughter.

"More new arrivals," said Ivor Grant. "I suppose that's Brookes; he was expected to-night."

"You know him?" questioned Beryl.

"He was in my old regiment. An awfully good fellow."

"That most inapplicable word to apply to a 'good fellow,'" she said, smiling. "Why awfully?"

"Oh, habit, I suppose, or bad example. One always hears it."

"Our beautifully irregular language is mostly made up of words one 'always hears, though we know they're wrong,'" commented Beryl. "Don't you think," she went on somewhat abruptly, "that your mother will be very lonely up at the Court, spending Christmas by herself? I think you ought to have gone to her."

For a moment he was silent. He had paused before a plant of white heath, and was cutting a spray of it with the scissors he had taken from her hand.

"I had a reason for not going," he said, his voice very low and stern.

"Was it a sufficiently good reason to allow of your paining her?"

"I thought it so," he answered, mechanically arranging the beautiful waxen blossoms with some loose, green, feathery grass.

"But she did not. Her letters tell me that."

"She does not know," he said sternly. "If she did she would have been the first to counsel me to keep my resolution. There are dangers from which a brave man flees, and at which a coward laughs."

"What danger is there at the Court?" asked Beryl, looking at him in surprise.

"None now," he said with a little mirthless laugh. "I fled it, and it pursued me."

"It is not—not Count Savona?" asked Beryl, unfeignedly surprised at any appearance of mystery in one usually so frank and open-hearted as Ivor Grant.

The flowers were nearly arranged now. He was mingling some sprigs of maidenhair-fern with the delicate heath and soft, feathery grass. He handed them to her, as she turned her anxious eyes to his in that involuntary question, and something in his gaze—in its pain, its passion, its sudden lifting of the veil that had so long hidden his heart's madness—smote her with a sense of terror and of shame.

"No," he said low and bitterly, "not—Count Savona. Will you have these flowers?"

She took them without a word. She was trembling greatly. They walked on again, scarce heeding where they went. The warm air was full of drowsy intoxication—the breath of the flowers seemed sweet and subtle as the breath of that struggling passion surging in their hearts and rushing to their lips. They could hear nothing, see nothing, think of nothing. The whole world in that moment seemed only—each other.

The situation was perilous, pathetic, infinitely tragic. Ten minutes before and neither had dreamt of the change a look would make—still less dreamt of taxing human weakness to the very verge of human endurance.

Silence was around them—silence in the air and the flowers, and on their sealed and trembling lips—a silence that seemed to turn all the realities of life into dreams, and leave only the tumultuous, intoxicating prescience of a joy they dared not fathom.

The moments passed. Ivor Grant was but a man—a man who had judged of temptations, laughed at them, perchance, but never faced one so fiery and so perilous as this. Resolves, control, reason, all went down like withes in the grasp of a fire. Something mighty as a giant wrestled in his heart and tore its way upwards through a thousand emotions and a whirlwind of feeling.

"Listen," he said. "I would not go to the Court because I wished to avoid you—because the friendship I promised was only an empty name. I—I could not act the lie any longer. I knew you would see the change—would wonder—would, perhaps, question me, and so, not to meet you, I fled. The rest you know."

Still she did not speak. The blood ebbed back to her face, and great tears burned behind her drooped and sorrowful eyes, but of all the words flaming and surging in her heart she could frame not one.

"I have angered—offended you. You will hate me now!" cried Ivor bitterly.

"Hate you!" Only a stifled murmur, a quick glance, then the flowers dropped on to the marble floor, her hands went up to cover her face, and she sank down on a seat sobbing as if her heart would break.

"You were the only friend I had," she cried between those stifled sobs. "Oh, why—why did you tell me this?"

"Because I could not help it," he said hoarsely. "I have kept it in long enough, God knows! It is beyond my strength any longer. You would pity me if you knew how I have suffered. Your heart is buried with your children, but mine, I—I think I gave you mine the first hour we met. It has been yours ever since."

Her sobs ceased. She lifted her head and looked at him.

"Is that true? And all these years— And the woman you told me of—the woman you loved, and said was—dead?"

"Was yourself, Beryl."

#### CHAPTER III. "IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN."

A LONG sorrowful pause followed those last words. In Beryl Marsden's heart still throbbed the gladness and bitterness, the wonder and the shock, of that long-guarded revelation.

He had loved her all these years; loved her, served her, thought for her as no man on earth had ever done, never betraying himself, never dishonouring that true and steadfast friendship which had been so sweet and sure a thing to her!

And now it was all over. The self-deception had been swept away in a moment. Never would they stand again and give to each other frank gaze and firm hand-clasp. The whole pitiful fabric they had raised was shattered at their feet. No wonder they could find no words, no wonder they dared not break the silence that seemed to

hold their very lives in its brief, charmed pause, yet with each ebbing moment bore slowly and surely away the frail bark of vanishing happiness, and the self-delusive sophistries which had so long hidden the shoals and rocks of a cruel fate.

Ivor Grant broke the silence at last, bending down and touching with gentle hands the white clasped fingers through which slow tears still found their way.

"Do not cry any more," he said gently. "You have shed so many tears of late, and it hurts me to see you."

She dashed them away then with resolute effort.

"I am very foolish," she said unsteadily. "I—I am so sorry I ever came here. If I had known—"

"It would have made no difference," he said quietly. "Sooner or later I should have betrayed myself. A man can't play at indifference always, when his heart is aching with love."

"Is it right—is it fair to speak to me thus?" she said, paling to the hue of the lilies by her side.

"No, it is not," he said with quick contrition. "I never meant to do it; but it is so hard to keep words back. I would not insult you, pain you, for worlds," he added rapidly. "Don't judge me hardly, and—don't look at me like that," as the beautiful eyes met his in their sorrowful pain. "You make me feel a brute—a coward. Of course I know you can be nothing to me. I have known it always—always. But that has not helped me or cured me either, and now it has grown too much for my strength. I can't meet you, see you, be with you, day after day like this, so I must—leave you; there is nothing else to be done."

"No," she echoed drearily; "nothing else."

"I should like to ask you one thing," he said, growing very white. "You won't misjudge me, for even friendship gives me that right—the right to know if you are happy."

"Does it need asking?" said Beryl coldly. "Do happy women lead solitary lives like mine?"

"But your husband—he—he is good to you? Did you not love him when you married?"

"Oh, do not ask," she cried, a hot shamed flush creeping over cheek and brow. "I thought so; I thought my life would be safe and peaceful. I looked no deeper into my own heart, or his."

"And now?"

"Now things speak for themselves fairly well, I think," she answered bitterly; "not that I have any right to complain, or you any right to question. I was happy enough till—till they were taken from me."

"I know," he said hurriedly, "and think what your sorrow was to me who longed yet dared not offer consolation. Then all this long, lonely time has followed. To think of the miserable, aching, dreary hours I have spent. No, don't speak—I don't reproach you. There is nothing for which you are to blame except for filling my life to its very brim, until all other women pale as shadows before your memory. If you had been happy—beloved, loving—I would have been content I think, but I knew you were none of these, and the knowledge added and added to my love until the secret passed all power of will to keep it back. I know you are sorry," he continued, as he saw the tremor of the quivering lips, "but don't tell me so, don't pity me. Say I am a brute, a coward if you will; your scorn is easier to bear than your compassion."

"How could I scorn you?" she asked passionately. "As I look back upon these years—as I see you so kindly, so thoughtful, so linked in a thousand memories with my life's joys, and griefs, and loss—as I see, too, my own blindness and selfishness exacting from you so much, and recking naught of any pain they gave, I should be made of stone to scorn you for a weakness that is as noble as yourself."

"Your kindness tries me too hard," he said brokenly. "I am not a good man, nor strong enough to combat any longer with the fate that has thrown us together. You can't fancy what it is to love as I have loved you—always hopelessly—yet always faithfully, though knowing, almost from the first, that as I held your hands in mine, no miles of sea or land could separate us more utterly than we were separated. Yet still amidst it all if I had only felt you were happy I could have better borne the loneliness of my own life, but even that poor consolation was denied me. Oh," he cried bitterly, "what a poor, pitiful thing life is at best! Though one would give one's heart's blood for the welfare or happiness of another, one can but stand by helplessly watching the pain that nearly breaks one's own heart too."

She rose from her seat; her face looked like marble; her trembling hands went out to him in one piteous appeal of a woman's weakness to a man's.

"Don't say more. I can't bear it. So long you have been my friend—the tenderest, truest friend that ever woman had, and now—now I must lose you as I have lost everything else. It does seem a little—hard."

Her grief unmanned him. He caught the trembling hands and



held them to his beating heart, and an agony of tenderness and self-reproach came into his eyes as they met the tear-drowned gaze of hers.

"You shall not lose me if it pains you. I will still be your friend."

She only looked at him.

"After to-night?" she said slowly.

He dropped her hands. The blood rushed to his very brow.

"You are right. I can't expect you to trust me since I can no longer trust myself, so I must leave you."

"Not yet—not now," she cried with a terror that brooked no concealment. "You could not leave like this."

"The sooner the better," he said huskily; "all has been said; it only remains to part for—both—our sakes."

The dressing-bell had rung long before, for dinner was to be an hour earlier on account of the *tableaux*, but neither of them had heard it. Beryl stood like one turned to stone.

"You must do as you think best," she said, speaking with slow and painful effort. "I—I leave it all to you."

"Then it is better I go. Sooner or later I knew one of two things must happen. Your lips would speak my banishment, or my pardon."

"But I do forgive you," she said quietly. "Do not think so hardly of me; only—only—"

"Only all the same our lives are severed," he said. "God bless you! Perhaps He will make you happy yet. As for me—"

"Don't," she cried piteously; "don't say I have brought trouble upon your life. I can't bear to think it—oh, I can't bear to think it!"

The tears broke forth again, but with one mad impulse he snatched her to his breast, and bade her weep them there.

"Think it is joy you have brought me," he whispered as his lips touched the dusky crown of her hair where it rested on his heart in grief's passionate abandonment, "the sweetest joy I have ever known, though for sake of it I must leave you at last."

"I—I have heard of love so often," she said brokenly. "But now it seems to me I never understood what it meant, until—until—"

The broken pause needed no words, for he stooped and lifted her face, and at last read its meaning.

"So you too share my sorrow, and my—joy," he whispered in a strange, stifled voice. "And yet—and yet you bid me go."

"I must," she cried desperately. "What else is there for us to do but part? Since we have sinned, we must also suffer."

"I wish the suffering were only mine," he said passionately; "you have had so much already, and I, who would so gladly lift your burden, can only add to it."

"Let me go now," said Beryl, lifting her face in its shy and sudden shame, and striving to unclasp the strong and trembling hands that made so sweet a prison. "I must be mad—what am I thinking of?"

There came a sudden, stealthy step on the marble floor, and as they started apart, pale as with conscious guilt, a face looked at them through the screen of plants, and boughs, and flowering shrubs beyond.

"That blackguard here!" muttered Ivor Grant with uneomplimentary fervour.

"Count Savona!" cried Beryl, growing white as death.

"At your service, madame," said the suave, silky voice of the Italian. "Is it permitted to observe that the dinner-hour is close at hand, and the ladies are coming down *en toilette*? Madame's maid is enquiring everywhere for her."

Beryl bowed hastily, and rushed off. The count watched her with that smile Ivor knew and hated.

"Madame is as charming as ever. Is she still a—grass-widow?" he said.

Ivor Grant turned on his heel and walked away.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## A Family Feud.

(A STORY IN FIVE WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER I.

FOR at least three centuries the Bradwells had figured as one of the leading families in North Brakeshire. It is true that people who before all things loved a lord, were compelled to turn from Hunstone Manor to the towers of Selworth Castle to offer their homage. But, as every local antiquarian was aware, the title of the Selworth magnate had been bought by very shady political services (some said by hard cash) of Walpole, whilst that of Sir Raymond Bradwell had been won by the gallantry and devotion of his ancestors on distant battlefields. This was a distinction with a difference, and

then the peer was an absentee from his county during by far the greater part of every year. He preferred town quarters, or life in a fashionable foreign spa, to the rural quietude of Brakeshire valleys. The Bradwells, on the contrary, were always in residence. The secretary of any local charity knew where to find them when wanted. Sir Raymond was the most active member of the Hunstone bench of magistrates.

An "old" family, in our insular sense of the term, is almost of necessity a proud one, and the Bradwells were by no means deficient in the quality of haughtiness. They had shown it in a marked manner. Pride was at the bottom of a grievous breach in their ranks.

At the present date there were in this same countryside two distinct branches of the race; Sir Raymond Bradwell lording it at the ancestral seat of Hunstone Manor, and Mr. Francis Bradwell farming his own land at Croyle. The two were brothers, sons of the same father and the same mother; and yet they met as strangers—nay, as absolute foes.

The explanation was a very simple one, and a further reproduction of a commonplace story.

The younger son of old Sir Henry had been a great wanderer, and if he had not exactly wasted his substance in riotous living, he had done what in the parent's eyes was even worse and more unpardonable. He had taken to himself a wife without either rank or fortune. Any ordinary youthful follies would have been passed over, but this was an inexpiable crime. A child of the people, a plain farmer's daughter, brought into the charmed circle of Hunstone's gentry as the wife of a Bradwell! It was terrible! The old autocrat at once disowned the culprit, and sternly forbade any member of his family to so much as speak to him.

Sir Henry had long since passed away, but the bar remained. The present head of the family refused to have any dealings with the one who had so miserably tarnished the ancient glories of his house. "To love as well as a Bradwell," had become a local proverb to express a supercilious hate.

It had been a perpetual annoyance to Sir Henry, and after him to Sir Raymond, that the delinquent should have dared to settle and reside in the immediate neighbourhood of Hunstone Manor. Is not a discarded, disinherited relative—especially one set aside for such grave and valid reasons—bound by all the proprieties to hide his diminished head in far-off climes, in America, Australia, anywhere where his name will not provoke remark and emphasise his disgrace? Surely he owes this much by way of amends to his outraged kinsmen. One would think, too, that he himself would be more comfortable suffering for his faults at a discreet distance. But Mr. Francis Bradwell set at naught such reasoning. In his brother's words, he was a "thoroughly abandoned fool!" He added insult to injury by going boldly up and down Brakeshire, wherever his business took him, and smiling sarcastically if anybody reminded him of the sentence of outlawry so ostentatiously proclaimed.

"I'm afraid my people don't exactly understand the signs of the times," he said; "'tis a democratic age, and sooner or later Ray, for all his stiffness, will have to recognise the fact. Poor fellow! it's a hard lesson."

Francis Bradwell would, doubtless, have felt the misery and awkwardness of his position far more acutely if, in a monetary sense, he had not been placed beyond the reach of either his father's or his brother's anger. In this respect he was fortunate. By the terms of his mother's marriage-settlement a certain provision was his, which no adversary could touch. He was safe against both maledictions and threats. The sum of his inheritance was not large, but it ensured a competence. He invested it in Croyle Farm, and deliberately devoted himself to the career of an agriculturist.

And he promised to succeed from the very first. He possessed sound judgment and an industry for which in his salad days no one had given him credit. He put his shoulder to the wheel and speedily took rank as one of the most thrifty and go-ahead, and withal sensible farmers to be found in the district. He stocked his farm well, bought and sold with much dexterity, cultivated his crops on an approved plan, and was spoken of with admiration and envy at many a market ordinary. He had a good helpmate. Mrs. Francis Bradwell put forward no claims to be considered a lady of fashion, but she knew how to manage a household with prudence and frugality; she had humility enough to have half-admitted the justice of the Manor strictures upon her birth and unpretentious upbringing; she had good temper enough to have wholly forgiven them. And yet she was an autocrat within her own domain, and insisted with quiet severity upon every man-servant and every maid-servant fulfilling his and her duty. The rebellion of sloth or indifference she crushed without compunction. Sitting in the seat of authority she intended to rule, and carried out her will.

The flourishing state of the Croyle Farm hugely vexed the Hunstone baronet. Since his father's death he had suffered several heavy losses through a taste which had grown upon him for stock

and share gambling. If matters went on at this rate, in a few years' time the balance of riches would have shifted across the valley. He took his brother's hardly-earned prosperity as an additional affront to himself, and put it all down in that long account of enmity which he vaguely hoped to be able one day to settle. On the rare occasions on which they met, Sir Raymond's scowl at the offender grew blacker and more ominous than even of yore, and to one or two of his principal associates at the covert-side and elsewhere, he spoke of "Mr. Francis Bradwell" in terms of concentrated bitterness which almost scandalised the listeners, familiar as they were with the facts of the situation. In some roundabout way one of these unguarded expressions of wrath reached the ears of the kindly old vicar, and he thought it his duty to remonstrate and attempt a reconciliation.

"It is of no use, sir, not the slightest in the world," Sir Raymond thundered out; "if it were not for the respect I am bound, I suppose, to show to your cloth, I should say so in stronger language. Such a wrong as he—Francis Bradwell—has done to my name and lineage is not easily wiped out and forgotten. You must prate of forgiveness to servant-girls and choir-boys, not to me, so far as Francis Bradwell is concerned." The well-intentioned effort was altogether a failure.

In appearance the brothers were unusually dissimilar. But that all the neighbourhood knew the truth, they might readily have been taken for total strangers, or for, at most, very distant kinsmen. The baronet was of medium height, thin and wiry, with dark oval features, and hair which at five-and-forty was as crisp and black as when he had made the grand tour with his Oxford tutor, a quarter of a century earlier. Mr. Francis Bradwell might have sat, not inaptly, for a portrait of the typical better-class British agriculturist. He was tall and well-built, and since his life on the Croyle homestead had commenced, he had added considerably to his weight. With portly form, and smiling, rubicund face, he formed a striking contrast to Sir Raymond, and in some scarcely definable sense seemed to form a fitting foil for that gentleman's caustic satire.

Although the elder brother had married—in due accordance with the claims of his station—several years before the younger's elopement with Ruth Rayne, the families at both Hunstone Manor and Croyle Farm were very small. The farmer and his wife had lost two daughters, and had a third living, a merry schoolgirl of ten summers.

The baronet had a daughter lately married, with great state, to a rising London physician, and one son, a pleasant-mannered young fellow of two-and-twenty. Sir Raymond Bradwell had now for several years been a widower. It was after his wife's death that he had begun to dabble most dangerously in the game of chance associated with the cabalistic quotations of the money market.

What an amazing bundle of incongruities and of apparent contradictions in this complex human nature! How wonderful is the magnetism exercised by certain follies and vices over those who for a single ill-omened hour become their dupes! Man's will is free, and yet lies dormant. He could escape at any moment if he would only arise and shake himself. But, alas! this is the very thing that he fails to do. It may be the foaming tankard, incautiously tampered with beyond a certain limit, and becoming henceforth an engine of the most wretched self-destruction. It may be the tables of Monte Carlo, patronised as a harmless tourist escapade at first, and by-and-by sweeping the luckless idler into the vortex of mad ruin. It may be the broker's circular from dingy London lanes that, incautiously relied upon, works disaster. In each and every case there is the same yielding to the delusive promises of hope, the same deafness to the warnings of experience, the same abandonment to the decrees of a kind or an unkind fate.

It was thus with the master of Hunstone Manor. He speculated and won, caught the terrible gambling fever, and speculated and lost—gained—lost afresh. At last, circumstances had enforced a certain measure of caution upon him. He had recklessly involved the estate, which should one day descend to his son, and to meet heavy claims he had to scrape together and to save every available shilling. For the time being he was a miser. And scarce a mile from his own threshold—across which the shadow of evil was so palpably falling—sat his disowned brother, daily growing richer. When he thought of it a dark line crossed his brow, and his fingers clenched themselves.

In his speculations Sir Raymond Bradwell had one confidant. At a Brighton hotel he had made the acquaintance of Captain Middleford, a gallant officer whose name had figured prominently on the front page of half-a-score of imposing prospectuses. He was impressed by the captain's *bonhomie*—by the air of easy dignity the captain assumed, and by the glibness with which he talked of millions. He invited his new friend down to Hunstone Manor, and in a very little while had given himself up like a sheep to the shearer.

But Captain Middleford was a wary and clever strategist, and knew better than to play his cards too openly. He had worked with many tools, and behind a mask. He had so contrived matters,

that every loss Sir Raymond Bradwell imputed to his own short-sightedness, and every gain to his friend's perspicacity. In this manner, slowly but surely, he had obtained a firm grip upon both the Hunstone estate and its deluded proprietor, and as yet he was unsuspected.

## CHAPTER II.

It was a soft spring evening, vocal, no doubt, in country lanes with melody of birds, and rustle of newly-opened leaves, and the faint drowsy hum of the thousand living things that hasten forward under sunny skies to welcome Queen Summer, and to swell the triumphal pageant of her train. But in London it was different. There mammon and fashion are the twin deities. The smiling calm of Nature only emphasised the madness of the universal race for fame and wealth, and served to bring tantalising visions to the throbbing brains of oppressed toilers. The slaves of counter and bar envied the very cabmen and omnibus-servants, for they, at least, felt the balmy south wind blow, and now and again feasted their eyes on the emerald of the parks.

Harry Bradwell had been busy all day with his books and his papers; he was a law-student by his father's strong desire, and had grown weary of the prolonged confinement. His rooms were pleasantly situated, it was true, and moreover had been furnished with abundance of luxury. But the young man pined, not unnaturally, for the freedom of outdoor life and habits. He had submitted to his parent's will with a fair grace, and was doing his best to ground himself in the dry-as-dust elements of scientific hair-splitting. But like the undertaking he did not, and in his own case he could hardly see its utility. He had even ventured a mild protest to Sir Raymond.

"I suppose I—I shall succeed—some day—a long while first, I hope—to the title and to the old place, and will law be of much use to me then, sir?"

"Decidedly it will; I only wish I had its intricacies at my fingers'-ends at the present moment," replied the baronet; "'twould be many a pound in my pocket, and many a load off my mind. Besides, study is work, and for young fellows like you work is the best thing going. You may enter the Church if you please, but an idle life I shall never consent to."

"And I do not wish it, sir; I accept your choice."

Accordingly Harry Bradwell had come to Eton Row. In figure and in feature Harry took largely after his father. He too was slim, and of little beyond the average height. He too was somewhat sallow of countenance, with curly jet-black hair, lofty, well proportioned brow, and dark penetrating eyes. He possessed in addition a cheery grace of deportment, which won him admiration in very varied society. It was already evident that the fairer sex would honour him with that distinct partiality which makes other would-be cavaliers of dames sneer enviously at "ladies' men."

But if Harry resembled Sir Raymond in looks, he differed very widely from him in mental idiosyncrasy and cast of character. It was hard to reconcile the views he took of things with the lineage from whence he had sprung. In an ancient and reputable Tory family, here was an impulsive young Revolutionist. Harry had a strong private conviction that the gods of birth and position which his ancestors had worshipped were doomed Dragons, worthy only of scorn and hostility.

Even with respect to the family feud he was by no means trustworthy. In his uncle's marriage, and present station as a farmer, he saw no grounds for his father's bitter hatred. Although he honoured Sir Raymond's commands so far as to hold no communication with the detested relatives, he failed to sympathise with the stern and vengeful feeling of pride. He shrugged his shoulders many a time in secret at his father's harsh speeches and loudly-declared contempt. His own creed was in unison with the spirit of Robbie Burns's famous song. He believed that, in spite of adventurous circumstances, "A man's a man for a' that." If Harry Bradwell could have healed the breach between the two brothers he would have done so.

The rays of the declining sun mounted higher on the narrow window-panes. The young man could stand his durance no longer.

"I'll go and have a couple of hours' stroll, anyhow," he soliloquised. "After that, perhaps I'll be in a mood for reading a dozen more pages."

He took his hat and walking-cane, and was soon out of Eton Row—journeying to meet Fate.

It was getting towards the height of the London season, and everywhere the streets were thronged by vehicles and pedestrians hurrying on varied errands of business or of pleasure—at this hour of the evening largely of the latter. Harry picked his way westward, and, wherever chance offered, selected on his route the less crowded thoroughfares. He was not specially enamoured of noise and bustle—few country-reared men or women are. He was crossing

the comparative solitude of a quiet and semi-retired square when shouts arose. A butcher's cart was rattling down a side-street at a terrific pace, the horse having evidently become unmanageable.

To Harry Bradwell there was no appreciable danger; he was young, and could easily spring out of the way, if the animal declined to pause in its mad career. But to others the peril was not more sudden than real. A feeble and elderly lady was tottering across the road as best she could, leaning heavily on a girl's arm. The pair were menaced by injury to limb, if not to life. There was not a moment to lose, and the girl put forth all her strength to drag her companion to a point of safety. But fear seemed to have palsied the uncertain steps of the elder, and she halted in the very centre of the roadway. Harry noted the awful risk of the situation, and rushed to the rescue. With a mighty effort, and just in the nick of time, he succeeded in gaining the pavement with the old lady in his arms, and then he began to apologise for any roughness he might have shown.

"It was not an occasion to stand on ceremony," he said.

"Certainly not. We are very greatly your debtors—both of us," answered the girl warmly, and her eyes conveyed even more fervent thanks than her words.

The elder lady was too agitated to find ready speech for her gratitude, but she inclined her head and murmured "Yes, yes!" by way of corroboration of her companion's utterance.

"You are very welcome to any slight service I may have been able to render; I am glad to have been of use in the world for once," said Harry with a smile.

Unconsciously his glance rested with admiration on the maiden's flushed face. Gradually the idea was occurring to him that he had seldom or never before seen a countenance so sweet and lovely. Tried by the canons of a strict taste, and with the remembrance of accepted classical models, the girl's features were perhaps not exactly to be termed beautiful, and yet there was a potent charm about them. In their very irregularities they were piquant and winsome, and their expression was one which insensibly bespoke sympathy and trust. There are faces which strike the most callous observer as being the mirrors of pure and loving souls, and to this order belonged that of Harry Bradwell's new acquaintance.

In form the maiden was slight and sylph-like, with, surely, the very poetry of motion revealing itself in her simplest gesture. She had an exquisitely clear complexion, eyes of dreamy hazel, which just now were flashing like twin jewels in their excitement and thankfulness, and a wealth of rippling auburn hair that deepened into gold in the shadows of her dainty hat and tossing ribbons. In age she was probably not more than twenty, if as much.

The contrast between herself and the lady she was supporting was one between May and November.

A sudden impulse came to Harry as in the moment's pause he noted these things.

"As it is, I am afraid that you have both suffered a considerable shock," he said. "Unfortunately no one could have been in time to prevent that. If you have far to go, will you permit me to call a cab?"

"Oh, I think aunt and I will be able to manage, thank you. Our home is just in the next street—No. 90, Frome Road. You can walk, can you not, aunt?"

"I will try, Agnes," the old lady answered feebly.

"At any rate, you will not object to my escort for that distance?" Harry said again.

"You are very good," the girl replied simply.

Frome Road was a quiet, retiring thoroughfare, with its prim, stuccoed houses all of a pattern, and apparently requiring the assistance of their faded bronze numerals for mutual identification as well as for the assistance of the postman and stray callers.

No. 90, in Harry Bradwell's opinion, was reached all too quickly. By the way, an informal introduction had taken place, and Harry was now in a position to give point and shape to his conversation by the employment of the ladies' names. He could address the aunt as Mrs. Holby and the niece as Miss Fenton.

The syllables of "Fenton—Agnes Fenton" he took an absurd delight in mentally reiterating at least a dozen times. It was wasted trouble, for with a single flash they had been already stereotyped upon his memory.

"By your leave I will venture to call to-morrow and enquire concerning the consequences of your alarm, Mrs. Holby; I sincerely trust they will not be serious," he said, as the trio halted at the designated door. And again his gaze fell with a scarcely designed persistence on Agnes, and displayed a homage which he was powerless to conceal.

This time the carmine tide which mounted swiftly to the girl's temples was not simply the reaction from past terror. There was maidenly self-consciousness in it. She left her aunt to answer.

"Do not trouble in the least, Mr.—Mr. Bradwell," the lady replied. "I am quite uninjured, owing to your gallantry——"

Harry shook his head with a gentle deprecation of the renewed tribute.

"Anyone would have done the same," he interrupted.

"And I shall be quite well, I hope, after an hour or two's rest."

"I hope so too. But I shall wish to know, and so Miss Fenton and yourself must please endure a call."

"You will, of course, be welcome, Mr. Bradwell," answered Mrs. Holby with old-fashioned politeness.

### CHAPTER III.

HARRY called at No. 90, Frome Road, not once but many times. The acquaintanceship so strangely commenced proved an exceedingly agreeable one to both the young man and the maiden. It rapidly ripened into friendship, and before either was quite aware of it, had developed into love of the most enduring kind.

Mrs. Holby, it seemed, was Agnes Fenton's great-aunt, and had adopted the girl in very early years. Agnes was an orphan, never having known one parent, and having but vague recollections of the other. Personally she was penniless, and it was not probable that Mrs. Holby would be able to make her a very great heiress.

The relict of the deceased engineer had an income amply sufficient for her own wants, but not susceptible of much diversion into other channels, and such as it was it ceased at her death. The knowledge of this fact made Mrs. Holby the more ready to encourage a possible suitor for her niece, especially when that suitor had so many claims to be considered a man of influence and wealth. It is not every damsel of Agnes's birth and station who wins the heart of the heir to a title.

The matchmaking instinct, which is always more or less pronounced in a woman's breast, whether she be young or old, rich or poor, gentle or simple, aroused itself, and Mrs. Holby was straining every nerve to bring about her niece's triumph. There was one great difficulty in the way, and one great fear which oppressed her. There was a secret which, if it should be revealed before irrevocable words were uttered, might mar everything. Would Agnes listen to reason, and consent to keep it? Once actually betrothed, Mrs. Holby believed that Harry Bradwell was too honourable to retreat, however awkward the dilemma in which his decision might place him.

Merrily the young man drifted with the stream. His leisure hours were spent far more frequently with Agnes Fenton than in the company of his sister and Dr. Marshbury, and at last he awoke fully and distinctly to the conviction that he was a prisoner in love's net, that Agnes Fenton held his happiness in her keeping.

It must always be a crisis in a man's history when he can no longer blind himself to the truth that his dearest hopes and aspirations are at a woman's mercy, when for the first time he comes to understand that a "Yes" or "No," which a maiden's lips may lightly utter, and a maiden's mind as lightly forget, must inevitably shape and colour his entire future. He stands at the parting of the ways, and joy or misery, hope or despair, are in another's giving. It was thus with Harry Bradwell.

And the problem was undeniably a complicated one. If, in a sense, Harry was his own master, being of age, and working steadily towards a position in which he might reasonably hope to earn his own bread, it was yet impossible to leave his father out of his review of the situation. He was compelled to enter on a dreary series of calculations as to what Sir Raymond would think, and say, and do. Harry knew very little of Agnes Fenton's antecedents. He had hitherto been content to bask in the sunlight of her presence without pressing home enquiries which might have proved inconvenient. He believed that she was a lady, there was a native refinement about her every word and act which forbade him to think otherwise. But he understood also that she was poor. Mrs. Holby had been frank enough to make that plain.

The widow had a knack of reading character, and with shrewd penetration judged that this fact would be no barrier to the realisation of her hopes. She guessed that the candid acknowledgment might even arouse sympathy, and such had actually been the case. To the attainment of Sir Raymond's consent to a marriage, the girl's poverty would, however, inevitably prove an obstacle, and Harry grew grave as he faced the possibility of an open rupture between his father and himself. There had been one unpalatable, unforgiven marriage in the family before. Was he, Harry, destined to contract a second?

Long and seriously did the young man meditate, but whatever the dangers ahead, the current of his affection had set too strongly to be easily stemmed. If conflict with his father's will should follow, he could not help it. His heart had made its choice, and, he was convinced, had made it worthily. What were houses or lands, or even the parental favour, in comparison with the treasure of a true girl's love? He would put his fate to the test.

The opportunity soon came. It was a warm sunny afternoon,

and Harry had been daring enough to suggest a stroll in the open air.

"I want very particularly to have a quiet chat," he whispered. "Will you not oblige me with your confidence, Miss Fenton?"

Agnes coloured, and her foolish little heart insisted on fluttering to and fro like a bird in its cage. Yet mischief gleamed in her eyes as she replied demurely:

"I will listen, certainly, Mr. Bradwell; but if you wish to be so very quiet, would not our present apartment be preferable to the street, or even to the square yonder?" In a lower tone: "You may trust aunt, you know."

"I am sure I may. But still, Miss Fenton, I must, please, be firm to my first proposition. You will not refuse my petition?"

The sharp accent of doubt and fear which a keen and sympathetic ear could detect in the latter appeal touched the girl. She made no further demur.

"Very well, Mr. Bradwell—for an hour," she said.

Dressing in her own chamber, it was astonishing how nervous she was. Her fingers trembled so much that neither hat, nor gloves, nor light fleecy wrap could easily be adjusted. Her toilet occupied three times its usual number of minutes. A presentiment of the ordeal she was about to face had seized her. She was happy, fearful, hesitant, and annoyed with her own agitation at one and the same moment. At last she was ready, and descended into the drawing-room.

The conversation was most decorously commonplace until the open gate of the retired square was reached. Entering this, the subject which lay nearest Harry's heart was approached also.

"I fancy, somehow, that you have divined my purpose, Miss Fenton—Agnes," he began abruptly. "I wanted to tell you how much sunshine you have brought into my life, to thank you for it, and to ask—something else."

Very inconsequently and very inappropriately, as it seemed, Agnes interrupted him.

"Do you know that it almost seems, Mr. Bradwell, as if you and I were related," she murmured in strange, quivering, husky accents. "Has aunt never told you? Mrs. Francis Bradwell, of Croyle Farm, close to Hunstone, was my mother's sister. She is even nearer to me than Mrs. Holby, and I suppose she is your aunt also. But there has been a quarrel, has there not?"

If the green and brown vista opening so pleasantly between the dust-sprinkled trees had suddenly disclosed a veritable lion in the path, or if progress had been abruptly stayed by the grim outline of a barricade, Harry Bradwell could not have evinced greater dismay. His bewilderment and discomfiture for some seconds took away his breath. Slowly he recovered from the shock, and slowly he arrived at a comprehension of the full import of Agnes's statement. The girl he was wooing and had intended to win for his wife was closely connected, then, with that branch of his family against which his father's anger was so fierce and implacable. Poverty Sir Raymond might possibly—by prodigious effort—have been brought to overlook, but a relationship to Mrs. Francis Bradwell was unpardonable, and would infallibly place Agnes Fenton without the bounds of his charity. If Harry persevered with his suit he would have to reckon with his father's most determined hostility.

It was a trying time for the young man's more generous and enlightened principles. It was true that Sir Raymond could no more disinherit him than rob him of the succession to the title. The Hunstone Manor estate was strictly entailed. But many difficulties would have to be surmounted, and a long and arduous struggle loomed ahead if Harry remained firm to his first resolution, and declined to perpetuate the family quarrel. He wondered vaguely how it was that he had never heard of this awkward kinship before. He did not guess that it was the one fact which Mrs. Holby had most earnestly beought Agnes to keep in the background, and that it was in direct disobedience to her aunt's counsel and commands that the girl had now revealed it. Yet it was so. Agnes had recoiled from the idea of allowing her lover to walk blindfold into a maze of possible troubles and anxieties. He should know the whole truth. If then he cared sufficiently for her regard to resume his plea, she would not again interrupt him. Whatever the future might in that case bring forth, he would at least be unable to reproach her.

There was a long, harassing interval. Harry's brain was in a whirl, and he needed time to weigh these new and momentous considerations in the balances of his judgment against the vehement claims of passion. There was still an avenue of escape available, if he listened to the voice of prudence.

But at length he spoke, and there was neither cowardice nor hesitation in his tone.

"A dispute? Yes, there has been a dispute, of very ancient standing, and I have always been sorry for it," he said. "I have certainly no ill-will against my relatives at Croyle Farm. The information is a surprise to me, I must admit. But, Agnes, it can make no difference to my heart's need of your love. Can you give me

that, and so make the sunshine still brighter and more lasting? Will you some day be my wife, Agnes?"

Tears were in the maiden's eyes, but they were tears of joy at suspense happily ended. Her answer was but a faint monosyllabic murmur, but it sufficed. Love had conquered.

(To be continued.)

## Too Loving and Too True.

A HEART all hot with love, a mind aglow  
With vivid fancy, and a trust complete,  
She poured into her lover's bosom when he came;  
And he—just once he breathed her fragrance sweet,  
Then sated, turned away.

Like dust beneath his feet he trod her in the way;  
And still she let those cruel feet pass on,  
To ruin other lives in idle play,  
And felt that she was blest thus to be trodden on.

Like some pale hedgerow rose he gathered her,  
And twirled her in his fingers for awhile;  
Looked on her beauty; and her full reward  
Was in the careless sweetness of his smile.

Then, flung aside, a useless thing, she lay  
In life's dry dust; and all her petals sweet  
Grew brown; but she—she still rejoiced to die,  
Where once had fall'n the shadowing of his feet.

Is it the tale of a withered rose that the sobbing night-winds tell?  
Nay, but the fate of a little heart that loved too sadly well,  
That never drained the cup of joy, her eager lips once tasted!  
So often love is languished for! so often love is wasted!

## The Little Brown Door.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE brown door—an odd thing to exercise a fascination over anyone, and yet it had fascinated me, and I could not give over watching it as I sat by my window, day after day, bound to my couch by a sprained ankle. A little brown door in the side of a small house, giving into a good-sized garden, bright with flowers and sunshine, pleasant with shady spots under old fruit-trees, or by great lilacs and hawthorns. Such a tempting garden—and yet no one ever walked in it, and the gay blossoms must have withered and died save for the gentle showers that came but rarely. I welcomed a cloud in the blue sky for the sake of the neglected flowers, and I watched to see the little brown door open with an odd curiosity that was almost anxiety.

It struck me that the people who lived in the house—and it was clear by the neatly-curtained windows that it had inhabitants—must be very strange creatures never to come out into the garden. If the sunshine was too strong for them, there was the twilight, or even the night—very pretty it looked when the moon was shining, and if there were only stars in the heavens it would be very soothing to a sad heart to walk in the soft darkness amidst summer fragrance.

I longed to walk in it as I lay looking at it far into the night, being very loth to go to bed, I slept so little; it seemed such a pity that no one should enjoy its beauty and quietness when there were toiling millions needing the refreshment it could afford to their wearied bodies and jaded spirits.

Some weeks previously I had taken a distaste to housekeeping; it had become to me a toil and an abomination, as needing a vigilance and forethought out of all proportion to the result gained, for I am a childless widow. And I am fain to confess that I took a distaste to my friends also; their voices sounded harsh in my ears, and all they said seemed but repetitions of what they had said many times before, and their faces seemed to me to wear always the same stereotyped smile, and their manners seemed to have lost all originality and spontaneity, until they themselves were little better than speaking automata.

Yet some were learned, some wise, some bewitching, and all good and kind, so clearly the fault was in myself. I consulted my doctor.

"You are hipped," he said. "You must have complete change. Try Norway."

I went home determined to follow his advice; but I would not try Norway. I would have a greater change. I remembered having

noticed a certain lane in a certain village, with a house with a bill in a window of "Lodgings to Let." If rooms were to be had, I would go there.

I enquired. Rooms were vacant, and could be retained for me. I let my house furnished for a term; I dismissed my servants for a long holiday, and came down to the little village, quite free, and my own mistress absolutely. I rejoiced in my immunity from all social ties, restrictions, and boredom, and was thoroughly prepared to enjoy myself after a fashion of my own, for the brisk business I had transacted had shaken me into good health and cheerfulness.

The morning after my arrival I went out to luxuriate in the green fields, the trees, the blue sky, the birds, the bees, the butterflies, and even the moles and the ants, if I could descry them. I had read the works of Richard Jefferies, and I flattered myself was about to study Nature with an enlightened mind and educated eye. I went down shady lanes, and by a brook that would not babble or ripple, as a kindly brook should do, but flowed evenly and silently, not to say sluggishly. Still, I saw more beautiful and interesting things than in former rambles, and I thought pleasantly that my mind must really be intelligent and appreciative.

I entered a field; I kept by the hedge to observe the strange creatures it sheltered. I was going uphill, and the path was a little rugged. I looked away from the hedge and observed a cow gazing fixedly at me. I remembered that years ago my father had said to me, "Nellie, that cow wants to speak to you," and forthwith the animal had rushed at me, and was with difficulty frightened away by the umbrellas and shouts of my friends.

Now this cow was looking at me, and soon it moved towards me. I ran away downhill at my greatest speed. I was almost at the stile. I could hear the animal's heavy tread. I urged myself to greater swiftness. I stumbled through the unevenness of the ground and fell. I glanced round in despair, expecting to see the great eyes and terrible horns close to me, but a tuft of clover had attracted the attention of my enemy, and she was placidly munching it, and when she had finished she walked quietly away to the other side of the field.

I could not rise, my ankle was sprained, and I sat under the shelter of my great holland sunshade for two hours. I had coveted solitude, I had wanted to be alone with Nature. I had not met a human being since leaving my lodging. I had clearly made a wise choice in my selection of a locality, but I was not contented. I did not like sitting in the corner of a field with a cow for compulsory society, and was beginning to think that a place might be too solitary when my listening ears were gladdened by the sound of wheels.

I flourished my sunshade as high as I could, and called out: "Help, help!"

A vehicle drew up at the stile, and a powerful man came to me. He helped me to rise, lifted me over the stile, and then into his cart, and took me home, and upstairs, and for more than a fortnight I had been upon the couch, looking out at the garden opposite, and watching for the opening of the little brown door.

Next day when my landlady came up to enquire what I could fancy for dinner, I asked her who lived opposite.

A certain primness came over her as she said:

"A young woman—leastways, perhaps I should say a young lady—and a servant, ma'am."

"Nobody else?"

"Well, I believe there is a nurse-girl, and, I have heard, a child, but I don't know of myself. I keep myself to myself, and don't make friends with strangers."

"Have they been here long?"

"Nigh upon ten months."

"And the poor young thing is a widow?"

"I did not say so, ma'am," and her aspect increased in severity.

"She has friends to visit her, I hope?" I said.

"If so be, they come from afar. No one hereabouts cares to know her."

"I do," I said, wishing to startle my very virtuous landlady, for I knew the world too well not to read her suspicions.

"The gentry are free to pick and choose their friends," she said in a conciliatory manner, "humble folk need be more careful."

"But you know nothing really against her."

"No; but one must go by the looks of things."

And the conversation dropped.

My interest in the opening of the little brown door was increased. I wanted to see the mother and child. I knew she was young and pretty, and I thought she was sad, and my only chance of seeing her to know it was she, was when she went into the garden, for I could see nothing of the cottage—which stood some distance to the left—but the cherry-tree covered end in which was the little brown door; other trees intercepted my farther view.

At last my patient watching was rewarded, the door was drawn back, and I could see into the dimness of a little passage. Presently

a straight, slim girl came and stood in the sunlight; she looked all round, and up at the sky—it was blue and cloudless—came a little farther into the garden, and stood as if testing the degree of heat, then went in. Shortly after a little procession came out of the narrow doorway. A middle-aged woman carrying a garden-chair, a little maid with a shawl and big umbrella, which she put up at once, then the mother, holding a child in her arms. She it was who had first come forth to reconnoitre, and see if Nature was in a fitting mood for the presence of her darling.

The chair was placed in deep shadow, the mother sat down, but rose quickly; she found the place too cold, I thought. Next she was stationed in the full sunshine; again she moved away, and finally settled where the sun shone through sparser foliage, and made a brilliancy of ever-changing pattern upon the grass. The child saw it and would get down to pick up the brightness that was gone ere his little hand could reach it. The little group were in a flutter of delight, and the boy was the centre of this interest and admiration. The mother led the infant, but he would get away from her, and then he ran sturdily after a butterfly. They then raised their hands in an enthusiasm of joy, and I saw that they were congratulating each other, and I understood that the child had been ill, and they were rejoicing at his renewed strength. And as the mother stood watching him I saw pride and joy in the pose of her erect figure, and, as she gazed upwards, I believed that she was making thanksgiving for his recovery. Then she ran after the boy, caught him in her arms, and kissed him; maid and servant did the same. Then she played about with him as joyously as himself, the little nurse sometimes joining in, the elder woman looking on with pleased approval.

I was enchanted; the scene was idyllic; love, joy, gratitude showing themselves in the simplest fashion. I was glad when the child was contumacious and would not go indoors, and bread-and-milk was brought to him, and he took his meal like a little king with gratified courtiers watching him. Then there was more play, and finally the mother carried her boy in, his little arms full of flowers, the others followed, and once more the little brown door was closed and the garden empty.

The next day, as soon as the noontide sun passed, and there was shade in the garden, mother and child were out again—she watching him and fearing to let him be in the sunshine; but the third afternoon she brought her book and sat quietly under a tree enjoying it, so I knew that she considered the child quite well and could trust him to the care of the nurse-girl.

One day I was watching the little fellow toddle about, when I observed him dart off towards the house at his quickest pace, with hands raised in delight. I followed his glance and saw standing in the doorway a tall, fair man. The sun shone upon him, and his hair and beard looked reddish-gold. This circumstance and something in his handsome presence touched some memory and made me think that I must know him, although I could not recollect who he was. Then I saw the young mother in his arms, his golden head bending over her brown one, and the child clinging to his legs, and I looked no more, although I felt that they could hardly grudge me the pleasure of witnessing their happiness.

Later I looked again; they were walking about the garden, he carrying the boy. That evening and several more the sound of laughter floated into my silent room, and I, the lonely watcher, shared in their mirth and joyousness.

"The husband is come home," I said to my landlady.

"Yes," she answered with her air of distrust, "he comes too seldom. A husband who is three times as much from home as in it, is not to my taste."

Her prejudice irritated me, but I knew the uselessness of opposing it.

"Can you tell me his name?" I asked.

"I have heard it is Elliott," she said as if under protest.

The name carried no information for me. The Elliotts are many, yet I could not call to mind that I had ever known one. Only some chance resemblance, I thought, but I wished that the tall handsome man had been an old acquaintance.

There is one evening that I shall never forget, though it was only made memorable by subsequent events. The sky was cloudless, the sunshine brilliant, and a soft breeze blew direct into my room, causing me to hear all external sounds with unusual distinctness. I watched my neighbours playing with their boy. I noticed what a personable pair they were, and I wished I was grandmother to the child. There was more frolic and fun than ever, and I rejoiced, for I had taken them all to my empty heart, and was glad in their gladness. But as the laughter sounded loud in my ears I missed its old mirthful ring, it was so full of excitement as to border on discordance. It struck me that they were trying, perhaps involuntarily, to ward off care by excess of merriment. And I saw them take to walking about soberly, the father carrying the boy, as on the first evening of his coming, with a sense of satisfaction.



## CHAPTER II.

THE next day there were only two dejected figures moving about the garden, and once I saw mother and child crying together as she sat caressing him under the big apple-tree. Then the maid came out, and mother and nurse made pretence of a merry game to cheer the child, and I knew that the father was gone away, and I grieved that there should be need of such partings.

Time passed; my ankle was quite recovered. I took to walking again, determined to keep far away from a cow. When I was about near my lodgings, I always looked out for my pretty neighbour, and once I met her with child and nurse. I spoke to the child and herself, but she was reserved, or I was awkward, for I failed to make any way towards acquaintance, but I told her that I could see into her garden, and took pleasure in watching her boy, and afterwards I often observed her looking up at my window, and later she would make the child kiss his fingers to me.

More than a month after Mr. Elliott's visit, the little maid came in to ask me to go over at once, for mistress was frightened, baby was so strange. Strangers as they were, they had become, through my constant interest in them, so much parts of my life, that it seemed most natural for me to be asked to do something for them. I found the mother bending over the boy, who was insensible.

"We will put him in a bath," I said, "and send for the doctor."

"There is no one but nurse in the house, but I can get the water." And she did, calmly and quietly following out my directions, and the boy was sitting up smiling at her when the girl returned with the doctor.

"He will do," said the medical man, "probably a fit of indigestion—no need for anxiety," and he went away.

Mrs. Elliott thanked me very gratefully. I noticed that she had grown thin and careworn, and I felt anxious about the absence of the elderly servant. Was she unable to keep her from poverty? Money was not of consequence to me, I had plenty of it, and I began thinking at once how I could force a loan upon her.

"Your cook has not left you, I hope?"

"Oh no, she will be back to-morrow, I hope;" and she turned so white that I knew that there was something amiss, but did not see my way to ascertain what it was.

"I shall look in to see how the little darling is, the last thing," I said, and then went home to ponder on many subjects connected with my interesting young mother.

Just before sunset I went over to the cottage, and found baby sleeping quietly, apparently as well as ever. I asked Mrs. Elliott to walk with me in her garden, saying that I had long wished to explore its beauties. I admired some especially fine flowers, and then turning to her I said abruptly:

"It grieves me to see you so sad and careworn, so changed; tell me your trouble. I am an old woman, and have seen much sorrow, so perhaps can help you out of it."

She looked at me with such wonderful pathos, that I could scarcely refrain from taking her in my arms. Then the tears gathered in her great eyes, and she said with a sob:

"I shall be so glad if you do not mind." I drew my arm within her. "I am so frightened," she continued; "I have not heard from my husband since he left me, and he always writes every week."

"My poor child! can you not write to his parents or friends for news of him?"

"He has only a mother, and she does not know of me; but I have sent my servant to find out what has happened. He was going home when he left me."

"A secret marriage," I said, and then she told me the sorrowful story.

She was the daughter of a curate of a country parish. She first met Mr. Elliott when he was on a walking tour with a friend. The following year he came by himself, and took lodgings in the town, saying that it was an excellent place for reading, it was so quiet, and offered so few distractions. He continued his acquaintance with the curate, and was soon in love with the girl, who returned his affection. Her father sanctioned an engagement. He then took some malady and was soon ill unto death, when Mr. Elliott proposed to marry his daughter at once, to which he consented, being terribly anxious about her future, as he was a widower, and had no relations to whose care she could be confided.

It was a mournful wedding. The two went back to the dying man as soon as it was over, and stayed with him until the last. Then Mr. Elliott took his bride to a village within reasonable distance of the university. And she did not mind the loneliness and isolation of her life, because he came to see her occasionally. At the time of the marriage Mr. Elliott was only a few months over twenty-one, and his mother was still absolute mistress in the home that was then his by inheritance. He was loth to tell her of his marriage; he wanted to tell of it with great tact and delicacy; he wanted to lead up to the idea of his taking a wife, so that the fact of his having done so might not come upon her as a great shock. Three years he had been trying to do this, and Ruth waited patiently;

now that she had a boy she did not mind how long she waited, she told me with pretty impressiveness, but I minded, and I thought that here was a wrong that I might be able to right. She told me that his mother was a great lady, famous for her beauty and her wit, and that she was afraid she would be very angry with Alfred for marrying without her sanction. I asked this lady's maiden-name, and found that it had been Percy—Arabella Percy. Instantly the impression that I had seen Mr. Elliott before was accounted for. Arabella Percy, the beautiful, the imperious, had been a very dear friend of my own before I started with my husband on his long foreign service. When I returned to England I heard that she was married, but not to whom, and we had not seen each other for twenty-five years.

"I feel better," Ruth said when she had ended her little tale. "I have never told anyone—indeed, I have scarcely spoken to a lady since I have been married. People seem shy of me because my husband is not always with me, I suppose."

Then she spoke again of her fears and her longing for the morrow to know if he was very ill. I tried to soothe her, but she was full of apprehension, so I promised to be with her the next day, and consult with her on what was best to be done in the emergency which might arise.

I was so sorry for her sad position, and she was so sweet and docile, so willing to be advised, and so grateful for sympathy, that my heart was filled with tenderness for her, and I wished I could do her a real service.

I was walking with Ruth in the garden, when the servant came to tell her news. She was a strong, healthy woman, but her face was deadly white, and I could see her hands tremble as she stood before her mistress and said:

"I found the place, ma'am."

"And he was ill?" exclaimed Ruth.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Did you see him?"

"No, ma'am."

"Ah, you were very discreet. You got my letter to him, and have brought me his answer?"

"I could not get to the house," and the woman wrung her hands.

"I would not cause him a moment's trouble for worlds. You were right to keep away; but you managed to hear what is the matter, and how he is getting on? He is better?" And she looked up with imploring eyes into the woman's face.

The poor creature burst into tears.

"Is he so very bad? Oh, I must see him," she cried in great anguish.

"Here, take baby; he is getting frightened at your sad looks," I said, putting him into her arms with a roughness that set him crying. "I will question cook; she seems a bit dazed."

I pushed her down into the seat near, led the woman aside, and soon learned the terrible truth.

Mr. Elliott had been killed in a railway accident on his way home, and had been buried many weeks, and his name was upon the great monument over the family vault. It was reported in the village that his mother was nearly mad with grief, and that the estate would go to a very distant kinsman, whom nobody about the place had ever seen.

As carefully and kindly as I could, I told the awful news to the poor young widow. I was almost afraid that she would lose her reason, she was so utterly despairing. She had neither sight nor hearing for her boy, although his pitiful grief at her changed appearance was enough to melt a heart of stone. I sent him away to be amused and comforted, and I watched with her until morning, when she fell into the heavy sleep of exhaustion.

When I returned to her, the child was in her lap, her tears falling on his golden head.

"He would wish me to think of him," she said softly.

"Assuredly his child must be your first thought," I answered, kissing her. "He will grow up just like his father."

"You think so?" she said, with a brightening of her sad face.

"I am sure of it."

"And you will help me to get him his rights? He would wish it, I know; he has often talked of the fine estate that would belong to the little beggar, as he sometimes called him." And fast the tears fell on the little face that looked wonderingly up into hers.

"He is his father's heir, and shall have all that belongs to him; I will see to that." And I wiped away the tears from the little face, tremulous with vague misery. "But the first thing is to get proper mourning for you."

She shivered. I kissed her and gave my watch to the child to console him.

"It must be," I added. "You would wish to pay him every respect?"

"Yes, yes. Heaven bless you! I wish he knew that I had such a friend, he would be so glad."

"Perhaps he does know," I whispered.

She continued :

"He was always so sorry that I had no friends, but said that it should be made up to me in the future a hundredfold. And he is dead."

I knew those last words meant that there was an end of all things for her, and their simple pathos went to my heart. I felt the absolute futility of all attempts at consolation in such bitter grief as hers, and giving her one kiss of sympathy I busied myself with the child.

Presently he came from her lap to mine, and she did not miss him; the joy and glory of her life had departed, and all lesser things might pass from her, and she would scarcely be conscious of their loss. So young, and yet borne down by such terrible affliction, would the burden be more than she could bear? I wondered. And I clasped the child closer in my arms, thinking that then he should be to me as my own, my cherished little grandson. And then I remembered his real grandmother.

I walked about with the boy in the garden, then gave him to his nurse, and went to his mother. She was still in the same position. When I went close to her, she lifted her despairing eyes, and said :

"I will try to be calmer to-morrow."

"Yes, yes," I answered ; "and I may get the things? You will let me act as if I were your mother."

"Do what you will," she said, and her thoughts went back to her dead husband, and there I let them rest, for I was awed by the solemnity of her grief.

### CHAPTER III.

I GOT mourning suitable for Alfred Elliott's widow; she did not notice its richness. I put the cap on the fair young head myself, it gave dignity to the sad face and slim figure. I was proud of the beautiful young widow, and I thought that her despairing mournfulness would plead eloquently with her late husband's mother by showing how deep had been her love for the son. I was always planning how to bring these two women together. Each had need of the other, and yet it would be easy to raise a barrier between them which should be well-nigh insurmountable. If the dowager Mrs. Elliott once declared that Ruth was not her son's wife, she would work hard to prove her words true.

She had been arrogant, domineering, and of strong will as Arabella Percy, and it was not reasonable to suppose that years of wealth, and of absolute rule over a minor and his estate, had made her more humble in mind or less confident of the infallibility of her own judgment.

I pondered the subject anxiously, prayerfully. I was bound to bring forward the claims of the infant and his mother, and I sought to do so in the way that should be least harmful. Every mode I thought of held dangers, covert sometimes, but real. Mrs. Elliott was like a fortress that must be assailed and conquered at once; there must be no parley or delay, or we should be repulsed with direful result. This I realised fully, and I decided on a proceeding that may seem foolish and unwarrantable, but I looked at it all round and I believed it to be the best I could do, and I hold that we must do what seems to us best, and leave the issue with Providence.

Ruth sorrowed only, and took no thought of anything, and was as wax in my hands. She never alluded to her boy's interests again. When I told her that I should take them all to a small town within some miles of her husband's estate the following day, she said simply, "Yes," and her tears fell faster.

We slept one night in the little town. I had some conversation with the landlord about the railway accident, which was still of recent memory, and heard of the death of young Squire Elliott, and the grief of his mother, and that she was a mighty high lady, and still at the Hall.

The next morning two handsome carriages drove out of the little town. Child and nurse in the first, the mother and myself in the second.

Ruth was quite passive. I think she was so absorbed in her grief as to be incapable of nervousness or excitement. I tried to cheer her, and the one thing she said was :

"If she would take the child, and let me go to him!"

Within a mile of the park-gates, I got into the first carriage and sent child and nurse to Ruth.

As I neared the house I felt very nervous, but I told myself that I was doing my best, and must not be faint-hearted.

Mrs. Elliott was at home. I sent in my card with my maiden-name written beneath the other. In a few minutes we met, after twenty-five years' separation. She was the same handsome, haughty woman, and I should have known her anywhere. There was no grey in her golden hair; but I saw traces of deep suffering in her face.

"I am glad to see you," she said, extending her hand with the stately graciousness I knew of old,

"I have been away from England many years," I answered, "and it is only lately that I heard where you were living."

"I have often wished we might meet again. We were good friends in the old time."

"I hope we shall be good friends again. Oh, I am so grieved for your loss!" and my eyes were full of tears. Hers were dry as she answered :

"The joy of my life is gone. I sit in solitude and desolation; he was my only one, and so noble and beautiful. I wish you could have seen him."

"I have seen him," I answered.

"You, Nellie! But, of course, he was much about in the world. And you liked him? He was handsome, and good, and clever—a son to be proud of and idolise."

"He was all these things, and more, and even to have had him for your son is an honour and a blessing. I envy you—I have never had a child."

"Poor thing! it is a great privation to be childless."

"I have adopted one," I replied, "a fair sweet girl, fit to be a duchess; her name is Ruth."

"You did well, you were always wise; but you saw my son often?"

"No; but I saw him before he started on his last visit to you. And I admired and respected him; but I did not then know that he was your child. I had never heard your married name, but Alfred Elliott was more than a good son, he was a good husband and a good father." I heard a gasping sob. She was standing grasping the back of a chair. I continued: "He was coming to tell you all, and obtain your forgiveness for his secrecy, when the terrible calamity overtook him, and he passed away, silent and unforgiven."

"What!" she cried; "he deceived me, my honest, frank boy!"

"His generous love hurried him into a marriage, and then he waited too long in breaking it to you; he disliked to do anything to change the even tenor of your lives."

"Oh, that he had spoken!" she moaned.

"He would have done so if he had lived an hour longer. Do not be hard upon him."

"I hard upon my own child? You do not know what you are saying. I hard upon him! I dare say he was right; the matter only needed explanation."

"Nothing more. Then you two would have understood each other, and been happier than ever, and been proud of his boy."

"His boy!"

"Himself over again, with the same golden hair and loving eyes; the sweetest child that lives."

"And his wife?"

"My adopted child, Ruth, sweet and tractable, but so deep in despair at the loss of her husband that I fear she will die too, and leave the dear boy an orphan indeed. I would gladly love and cherish him if I had the right."

"But you have not; it is mine. The love and the cherishing must be mine. The guidance and protection all mine. I am his rightful guardian."

There was intense haughtiness in her voice and manner. My heart resented it, yet I was glad, and answered gently:

"I know that is so, and that is why I have brought him to your knowledge."

"Thank you. And understand I am not angered with my son. I do not doubt he had good reason for what he did, and that a word of his would have made that reason clear. It can never be spoken, but I trust him. I would not have the world think there was ever division between him and me, in life, or in death. I trust him."

"You do well," I said, and I admired her proud endeavour to crush down and hide her bitter suffering at her son's deception, and to maintain her perfect belief in his goodness and wisdom.

"Where are my grandson and his mother?"

"Very near; I will bring them to you."

"You are still the old kind Nellie, but a little vague," and she smiled at me. "How soon?"

"In ten minutes," I replied.

As soon as the hall-door was opened I waved my hand, and my coachman drove on, and then another carriage moved out of the shadow of trees at this prearranged signal, and came towards the house. When it stopped at the steps I went down, and told my darling that she and her boy were acknowledged.

There was joy in her face for a moment, and she pressed my hand gratefully, but the deep melancholy was back at once, and she looked faint with grief as I led her up the steps, holding her boy by the hand.

As we entered the hall I observed that servants were drawn up in a line on either side, and before we had advanced many steps Mrs. Elliott, with most gracious dignity of mien, and saying, "Welcome to your home, dearest Ruth," put her arms round the girl and kissed her,

Then stooping she said, "Welcome to your own, my darling," and lifting the child, kissed him passionately. Then showing him to the servants she said: "This is the new squire, your late master's son. You have not heard of him, but my son and I always understood each other. Come near and speak to him."

An old woman, the nurse of the child's father, in obedience to a sign from her mistress, came first and kissed him. All came in turn, men and women; some of the women kissed his cheek or his hand, the men put a finger or two in his little palm, and "He is the image of the master;" "Surely he'll be a blessing to you;" "I'm glad the old line will last;" and other sayings of a like nature were uttered by all.

The child was amused, and smiled at every face as it looked at him and passed on. He sat erect on his grandmother's arm, and she held him proudly, as if he were a baby prince receiving the homage of his vassals.

Ruth watched him with dilated eyes; once I fancied that there was a gleam of triumph in them, for that her boy had his rightful place as his father's son, and wore his honours royally. As the last servant turned from the child her slight form swayed, and would have fallen, save for the old nurse, who caught her in her arms.

She was carried to Mrs. Elliott's room, while the grandest chamber of the house was made ready for her. She was the widow of the dead son, and mother of the living grandson, and was honoured accordingly.

I stayed at the Hall until my adopted child had attained a more resigned frame of mind, and then I went back to my home and my friends well pleased with my holiday. I left a peaceful household behind me, and I knew that it would be a very happy one as soon as time had dimmed its memory of the great bereavement, for Mrs. Elliott liked to manage and govern all things and all people, and Ruth wished to do nothing but love her boy, and admire and reverence his grandmother.

## The Thrush.

THE brown bird came where his nest had been,  
When the skies were bright and the leaves were green;  
He came where the bare boughs aaway in the cold,  
And his mate lay dead on the black wet mould.  
Through the sunless air the frost had stilled  
The wailing note of his melody thrilled,  
As the sense of solitude, loss, and wrong  
Broke in the flood of his passionate song.

He sang as of erst beside his nest,  
To charm the ear that he loved the best,  
In a sad and strange delight he sang,  
Till his call through the desolate woodland rang;  
Fuller and sweeter swelled the note  
From the breaking heart and the quivering throat,  
Till in the dreadful unanswering hush,  
Silent and dead lay the lonely thrush.

So many a human singer will come  
Where the hearth is cold and the hope is dumb,  
And wake the notes that the dead loved well,  
With a bitter joy in the old sweet swell;  
Just so much the better than brutes we are,  
We can catch an echo though faint and far;  
As faith and memory breathe from the skies,  
"The love that united us never dies."

## The Editor's Note Book.

IT was fortunate for the Government that they were induced to take measures for active intervention in the Soudan before the division on the proposed vote of censure. There can be no doubt that the speeches of Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen accurately reflected the opinions of a considerable number of Liberals, and that the past conduct of the Government has only been condoned by many of their habitual supporters in consequence of the hope that they mean to do better in the future.

ANOTHER circumstance which tends greatly to maintain Mr. Gladstone in power is the fact that the House did not, and is not likely to, see its way to giving Lord Salisbury what Mr. Goschen happily called a "political blank cheque." So it is more than probable that the Conservative party will have to wander aimlessly about in the cold shade of Opposition, as sheep without a shepherd, for at least the life of the present Parliament.

THE majority against the vote was smaller than that by which Mr. Gladstone is usually supported, but the Parnellites voted almost "solid" against the Liberals—as they would probably have voted against the Conservatives if Sir Stafford Northcote had been sitting on the right instead of on the left of the Speaker—so that the Government was, as a matter of fact, almost as strong as ever.

MR. MARRIOTT had the courage of his opinions in a greater degree than other weak-kneed Liberals who were of his way of thinking, but nevertheless went into the division lobby with Mr. Gladstone. Not only did he speak and vote against the Government, but next day resigned his seat in order to see at once what view the Brighton electorate takes of the situation.

NATURALLY enough he has been indignantly thrown over by the Liberal party in the borough, and can only hope to be re-elected by the Conservatives, assisted by such members of the Whig branch of the Liberal party as may be induced by the secrecy of the ballot to vote as they feel inclined, rather than as they are told. The result seems to be very doubtful, but the Liberals have secured a strong candidate in Mr. Robert Romer, Q.C., a senior wrangler, and one of the leaders of the Chancery Bar. Mr. Romer was educated at Trinity Hall, to which college Sir Charles Dilke and Professor Fawcett also belong.

GENERAL GORDON'S Slave-Trade proclamation, on which it is hardly fair to comment unfavourably until the full reasons for its issue have been given, will assuredly cause a good deal of trouble, but, if he with his diplomacy, and General Graham with his troops, are only successful in settling matters in the Soudan, public discontent at home will probably be very soon dissipated in words.

CERTAINLY our proceedings must "astonish the natives" not a little. In one part of the country our representative proclaims emphatically that he comes without troops and without arms to deliver the people from the Egyptians, and elsewhere we are under the painful necessity of calling the people rebels, and of marching out against them, for the protection of those same Egyptians, with soldiers, and cannon, and all the rest of it. But so long as everybody votes with his party at Westminster, all is presumably for the best.

STILL, it is an astonishing circumstance, and one which must be altogether inexplicable to our friends on the Continent, that England, who has been for so many years, and at so tremendous a cost, committed to the abolition of slavery, should find herself compelled, not only to temporise with but absolutely to enter into an alliance with slaveholders. Events, after all, are more the masters than the servants of the nations as they are of individuals.

No doubt the Speaker was right the other day in his ruling on a point of order which arose in the course of a speech of Mr. Healy's, but if the honourable gentleman is not out of order when he called Lord Rossmore "a bigoted and malevolent young puppy," it becomes curious matter for speculation to consider what sort of language would be so unparliamentary as to evoke the Speaker's reprobation.

THE Liverpool murders afford ghastly evidence that wholesale poisoning for the sake of insurance-money is as rife as ever, and that the value which the lower orders of the community place upon human life is not very much higher than that which obtains in China. It is impossible to suppose that a little more care on the part of the insurance offices would not go far to make the crime so dangerous as to be unremunerative.

A MOVEMENT has been set on foot for the preservation of the Alexandra Park to the public, and London is growing so rapidly northward, that it is earnestly to be hoped that the attempt may be successful. Between the Park and Highgate there are still some pretty fields, and a charming bit of old Hornsey Wood. If these could also be preserved it would be all the better, but I am afraid that this is too much to hope for.

LIEUTENANT WAGHORN, the founder of the overland route to India, died some years ago, a disappointed and unappreciated man, leaving relatives who were dependent upon him, in a state of poverty which was scarcely even mitigated by a grateful country. It is now proposed to erect a monument to his memory at a cost of from two to three thousand pounds. A little seasonable bread would have been more useful than all this stone.

CRITICS should never lose sight of the fact that people attach widely different meanings to words, and that there are all sorts of

ways of looking at things. Thus, Miss Smith, governess, who brought an action against her employer, deposed that she had been most shamefully treated by that lady's children, in that they went so far as to put sugar on her bread and butter. If this was all the lady had to complain of, it would seem that she was almost too sensitive. The case was otherwise remarkable for the brilliantly humorous manner in which it was treated by Mr. Baron Pollock.

THE editor of *Truth* professes to feel much sympathy with poor Miss Fortescue, but certainly has an odd way of showing it. Last week, for instance, he published a number of stories to the lady's detriment, remarking that he did not believe they were true, but was afraid that a good many people might accept them as facts. On the face of them they were preposterous fabrications, and it seems a singular sort of kindness to have published them at all.

It always seems to me to be a contradiction in terms to speak of such productions as "Paw Clawdian" as good-humoured, and genial, and not calculated to hurt anybody's feelings, and so on. People do not appreciate being laughed at, however much, like the Marchioness with the orange peel, they may "make believe," and to point out the absurd and the ludicrous, and nothing but the absurd and the ludicrous, in one's neighbours is not always an infallible sign of a genial or kindly nature.

Of course it may be said that in concocting a parody of "Claudian," Mr. Burnand was no more obliged to show any regard or consideration for the feelings of Mr. Wilson Barrett or Miss Eastlake, Mr. Wills or Mr. Herman, than he was called upon, when he turned "The Tempest" into a Gaiety burlesque, to trouble himself with any feeling of respect or reverence for Shakespeare, and perhaps this is true. But then, if it is all so good-natured, why should Mr. George Sims and Mr. Henry Jones come in for a sneer in "Paw Clawdian," seeing that they have no connection at all with Mr. Wilson Barrett's latest success, except that they also have had plays produced at the Princess's?

THE fact is that burlesque, or parody, or travestie, or whatever it may be called, is, and has been in all ages, so highly appreciated by the public—always ready to laugh, if it is amused, without the slightest reference to the possible annoyance or mortification of the unfortunates who are held up to ridicule, and who, if they suffer, can only grin and bear it as best they may—that it is useless at this time of day to attempt to protest against it, and that it must be accepted like other developments of the drama.

BUT it is a form of dramatic cookery which is always popular in proportion to the quantities of spice and pepper which are put into it, though where the kindness and good-humour of the cook come in, I must confess I altogether fail to see.

As for "Paw Clawdian" itself, Mr. Burnand has fitted it with some of his most excruciating "side-splitters," and has made adroit use of those portions of the original which lend themselves most readily to burlesque, but the travestie really has to rely on the imitations which are given of the Princess's company, and naturally enough "Paw Clawdian" becomes rather tedious before he has finished his career.

MR. TOOLE (with a capital song), Miss Marie Linden, Mr. George Shelton and Mr. W. Brunton are as good as they possibly can be, and Mr. E. D. Ward delivers his curse with much humorous impressiveness and sings a comic song quite unusually well. I am bound to say that on the night of my visit the great majority of the audience were far more amused by the performance than I was, and that there is every prospect of a long and prosperous career for the piece. C. D.

## Charm of Flowers.

FLOWERS seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity; children love them; quiet, tender, contented ordinary people love them as they grow; luxurious and disorderly people rejoice in them gathered. They are the cottager's treasure; and in the crowded town, mark, as with a little broken fragment of rainbow, the windows of the workers in whose heart rests the covenant of peace. Passionate or religious minds contemplate them with fond feverish intensity; the affection is seen severely calm in the works of many old religious painters, and mixed with more open and true country sentiment in those of our own pre-Raphaelites. To the child and the girl, the peasant and the manufacturing operative, to the grisette and the nun, the lover and monk, they are precious always. But to the men of supreme power and thoughtfulness, precious only at times; symbolically and pathetically often to the poets, but rarely for their own sakes. They fall forgotten from the great workman's and soldier's hands. Such men will take, in thankfulness, crowns of leaves, or crowns of thorns—not crowns of flowers.—*Ruskin*.

## The Family Doctor.

### THE HYGIENE OF DRESS.

IN our last article we considered the hygiene of entertainments, and now we will go on to a subject not wholly unrelated thereto, to wit, the hygiene of dress.

CLOTHING should, in the first place, afford fit protection for our bodies, and in the second, it should be as pleasant as possible to the eye. We put this in the second place, yet we think this an instance in which we may invariably apply the quaint verse:

Straight is the line of duty,  
Curved is the line of beauty.  
Seek thou the first and thou shalt see  
The second ever follow thee.

It is not beauty, but "fashion" which perverts our clothing from what is fit and serviceable.

IN our climate, almost all the year round, certain degrees of warmth must be sought, and clothing must be studied with this view. But it should be always remembered that clothing does not "create" warmth, it only keeps in what is there and prevents it from running to waste. To maintain heat in our bodies is really equivalent to taking so much food. There is a deep philosophy in the provincialism which calls chilly people "starved." It can, therefore, be readily understood that cumbrous clothing which impedes exercise is not truly warm clothing, yet one very common mistake is to resort to heavy wraps, while neglecting light, simple, and more truly warm arrangements. One hears ladies complain of cold hands, and sees them draw numb fingers from knitted or wool-lined gloves. On enquiry, one finds that their underclothing, at least any that is worthy to be so called—i.e. flannel or woollen—stops at their shoulders, and that their arms are only protected by the thin linen sleeve of a slip body, and the sleeve of their dress, probably of silk or cashmere. We have known many instances of cold hands growing warm as soon as the woollen underclothing was extended to the wrists.

IN this connection let us mention the great insanitary evils which often follow the inexplicable custom of baring the female neck and arms at evening parties. This is not seen so often now, but it still appears at times; and we fear that it is only held in abeyance by "fashion," and not by common-sense and good taste. Fatal illnesses have often arisen from chills received by this unnecessary exposure. The skin which covers the body is largely supplied with numerous and very fine small blood-vessels called capillaries, also with numerous little tubes which secrete perspiration. These structures are in a state of heat and activity during the heat and excitement of a crowded assembly, and if large surfaces like the arms and shoulders, and, above all, the front part of the chest, are exposed or imperfectly covered, a sudden and decided chill is felt—the activity of the skin is suddenly checked. Even if shawls and cloaks are thrown on in abundance, it must be remembered they must be considerably colder than the skins with which they come in contact; they may be even a little damp from lying in carriages or on hall-tables, perhaps near dripping garments. Besides, how is it possible to avoid a sudden draught?

THE true way to secure warmth is to have underclothing, so sensibly chosen and abundantly supplied, that a short, thick, tight-fitting jacket or coat is all that is needed for outdoor exercise. For those so sensitive that they cannot endure flannel next the skin, the flannel may be worn outside very thin and closely-fitting linen under-garments.

FUR is always very beautiful, and in many circumstances seems so natural and appropriate a protection, that it is hard even to hint that there are other circumstances in which it is not so desirable. Fur should be only used in loose outer garments, or as trimming, for fur is a skin in which the functions have ceased; it is, in plain words, leather, and does not absorb and carry off our perspiration as woollen garments do.

CLOTHING should be not only not too heavy, but it should not in any way hamper the natural and easy movements of the body, or of any single limb. What can be more absurd than to see a lady at a bank counter, struggling to get her cheques within reach of her hand, her arm being pinioned to her side? Or to see a gentleman holding "his chin in the air," to spare himself from mildly cutting his throat on his high stand-up shirt-collar? Tight-fitting trousers are not nice to look at, and certainly are not comfortable to wear, and our nerves surely have enough unavoidable irritation, without rasing them with petty miseries of this sort. The tight-fitting skirts were almost more irrational. They prevented anything like proper walking, and readily led to accidents from inability to move quickly and adroitly, and it was painful to think what would be the result if one of these unfortunately-attired ladies happened to fall!

ANOTHER injurious fashion—and it may be remembered that these things may always recur—was the walking-dress with a long train, which was worn out of doors knotted up and swinging behind a sheer waste of work and material, only producing a chronic bundle,

and indoors as "a tail," which must have been a perfect nuisance among the exigencies of domestic life. A better device for weakening the spine and producing a general feeling of *malaise* and inadequacy for the duties of life could not well have been contrived. Another unnecessary appendage is called the "dress improver," certainly not the "figure improver." These artificial monstrosities can serve no useful purpose, they simply waste time, money, and temper. They cannot be beautiful, for if we found anything like them in Nature it would mean disease and abnormality.

HATS and bonnets should not be made too heavy, for this leads to headache and is injurious to the hair. There is not a word to be said for the "chimney-pot" hat. It is simply due to a "fashion" which has settled into pernicious "use and wont." Ladies' bonnets should not be so small as to be mere apologies for a head-covering; nor should they be hard and stiff. The prim Quaker bonnet has been said, by experienced "Friends," to be very provocative of headache.

It often seems as if ladies have no regard for their personal appearance, but only for the "fashion," else whole communities would not, at one time, change the style of wearing the hair, since no one style can possibly suit all ages and all sorts of faces. The chignon was a thoroughly unwholesome abomination. Again, hair should never be dragged and strained in a direction opposite from its natural growth, nor frizzled in a hot mat on the forehead. Elaborate hair-dressing is to be deprecated. It is not natural; it hurts the hair, which it often destroys, and the position of the arms and hands while performing the office of self-adornment is trying and exceedingly bad for delicate people. Doctors are just now suggesting that a return to the old-fashioned "night-cap" might avert some headaches and neuralgic troubles. In the case of ladies it does really seem as if such an article would give the head a refreshing rest from combs, hair-pins, etc. Few care to sleep with their hair straying in disorder; that might easily produce an irritation which would banish sleep, therefore the general custom is to secure the hair much as is done by day, only probably a little more tightly. Now, if a nightcap were used, the hair might be simply well brushed out, coiled up, and slipped into its crown. But such a nightcap must be of thin and soft material, rational shape, and delicate cleanliness.

We are thankful to hope that tight-lacing is a fashion that is really dying out. A tight constriction at the waist exerts injurious pressure on the liver, stomach, and other most important organs. It impedes the breathing, and provokes palpitation and other nervous symptoms. It often leads to fainting. The famous Dr. John Brown has given the world a humorous picture of his father's stern beadle standing beside a prostrate lady of the congregation, with the ominous words, "Shall I rip her up, sir?"

THE proper kind of boot we have already discussed in "The Care of the Feet." Suffice it for us to say that a very high-heeled and narrow boot is now on view in one of our surgical museums, labelled "The Deformity of Fashion." Woollen stockings should be worn, not only in winter, but whenever there is any chance of getting the feet wet. We should not rest contented with carelessly-bought "worsted stockings," but should carefully select our article from among the best "hand-knit." If we can get the real Shetland goods, we shall do well to do so, especially if we are greatly exposed to wet feet. The climate of Shetland is notoriously humid, and the islanders say "there is nothing but Shetland wool to save one from Shetland weather," while visitors to the island declare that they feel an appreciable difference in their comfort when they exchange garments of the best Scotch wool for the products of native industry. Yet it is said that the real breed of Shetland sheep is being allowed to pass away without any special effort to retain it—since Shetland industry has never been able to secure a healthy and active trade!

BUT in a subject ever varying as this, the best advice is that which asserts permanent principles. We may lay down the following rules: That our garments should follow the lines of our bodies. That the free use of our limbs should be secured. That no unnecessary burdens should be imposed on our strength. That when seeking warmth we should also be careful to secure cleanliness and lightness. That we should study what really suits our own appearance and requirements, and reject all fashions out of harmony with these. That we should seek for materials of purity and durability. That we should reject all manufactures which are unwholesome to the producers, and which entail cruelty upon any living creature. And that it is a matter of personal duty to seek knowledge on these subjects, and to give them most careful consideration.

## Napoleon at St. Helena.

### Reminiscences of a Veteran.

IN the pretty little town of Woodbridge, in Suffolk, lives an old veteran, Stephen Barber by name, now in his eighty-ninth year, who was one of the men on duty at St. Helena during the time Napoleon was a captive there. The following narrative, related in his own words, may prove of interest to many of our readers,

"Yes, sir, thank God! I'm middlin' well. I'm eighty-nine come the 22nd of June."

"Four days after Waterloo," I remark.

"Ah yes! that Waterloo worn't so much as folks make out; it is 'cos 'twas the last. There were a many worse actions than that. I were at Toulouse, though, in 1814, in the Twentieth Regiment. We came to Ireland arter that, so missed being at Waterloo. We sailed from Cork to St. Helena in 1816. Yes, I recollect Bony werry well. I was on guard over him at St. Helena, a werry arbitrary man he was. Wunnerful proud like. Admiral Cockburn, he were governor there afore Sir Hudson Lowe come. When he come to take charge on him, he says, says he, 'I 'on't take charge on him till I see him.' Bony, he hated Lowe, and when he come, went indoors, and barred all the doors. But Sir Hudson had the sappers up and broke all the doors open with sledge-hammers, and when he went in, took hold of Bony by the shoulders and turned him round, and looked him in the face and said, 'Now I'll take charge on him.' They said as how Bony had been werry hard on him afore, when he took Lowe prisoner, and would ha' shot him 'cos Lowe said as how Lord Paget worn't in command o' the cavalry; more he worn't, ye know, 'cos he was just made Earl o' Uxbridge! Napoleon, he used allus to take off his hat when he come up to any of us, and put it behind his back, and show us great honour; but if ever he saw an officer, he wouldn't look at him, he'd turn his back and walk right away. He was a beautiful-made man, he was. I never see one made like him—you couldn't ha' turned' one like him. He was werry proud of his figure, and allus wore low shoes, silk stockings, and tight breeches to show his legs. Yes, he was a handsome man, only werry dark complexion, ye know, which showed the Cossack [Corsican?]. He was afraid o' being made away with by poison. There used to be a beautiful spring o' water close by where I was on guard. His servant allus used to come down every morning with two great silver pitchers to fill with water. That's a curus thing, arter his layin' there all them years, they should take him up and bury him in Paris. I was one of the light company; there was twelve on us as carried him from Longwood to the Hut House arter he died. Then there was twelve o' the Grenadiers carried him to the cemetery. There was a lady on horseback with beautiful gold saddle-cloth, she stood on the top of a hill all the time, so she could look over the whole. When Napoleon died he was laid out in state, and no one who was not in uniform was allowed to see the body. Lots o' folks borrowed the soldiers' uniforms to go and see him as he laid. When he was put in the ground we gave him three times nine, just the same as a general officer. The captain of our company had charge of Napoleon personally. He had to tallygraft every time he went off duty. Captain Crockett was his name. After Napoleon died, his heart was taken out for to be embalmed. I saw the box it was in. Captain Crockett took that to England. He was made a major for his services. When Napoleon went out walking, there was most always General Bertram and General Montholon with him, one on the right hand, t'other on his left; they always walked with their hats under their arms, that was the ceremony. Sir Hudson Lowe was as nice a man as ever lived. He would walk about for an hour at a time, apparently thinking deep, and then, all of a sudden, off he'd run like a shot to put somethin' or another down, lest he should forget it, I s'pose. He did not care for to be saluted allus when we met him, and when we saluted would say sometimes, 'Oh, never mind me!' He'd a deal on his mind, no doubt. There was the Russian Ambassador and a Prussian, as well as the English and the French; that was to see Bony had his rights. You've heered, I dessay, that there was a new state prison built there, and a private chapel. There was a deal o' mutinising i' the island at one time, and while they was a-diggin' the foundations of that place they turned out no end of skeletons in irons that had been buried there; and one man, he was number ten in my company, swore nothin' on earth should make him go on guard there another night, as the night afore he saw his coffin laid at his feet, and when ordered there again, said, 'No! I'll take two hundred in the mornin' afore ever I'll go on guard there again!' I was number eleven, I was, so I said, 'Don't confine the man, I'll take his duty for him;' but, Lor' bless ye! I never see nothin' Napoleon, he went one day to look at this place while it was building; he said he would never go and live there, and took to his bed not long arter, and died. When we left there we went to North Ameriky."

My old veteran's wife—they have been married fifty-five years, he says—adds a little to their modest income by retailing sweets to the urchins in the neighbourhood. At this point in his yarn, in walks a youngster. "I want a ha'porth of mixed sweets." Veteran walks to the receptacle for such matters, grubs about a bit, can't find what is wanted, gives it up, and sings out: "Hi! missis! a bor wants a ha'porth o' mixed suckers; come you and see arter him; I don't know nothin' about sich things."

## How to Work With the Microscope.

### PART I.

THERE are few ways in which the spread of scientific knowledge is more strikingly exemplified than in the rapidly increasing popularity of the microscope, an instrument the use of which, not so many years since, was almost entirely confined to those few to whose researches it



was an indispensable adjunct. At the present day, however, things are happily very different. The large demand for microscopes, and the consequent competition amongst manufacturers, have so greatly reduced prices that a really good and useful instrument may now be purchased for a comparatively small sum; so that investigation into the wonders and mysteries with which Nature has clothed even the most minute of her creations is now possible even to those whose narrow means preclude any great expenditure upon what to them is merely an amusement. The following hints and suggestions are intended for those who are as yet novices in the field of microscopic research, and who find that the commencement of their labours is attended with difficulties which hinder them from performing serviceable work.

IN the first place, a few words as to the choice of a microscope may not be out of place. The instruments which have from time to time been placed before the public are many and various, ranging from the simple pocket lens costing but a few pence to the elaborate and complicated instruments which are priced at from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds. With these latter, however, it is not now our intention to deal, for they are of service only in certain branches of science where great magnifying power is a necessity, while to the less ambitious student they would be of little practical value. It is not everyone, moreover, who has a hundred and fifty pounds to spare for such a purpose; by far the larger proportion of scientific workers being recruited from the ranks of those whose means leave but little margin for superfluous luxury. Neither shall we treat of the simple microscope, but shall confine our remarks to the ordinary forms of the "compound" instrument—i. e. that which is composed of several parts, and whose magnifying power can be increased or diminished at will.

THERE is a frequently quoted proverb to the effect that no rule is without an exception, and with regard to the microscope we find the exception which proves the rule, in the advice never upon any account to go to any but a well-known optician when purchasing an instrument. If you go to a second-rate man you are sure to get less value for your money, and although you may perhaps save a shilling or two in the first place, you are sure to repent of your folly sooner or later. All the really first-rate opticians offer for sale at about three guineas a really good microscope, with which work of even an advanced character may be performed, and which may be thoroughly depended upon for the two great requisites of magnifying power and clearness of definition. This instrument is neatly packed in a small mahogany case for convenience of carriage, and is provided with all the auxiliaries which are absolutely necessary.

UPON opening the box the microscope will be seen to consist of several parts, chief among which are the tube, or barrel, the stand, and the object-glass, or objective. The tube will be found to screw firmly into the stand, which is strongly clamped to a square of mahogany, so that perfect steadiness (a very necessary item) is assured during use. The upper portion of this tube, termed the eye-piece, is capable of removal, to allow of the substitution, if required, of others of higher magnifying power. These, however, are not provided with the lower-priced instruments, but must be purchased separately.

THE object-glass will be found enclosed in a cylindrical brass box, which is packed away in a kind of rack at the top of the case. Unscrew this, and you will find that the instrument in question consists of a small and beautifully finished compound lens of an inch and a half or so in total length. This is the most important part of the instrument, and will be found to screw into the lower end of the tube, which is then ready for use. It may here be remarked that all the modern microscopes are fitted with the "Universal" screw, so that the object-glasses of different makers are equally available.

IN the three-guinea microscope which I am now describing, the object-glass provided is formed of three parts, which may be used either separately or together. When all three are combined, they possess a focus of half an inch, and a magnifying power of one hundred and fifty diameters; that is, an object viewed through these appears one hundred and fifty times as long and as broad as is really the case. If two lenses only are used, the focus is altered from half an inch to one inch, and the magnifying power reduced to seventy-five diameters. If one glass be employed alone, the focus is altered to an inch and a half, and the magnifying power is that of thirty-five diameters only. Or, by arrangement at the time of purchase, an object-glass can be substituted, the foci and magnifying powers of which are as follows: Three lenses, equal to a quarter of an inch focus, and three hundred diameters; two lenses, equal to one-third of an inch focus, and one hundred and seventy-five diameters; one lens, equal to two-thirds of an inch focus, and ninety diameters. For ordinary purposes, however, this object-glass is far less serviceable than the preceding.

It may be well here to correct a common mistake. Many people imagine, on hearing that a certain lens magnifies, say, one hundred diameters, that an object seen through it appears one hundred times as large as it is in reality. This is not the case, for the object appears one hundred times as long and one hundred times as broad as it is when seen by the unaided eye. The total surface, therefore, is seen, in round numbers, about seven thousand eight hundred times larger

than is really the case, while the magnifying power of a lens of three hundred diameters would be equivalent to more than seventy thousand times.

IN higher priced instruments each objective is complete in itself, and three or more are furnished according to circumstances. In either case, however, the lower powers are by far the more useful for ordinary work, and objectives with a less focus than a quarter of an inch are very seldom necessary. For it must be remembered that the higher the magnifying power the smaller the portion of an object which can be examined at a time, so that with the quarter-inch glass perhaps only one-seventieth part can be seen of an object the whole of which may be easily seen under an objective with a focus of an inch and a half. It may be here remarked that the foci thus given do not represent the distance at which an object must be placed from them in order to obtain a clear definition, but the object-glasses in question are supposed to possess a magnifying power equivalent to that of a lens with the focus mentioned. It will be found, for instance, that the one-inch objective must be placed but little more than half an inch from the object to be examined, and the others in corresponding proportion.

THE instrument being now fitted together, we will proceed to the manner of using it. Upon the upper portion of the stand will be seen two tolerably large milled heads, or wheels, by turning which the tube may be raised or depressed as required. This apparatus is known as the "coarse adjustment," and by its aid the necessary focus may be approximately obtained. Nearer the head of the tube is a single smaller wheel of a similar character. This is the "fine adjustment," which is of so delicate a character that the upward or downward movement of one thousandth part of an inch may be easily managed. By the aid of this the exact focus can be obtained. Beneath the tube, and forming part of the stand, is the "stage," upon which may be placed the slides, etc., intended for examination, a sliding bar being provided in order that they may be placed in the most suitable position. Underneath the stage, in the centre of which a large circular hole is cut, will be found a small mirror, which is so arranged that it may be freely turned in any direction. This mirror is to be used during the examination of transparent objects, which require that a powerful light shall be transmitted from below.

Now let us suppose that the microscope is successfully put together, a slide ready at hand, and the student prepared to set to work. Place the instrument in a good light, lay the slide upon the stage, taking care that the object is in the exact centre, and, looking down the tube meanwhile, gently work the wheels of the coarse adjustment until the focus is tolerably correct; then complete the business by the aid of the fine adjustment. Next arrange the mirror in such a manner that the light shall be reflected through the object to be examined. Having done this your preliminaries are complete, and your actual work may begin.

WHEN an opaque object is in the case the light must be differently managed, and the "condenser" will be called into play. This instrument is not furnished with the three-guinea microscope, and can be bought separately for a few shillings. It consists of a large and powerful lens fixed upon a moveable stand. Like the mirror already described this lens is so constructed that it can be turned in any required direction, and can also be raised or lowered if necessary. Arrange this in such a manner that the rays of light passing through it are concentrated upon the object under examination. This is not always easy to manage, and will require a little practice before the greatest procurable light is obtained.

IN the drawer at the bottom of the box will be found forceps of two kinds, the one of a simple and generally rather clumsy character, for raising small objects which cannot be lifted by the hand, and the other, entitled the "stage forceps," which fits upon the stage, and holds objects not easily damaged in the proper position for examination. In the case of insects, etc., these forceps are invaluable, as they can be turned in any direction, and the upper, lower, and side surfaces thus seen without difficulty. The remainder of the drawer is generally fitted up as a kind of rack, for holding slides in an upright position without contact with one another. This part of the drawer will be found especially useful when conveying a few slides for any distance.

IN the following paper a few hints will be offered upon light, management, and other details of more or less importance.

## An American on China Decoration.

"THE fast four was rushing over the tracks between this city and Philadelphia the other day," says a contributor to the *Crockery and Glass Journal* of New York, "and seated beside us was a long angular party who had put us through the shorter catechism before we reached Newark, and had asked almost every question that language could frame excepting 'Who'd ju marry?' Of course he found out all about what we did to secure our daily soup, and he began thereupon to give us his opinions on china decoration. 'Now, I live in Brooklyn, and if I do say it myself, I've got some money and a reasonable amount of taste, and there's nothing I like more than nice china, and

I want it decorated to the Queen's taste. Some decorations I have seen and owned were just perfect and no mistake, but I know some people that wouldn't look at what I buy. They'd buy something in imitation of old Palissy, with frogs and snakes and all kinds of reptiles crawling over them. Fine things to eat out of, now ain't they? Well, I should smile. Then, some of my friends have bought stacks of Chinese stuff with a lot of hideous old heathens painted on it, enough to give a man the cholera infantum whenever he looked at them. Some of these decorators must be put to it for decorative ideas when they will put such abominable things on the ware, which would look a thousand per cent. prettier if it were left plain white. About one-half the stuff on sale nowadays is only fit to be smashed up and make roads with it, simply because the decorations spoil it. But I suppose there is always somebody ready to buy it if the price suits. Women are the worst lot to buy a dinner-set that you ever saw. They don't know anything about quality to begin with, and if they strike a decoration that tickles their fancy they buy it if it is the greatest abomination on earth. Case in point: my wife. Thought I'd let her try her hand at buying a dinner-set the other day, and what do you think? When I got home I found her just radiant, don't you know? and as I entered the dining-room she waved her hand towards the table, on which was spread a fine china dinner-set, on which was slapped in all sizes and impossible shapes a picture of Brooklyn Bridge. She said that she had just found what she had been gasping for for some weeks, as she wanted something to commemorate the opening. I tell you now, my friend, I am naturally an amiable man, but every time I go home now and find the table spread with that infernal set with two hundred and twenty 16,000,000 dols. bridges on it, it just makes me cross. Then I get my dinner in New York. Hello! get out here—eh? Well, good day!

## Household Gardening.

WITH the close of February, the resting period of vegetation usually terminates, and the time of awakening arrives. The sleeping buds of trees and shrubs are summoned into activity, and opening hardy flowers—Snowdrops, Primroses, and Violets—proclaim the advent of spring. But the weather at this period is not always spring-like. Frequently, if not generally, when the winter has been remarkably mild, a cold wave passes over the land at a time when genial days are expected, shivering the advancing growths of trees and flowers. It may be so this year; if not in every part in which this Journal circulates, yet almost certainly in some districts keen winds will prevail, cutting the tender plants and budding flowers where no shelter can be afforded. In many cases, however, something can be found for placing on the windward side of plants that are liable to injury, whenever such aid may be needed. This year vegetation is very early, and consequently less sturdy than it is after a long cold winter, and the cultivator's fostering care becomes the more necessary. Let us now advert to plants of a different order—tender plants variously preserved.

### PLANTS IN GREENHOUSES.

These, whatever they may be, should be closely examined now and put in order for the coming season. Young plants raised from cuttings last autumn and now growing freely in small pots, and these filled with roots, should be given pots a size larger.

In repotting a free-growing young plant, such as a Pelargonium, or any other of a succulent nature with rather large leaves that indicate brisk root-action, the pot in which it is to be placed should be two inches wider across the top than the one from which it is to be removed.

When a plant is transferred to a pot only very slightly larger than its present one, there is often not sufficient space between the ball of soil containing the roots and the sides of the new pot for the fresh compost to be pressed down properly without injuring the roots.

In shifting healthy young plants in the spring very little soil should be shaken from the roots; only just a little portion that is more or less loose on the surface needs removal, and the crocks, with a little that may adhere to them at the bottom of the ball.

A young plant that is not growing so freely as is desired and has not rooted strongly, may have a larger portion of the soil removed, as this may have become sour, or is in some other respects unsuitable, and it is always advisable that a considerable extent of roots be placed in actual contact with the fresh compost that is given. In this case a smaller pot should be selected than for a plant with abundance of roots coiled round the original soil, and where the soil is not materially disturbed.

No plant should be transferred from one pot to another, when the soil in which the plant is established is dry. Nor, on the other hand, must it be soddened with wet. Choose the medium between those two extremes, and the soil will be in the proper state. This is a very important matter—one of the secrets of success in plant culture, of even greater importance than the composition of the soil.

The soil to be used, too, must be similar in character as to moisture—i.e. neither distinctly wet nor decidedly dry. If when mixed it is in a very dry powdery state, spread it out, sprinkle it with water, and pass it through the hands, adding just sufficient water to enable the

particles to slightly adhere when a handful is grasped, instead of falling away from each other.

If the earth when prepared is so wet as to be adhesive, and the mass feels like a lump of putty when grasped, spread the whole thinly in a dry place and leave it there, turning it occasionally, until the excess of water has evaporated and the soil is in the right condition. It is better to wait a week for this than to use the soil in a pasty uncongential state, which no roots will enter.

For all kinds of soft-wooded plants, such as Fuchsias, Geraniums, Chrysanthemums, with others of that texture of growth, a compost of from one half to two-thirds of loam, and the remaining portion leaf-mould, or cocoanut-fibre refuse, and peat, if readily obtainable, and a tenth part of the entire bulk of sand, will be suitable.

The pots to be used must be perfectly clean and dry, have half an inch of drainage placed in them, this covered with a thin layer of dry manure; then place in the soil, just enough to raise the top of the roots within an inch of the rim of the pot, and no higher.

In adding the remainder of the soil place in a little at a time, pressing it down from the bottom upwards as firm as the old soil placed with the roots in the pot. This identity of firmness of the old soil and the new is one of those matters so small and so simple, that experts in gardening appear to assume that everybody is aware of its import. But this is not so. How can the inexperienced know if they are not told? Yet this is one of the main points to remember in the repotting of plants.

The treatment of older plants will be alluded to, but in the meantime, remove every decayed leaf from plants in greenhouses, destroy every insect, and pour water copiously into every pot in which the soil is at all dry, and the plants will make free and healthy progress.

### PLANTS IN FRAMES.

Many plants that are not sufficiently hardy to be exposed to the weather, yet not so tender as to need the protection of a greenhouse, are wintered in cold frames. Auriculas, Carnations, Pentstemons, Hollyhocks, Violas, Chrysanthemums, with various plants that are employed in carpet-bedding during the summer, are preserved in the manner indicated.

At this period of the year all the air possible must be afforded those plants in favourable weather by propping up the lights on wet, yet mild days, and drawing them off entirely for some hours when the weather is warm and dry.

All decaying portions must be promptly removed from the plants, and water must be given to those in which the soil in the pots is at all dry. It is a safe practice, however, to pour it on the soil only, not sprinkling the foliage at this early season, when the nights, if not the days, are cold; but in warm weather in summer an artificial shower all over the plants is very beneficial.

### AURICULAS.

These charming Alpine gems now require special attention. The choice varieties are grown and flowered in four and a half inch pots. The plants have now fairly started into growth and will very shortly produce their flower trusses, their beautiful blooms expanding in April.

With the object of having the flower-stems as strong, the blooms as large, and the colours as bright as possible, a little of the old soil, an inch or so, is removed from the tops of the pots, and fresh rich compost added, such as loam and manure, decayed almost to mould, with a little sharp sand, the whole well mixed together with the hand.

If the soil in the pots is dry apply water freely before the top-dressing is added. This should be pressed down pretty firmly and close round the stems of the plants. In a day or two water must be given, after which the soil must be kept constantly moist; new roots will then issue and take possession of the fresh soil, and the growth of the plants will be sturdy and vigorous.

The plants grow and flower admirably in frames, and although they sustain no injury from even severe frost in winter when the soil is dry and the plants resting, yet in spring, when they are growing and the roots are kept moist, frost must be excluded by covering the glass with mats, or it will be very detrimental to the fresh green leaves and advancing flower-stems.

Insects are usually troublesome now—small green aphides. Immediately they are seen they should be brushed off with a feather, or dusted with snuff or tobacco-powder.

Auriculas are pattern plants for small gardens, as so many can be accommodated in a very small space, while they succeed well in and near towns. It is questionable if there are any plants that afford so much beauty in so little room as these; and some of the hardier sorts are admirably adapted for outside window-sills. They can be raised from seed, and particulars for raising them will be given at the proper time.

### PLANTS IN ROOMS.

Much more water will now be needed by plants of all kinds growing in windows, than was necessary during the shorter days of winter. Those that are growing freely, whatever they are, and especially if the pots are crowded with roots, must be watered as often and as freely as is required for keeping the earth in the pots moist, from the top to the bottom. Not an insect must be allowed to remain on the leaves or stems, or the plants will soon be infested, and then, no matter how good the soil may be, and how correct the treatment in other respects, the plants cannot flourish.

## Odds and Ends.

THE industrious London correspondent of one of the Edinburgh newspapers computes that Mr. Barry Sullivan, during the course of his dramatic career, has committed 17,000 murders, and has been killed in battle, slain in a duel, poisoned, or been fatally stabbed, 9,000 times. Mr. Henry Irving's record is not quite so full of blood, but our great tragedian has taken 15,000 lives, and on 7,000 occasions has been done to death in the full glare of the footlights. Mrs. Bancroft has been foully betrayed or abducted 3,200 times. Mr. Henry Neville has 3,100 times been ruined by the treachery of his friends. Miss Ada Cavendish has been betrayed, deserted, or abducted 5,600 times, and is still suffering similar misfortunes. Mr. Charles Warner has 2,000 times been killed by ardent liquors, and has nearly as often perished by accidents on sea and land. Mrs. Kendal has been 2,000 times deserted or betrayed, and has besides been otherwise basely treated 1,100 times. Mr. Kendal has 900 times fallen dead suddenly; and Mr. John Clayton—to his honour be it spoken—has nobly befriended 1,800 miserable and deserted women, and has subsequently married about half of them. As for Mr. Charles Wyndham, he has been divorced from 2,800 wives, and is now in America, where he is continuing his disgraceful and heartless conduct to crowded houses.

THE proprietor of a menagerie issued a placard offering one hundred pounds to anyone who would enter the cage of the lion. Towards the end of the performance a peasant walked up to the lion-tamer and said: "Sir, I have come to earn the one hundred pounds." General horror. The lion-tamer replied with a derisive sneer: "So you want to go into the lion's cage?" "Aye, sure," said the peasant. "Come on, then! There, I will open the trap-door for you, and you can step in." "Well, yes," answered the honest countryman, turning to the audience with a broad grin on his face, "I am going in, but the beast will have to come out first; you know the paper only says: 'Any one going into the cage shall have a hundred pounds.'"

MOORE has omitted one of the most touching and heart-stirring anecdotes connected with the funeral of Sheridan. The noble and select company had assembled to pay the last tribute of respect to departed genius, and the coffin was about to be placed in the hearse, when an elegantly-dressed personage, who pretended to be distantly related to the deceased, entered the chamber of death. At his urgent entreaties to view the face of his friend, the coffin lid was unscrewed, when, to the horror and surprise of the bystanders, he pulled out a warrant and arrested the body! Mr. Canning and Lord Sidmouth went into an adjoining room and paid the debt, which, it is said, amounted to five hundred pounds.

THE first book auction in England of which we have any record is of a date as far back as 1676, when the library of Dr. Seaman was brought to the hammer. Prefixed to the catalogue there is an address, which thus commences: "Reader, it hath not been usual here in England to make sale of books by way of auction, or who will give most for them; but it having been practised in other countries to the advantage of both buyers and sellers, it was therefore conceived (for the encouragement of learning), to publish the sale of these books in this manner of way."

A WELL-MEANING but intemperate divine, whose furious denunciations of the shortcomings of his flock justly laid him open to the commentary passed on Charles Fox, that though he knew how to hit the right nail on the head, he generally hit it till he split his work, was once impelled to ask one of his congregation what he thought of his philippics. "Sir," said his friend, "I think that good advice is like brandy-and-water—a capital thing in its way, but nobody likes to swallow it scalding hot."

PRACTICAL Hygiene is the latest study in the Burmese Court. King Theebaw has been so impressed by reading a "Sanitary Primer" that he has had the Mandalay Palace turned topey-turvy, and the royal habitation looks exactly like a British matron's house during a "Spring clean." Dens that have not been disturbed by a broom for years—perhaps a generation—are being turned inside out, and the health officer is abroad everywhere.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS painted the portrait of Mrs. Sheridan in the character of Saint Cecilia, which gave occasion to the happy compliment paid to the singer by Haydn. "What have you done?" said he to Sir Joshua; "you have made her listening to the angels, whereas you should have represented the angels as listening to her."

AN old bachelor recently was introduced to a beautiful widow of the same name as himself. The introduction was in this wise: "Mr. Evans, permit me to introduce you to Mrs. Evans." "Mrs. Evans!" exclaimed the spirited bachelor; "the very lady I have been in search of for the last forty years."

ON arriving at Calais on her way to make the grand tour, an English lady was surprised and somewhat indignant at being termed, for the first time in her life, "a foreigner." "You mistake, madame," said she to the libeller, with some pique; "it is you who are foreigners. We are English."

OUR well-doing in behalf of our fellow-men ought not to be left altogether to the impulse of occasion as it may arise. There should be habitual, careful, and frequent planning for it. Such planning is needful to keep us in a right temper, and to make us watchful of opportunities as they may occur.

UNTIL every good man is brave we must expect to find many good women timid—too timid even to believe in the correctness of their own best promptings, when these would place them in a minority.

CERTAIN thoughts are prayers. There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees.

"DIFFICULTIES are opportunities," said Lord Derby, in a recent speech. They are opportunities for failure.

DEFERENCE is the most delicate, the most indirect, and the most elegant of compliments.

No metaphysician ever felt the deficiency in language so much as the grateful.

THE sweetest thing in life, is the unclouded welcome of a wife.

UNDER Mr. Leitch's instruction, Queen Victoria attained to great proficiency in painting. On the occasion of one of his visits, Mr. Leitch saw a drawing of a subject behind Buckingham Palace, which Her Majesty had done entirely herself, and which Mr. Leitch described as "admirably done." He liked it so much that he obtained leave to take it away, in order to have it properly mounted. It was lying in his studio for this purpose, when Stanfield called, and, observing the drawing, he asked by whom it was painted. Mr. Leitch said it was by a pupil of his. "Oh, nonsense," Stanfield said. "Yes," said Mr. Leitch, "and it is by a lady." Stanfield looked at it again, and said: "Well, she paints too well for an amateur. She will be soon entering the ranks of professional artists."

WHEN visiting an old acquaintance—a farmer—at a time when albums were all the rage, a well-known wit was handed by the daughter a superannuated account-book, ruled for pounds, shillings, and pence, in which he was requested to write something pretty for her, with which request he complied in the following manner:

	£	s.	d.
This world's a scene as dark as Styx,			
Where hope is scarce worth		2	6
Our joys are borne so fleeting hence			
That they are dear at			18
And yet to stay here some are willing,			
Although they may not have	1		

BEETHOVEN had incurred the displeasure of a petty German sovereign, whose territory was infinitely less than were his dynastic pretensions. Notice was served on him to quit the States of His Serene Highness within twenty-four hours. Beethoven wrote in reply: "Prince, if your highness will take the trouble to ascend to your balcony, you will see me cross the frontier in five minutes."

A PROMINENT lawyer contributes this as a new one. Clerk: "Prisoner at the bar, are you guilty or not guilty?" Prisoner: "Not guilty." Judge: "Who is your counsel?" Prisoner: "I have none; I am unable to employ a lawyer." Judge: "Mr. R., I appoint you to defend this man." Prisoner (after looking at the lawyer): "Well, then, I plead guilty."

"WHEN I left London six years ago, that mournful failure had already been out four or five seasons, and made dead sets of most of the rich fellows in society. Looks as though she'd take anything now." "Which one is that?" "The floppy specimen behind you. Do you know her?" "Yes. We are to be married next month."

"MY hearers," began the lecturer, "I trust—" Before he could proceed farther a Babel of voices shouted: "We'll trade with you, mister; we'll trade with you. Never you fear for that." The ignorant citizens thought he was going to open a shop in the town, and that he had risen to announce the fact.

THE attachment of some French ladies to their lapdogs amounts, in some instances, to infatuation. An ill-tempered lapdog having bitten a piece out of a male visitor's leg, his mistress thus expressed her compassion: "Poor dear little creature! I hope it will not make him sick!"

A POOR man once came to a miser and said: "I have a favour to ask." "So have I," said the miser; "grant mine first, then I will comply with thine." "Agreed." "My request is," said the miser, "that you ask me for nothing."

FIRST Swell: "By Jove, Fred! that is quite the highest collar I've seen yet." SECOND Swell: "Think so, old man? Well, I don't mind telling you—it's a little idea of my own—it's one of the gov'nor's cuffs."

IN a contemporary appears the following: "A respectable young man in want of a situation wishes to meet with a farmer who requires assistance in the management of his farm. Would be willing to work."

ON the eve of the French Revolution, a rich nobleman said to his chef: "Well, I suppose I shall soon have to cook the dinner, and you to eat it." "I sincerely hope not, monsieur," was the reply.

THE following was many years ago written by a wag on certain donkeys lent to hire in Margate, and which were alternately employed by ladies and smugglers: "To bear angels by day and spirits by night."

AN advertiser of very cheap shoes recently blurted out the real truth in mistake, thus: "N.B.—Ladies wishing those cheap shoes will do well to call soon, as they will not last long."

IT is no longer fashionable for a girl to say that she has refused an offer of marriage. It is now in good form to speak of the rejected lover as having been placed on the retired list.

"WHAT is meant by the bone of contention?" asked young hopeful, looking up from his book. "The jaw-bone, my son," replied his father solemnly—"the jaw-bone."

ORDERED to clear the court, an Irish crier at Ballinasloe did so by this announcement: "Now, then, all ye blackguards that isn't lawyers must lave the court."

COUNTRYMAN, reading bill of entertainment: "Front seats, 2s.; second seats, 1s.; third seats, 6d.; programme, 2d. I say, old chap, let's go in the programme."

"THERE is a coolness between us; good-bye," said the fish under the ice to the fisherman on top, who was trying to break through and catch him.

WITH exceptional truthfulness a quack doctor begins his advertisement: "I offer my services to all who are so unfortunate as to require them."

WHY should aeronauts not speak high words in a balloon? Because it is death to fall out?

A YOUNG lady has written a book called "My Lovers." It begins, of course, at Chap. I.

A SOVEREIGN remedy for bankrupts—Twenty shillings in the pound.

THE philosophy of theft is based upon abstract principles.

How to make a tall man short—Rob him of his purse.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## QUESTIONS.

E. J. B. wants to know where she can find the quotation, "Secure the shadow ere the substance fade."

H. D. will be glad to know who wrote the poem commencing "The wind before it woos the harp."

M. D. R. wishes to know where he can find the phrase, "Take heart of grace."

OCTAVE wants to know the meaning of the phrase, "Putting your eyes upon sticks," and its probable derivation.

## ANSWERS.

AMERICAN.—The works of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes can be procured through Messrs. Sampson Low, Fleet Street, and those of Washington Irving through any bookseller. "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" is the best known work of the first-named author, and the "Sketch Book" one of the most popular of the latter.

AMICUS.—1. See answer to "Brush," HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 145.

2. Legible, but too heavy, words too far apart, and generally stiff.

A YOUNG MAN FROM THE COUNTRY.—1. No doubt you are right in thinking that more things go to the making or marring of "domestic bliss" than the breaking of glass and crockery. Yet constant destruction of one's favourite sets are very trying to the temper, and you may remember that Pope gave it as one of the crowning graces of a lady, showing that he considered patience under such provocation unusual, that she is "Mistress of herself though China fall." You will find that not only does the use of "Toughened Glass" prevent many an angry word and contention as to whether the cat is or is not answerable for all breakages, but that it effects a real saving of money. It is a fact that toughened glass is unbreakable by any ordinary usage. We lately saw a practical joke, which is a case in point, played upon the master of a house whose wife had just invested in a complete set of toughened glass. The maid having had a private rehearsal, entered the room with a large tray full of tumblers and water-bottles; these she suddenly jerked in the air, and then let fall on the floor with a tremendous crash and clatter. Great indeed was the astonishment of our friend on finding, instead of a heap of broken glass, every article intact. He is now a firm believer in the "Domestic Bliss" theory. 2. We cannot tell you of any substitute for wine in cookery. There is nothing that we know of which will give the same character or flavour to a dish as sherry or claret; at the same time excellent dishes can be made without wine, only they are, as the French say, "*autre chose*." To make a variety in savoury dishes, vinegar and spices, as well as such sauces as Yorkshire Relish, or Brand's, can be used. We question very much, however, if anything is gained by omitting the small quantity of wine required for flavour, or if anything else which can be used instead of it, is equally wholesome.

C. A. C.—A correspondent, "Molly," has kindly sent instructions for Grecian netting, and offers a small specimen of the work if you wish for it. Please send a stamped envelope addressed to the Editor, when the instructions will be forwarded to you.

COUNTRY COZ.—1. Any oilman in a large way of business will supply you, or ironmonger—Messrs. Dean, London Bridge, for instance. 2. It is difficult to remove the stain of paraffin from a carpet. You might try Frockter and Forth's (High Street, Cheltenham) carpet-soap. 3. "Murphy's Games of Chess" (Bell), 5s. "Staunton's Chess Players' Handbook" (Bell), 5s. 4. Do you mean the blades? If so, emery powder will restore them; if the handles, you can do nothing, and had better send them to an ivory-turner.

E. H.—Please see answer respecting shoulder cape to "Spencer," in our issue of last week.

ENQUIRER.—We will answer your question respecting the poem, "February 3rd, 1852," as soon as we can obtain the information.

EXCLUSOR.—From practical experience we can strongly recommend "The Trypograph" (Zuccato's Patent) as an excellent copying machine. By writing with a stylus on a sheet of Trypographic Paper, placed over a finely corrugated metallic plate, a number of minute perforations are produced in the lines traced by the stylus. The perforated sheet, or stencil, is then placed in the printing apparatus, and fixed by means of bars. A sheet of the paper to be printed upon is placed underneath the stencil; a small quantity of printing colour is pressed into the perforations by means of a scraper or squeezer, and a fac-simile of the perforated writing is produced on the paper below. The operation may be repeated thousands of times. The Trypograph paper is prepared so that every stroke made upon it by the stylus is clearly distinguishable. In writing, the stylus is held in the manner of an ordinary pencil. A machine which would answer your purpose can be had for a guinea and a half. The dépôt is at 15, Charterhouse Street, Holborn Viaduct, London, E.C.

HETTY R.—A tendency to candy is one of the most common faults of home-made marmalade. It generally is due to over-boiling, or to the use of too much sugar. The following is a recipe which has been well tried:

Take the peel off the lemons and boil it until tender, then cut it into fine shreds; squeeze the juice from the lemons, which wash in a little cold water, in order to get all the goodness; measure all the liquid, and to each pint allow three-quarters of a pound of loaf-sugar; boil this until it becomes a thick syrup, when put in the shred peel, and continue boiling until, on trying the marmalade, it will set. Pour into pots whilst hot.

H. L. B.—Yes. The story belongs also to the opera of "Tannhäuser."

IENA.—We are much obliged to the correspondents who have kindly sent copies of Bishop Heber's poem entitled "Sympathy":

A knight and a lady once met in a grove,  
While each was in quest of a fugitive love;  
A river ran mournfully murmuring by,  
And they wept in its waters for sympathy.

"Oh never was knight such a sorrow that bore,"  
"Oh never was maid so deserted before;"  
From life and its woes let us instantly fly,  
And jump in together for company.

They searched for an eddy that suited the deed,  
But here was a bramble, and there was a weed;  
"How tiresome it is!" said the fair with a sigh,  
So they sat down to rest them in company.

They gazed at each other, the maid and the knight;  
How fair was her form, and how goodly his height!  
"One mournful embrace," sobbed the youth, "ere we die!"  
So, kissing and crying, kept company.

"Oh had I but loved such an angel as you!"  
"Oh had but my swain been a quarter as true!"  
"To miss such perfection how blinded was I!"  
Sure now they were excellent company!

At length spoke the lass, 'twixt a smile and a tear:  
"The weather is cold for a watery bier;  
When summer returns we may easily die;  
Till then let us sorrow in company."

J. W.—"Iena," to whom we are much obliged, sends a copy of the "Convict's Escape," by Re Henry. It is too long for publication in our columns, therefore please forward us an envelope, stamped and addressed.

MISS M. M.—The Puzzles are discontinued. The monthly part will, therefore, answer your purpose if you prefer it to the weekly number.

MOLLY.—1. Many thanks. 2. The Christmas Number was published as advertised. 3. The Hon. Catharine Caroline Cavendish, youngest daughter of William, third Lord Chesham.

SARAH.—1. Yes. The basket should be first lined with moss. 2. Cleanse with Hudson's Extract of Soap, afterwards scour with fine sand. 3. Bath-brick powdered is the best thing. 4. It is generally recommended, and in any case can do no harm.

S. L.—We are sorry that we cannot obtain information about local tennis-clubs admitting ladies.

SUFFERER.—We have heard that the "Lairitz Pinewood Fabrics" give much relief in rheumatic and gouty affections. At any rate you could try them, and we should be glad to hear the result.

W. McW.—We find that a second edition of "T Leaves," containing "My First and Last Appearance on Any Stage," by Edward F. Turner, has been just published by Smith, Elder, and Co., price 3s. 6d.

YOUNG GOVERNESS.—1. The best book we know of for your purpose is No. 4 "Hughes's Science Readers," edited by A. Newsholme, M.D., which traverses the sciences of Botany and Physiology, stating, as simply as is consistent with accuracy, their main facts and principles. The little book is profusely illustrated, and as it is intended as a reading-book for elementary scholars in Standards VI. and VII., the matter is given as untechnically as possible. The published price is 1s. 6d. 2. You must take a few lessons, and afterwards books will help you.

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 150.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 1884.

[Vol. VI.]

## A Pair of Ball Shoes.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"THEN you will not relent, Maude?" said George Uniacke.

"No, George. A woman is privileged to change her mind as often as she pleases," answered Maude Hardinge, impatiently turning away from her lover towards a merry group at a little distance from them on the Promenade, as if in haste to conclude the matter there and then; but he was not to be put off with such an answer.

"A woman may have a right to change her mind, Maude," he said gravely, "but she should keep her promises. You promised my dear old grandmother to come over with Harry the next time he brought the 'Arethusa' to Douglas, and now you refuse."

"What of that? Harry is only my brother. I am not bound to use ceremony with him, surely?"

"You wilfully misunderstand me, Maude. I dare say it doesn't so much matter to Harry, but it does matter to my grandmother that she should be disappointed, and—slighted by your refusal to let her see her only grandson's betrothed wife."

"I don't suppose she will care much," said Maude, pouting and holding up her full, round chin saucily; "she might have come over to see me if she was so anxious about it."

"Maude, Maude, you are determined to be contrary, or you would not talk so. Could you expect an old lady of eighty-nine to cross the Irish Sea in order to—to—"

"To view a girl of seventeen! Dear me! we're miles off each other, your grandmother and I, George. No, I don't expect it; and I don't see why she should expect me to cross the Irish Sea to be viewed. Captain Herries told Harry only the last voyage he made in the 'Arethusa' that the passage to the Isle of Man was the one he disliked most, especially in a yacht. But I see, George," she added, laughing, "you want to get rid of me, that you may marry your darling Alice."

"You will make me angry, Maude. How can you talk such nonsense? Alice is the same to me as a sister. Cousin Alice has lived with my grandmother ever since the death of her parents. I love her dearly; but you know better than to be jealous of poor blind Alice, Maude. It is not generous or kind."

"Just as generous and kind," retorted Maude, "as it is of you to tax me with flirting with Lord Silvermere and Tom Ushant. It is just the same thing."

"No, it is not, Maude. There is no truth in your pretended jealousy of Alice; but you know best whether I have any right to be jealous of Lord Silvermere and Ushant."

"Yes, of course I know all about it, and shall keep my knowledge to myself. I tell you what, George: I am not going to submit to a species of slavery—that I mayn't do this or that, and mustn't speak to anybody but with your gracious permission."

"I never wished to deny you the right to do exactly as you pleased, Maude. Your promise to come to Douglas to-day was of your own free will."

"Yes, I know; and now I refuse of my own free will. Have you forgotten that there is to be a ball to-night? I wouldn't give up that ball at The Queen's for all I could see. I have promised any number of partners to dance with them; and, you know," she said, turning her bonny bright eyes saucily upon him, "you don't like me to break my promise."

"No, I don't, Maude. But what matters the mere dancing at a ball compared with the disappointment and slight to my grandmother? She is so anxious, darling," he added, coming close to her, with an earnest entreaty in his voice, "to see my bride, my beautiful Maude. Change your mind, my darling. Remember how old and feeble she is, and I can honestly give her no good excuse for your non-appearance. Maude, suppose I can persuade Harry to postpone his visit to Douglas for a day—till after this ball—will you promise to come then?"

"No, I won't," cried Maude petulantly, the momentary softness evoked by his tenderness dying away in her anger at his persistence, and the reason she chose to assign to it: "That you may come to the ball, and watch me, I suppose; be an eye-witness of my flirtations with dear old Silvermere and jolly Tom Ushant—eh?"

"Oh, Maude! how can you belie your real nature with this affected love of flattery and tomfoolery? I don't believe you care for all these silly girls and frivolous men."

"I don't think it is at all polite of you, George, to talk of my special friends in such a way; and as to belying my real nature, I haven't any reality about me—girls never have. They are sham from one end to the other. I dare say I don't the least know what I like best. Probably I should be much happier boxed up with my Lady Glanville in Borth Castle than 'tripping the light fantastic' here. Not a doubt of it, George; it is so dull here, and so lively there. Alice's account of her serenely quiet happy days are amazingly attractive to a girl of my tame disposition; and if even I could forego the delight—the supreme happiness, I might call it—of wearing the loveliest dress and the prettiest pair of little shoes in the room to-night, I don't think I could stand the blue-moulding at Borth. No, it wouldn't do, George. Good-bye; I hope you'll enjoy the passage. Give my love to your dear and aged grandmother; tell her I didn't feel inclined to be trotted out this time. Perhaps next time Harry goes to Douglas I shall be a better girl, and if not—why, you know you are not obliged to carry on our engagement a moment longer than you like."

"Maude, Maude, there is many a true word spoken in jest," he said sorrowfully.

"Quite so; but I was speaking in downright earnest. I don't think we are a bit suited to each other—our tempers are not compatible, or perhaps they are too much alike, which comes to the same thing. You like your own way, and I like mine. We should always be fighting and squabbling if we were ever foolish enough to marry. Now, old Lord Silvermere would say 'Yes,' and I should say 'No,' and he would give in at once; or Tom Ushant would say, 'Do just what you like best. What pleases you pleases me.' Good-bye, George—"

"Fare thee well, and if for ever,  
Still for ever fare thee well."

She kissed her hand to him as she walked briskly away to her companions, and he heard her merry laugh so directly upon her parting with him, that for a moment he fancied she was regaling them with a highly-spiced account of their recent interview, and then his heart smote him. No; whatever might be Maude's faults, and, alas! they were many, she was not little-minded or mean. Whatever she might say to him herself, she would not say a word of him to anyone that he might not hear.

He went back to the hotel to prepare for his departure sorrowfully enough.

Maude wasn't coming, he told her brother; she had promised to stay for the ball at The Queen's, and didn't like to change now.

"Excuse me, Uniacke, but you're an arrant donkey to put up with Maude's tantrums as you do. I should have made her go. Ball, indeed! Why she said only yesterday that nothing should induce her to put her foot inside the ball-room if they had it at The Queen's. How you mean to manage her when you are married, I don't know, for you seem quite incapable of it now. I consider you've caught a Tartar, Uniacke, and, though she's my sister, and the loveliest girl I know anywhere, I don't envy you, old fellow—I'd break it off if I were you. What will Lady Glanville say?"

"That's just it, Hardinge—I shouldn't care so much if it were not for my grandmother, but she will be so disappointed—and she's too old now to bear disappointments as we young folk can. I know she was greatly looking forward to Maude's coming—I had made so sure of it, that she will be quite unprepared, and now I am quite afraid of the effect of such a disappointment."

"I pity you, George—from my soul I do. She's a wilful young hussy, and wants a lesson."

"She's a darling, Harry, and I think that I love her the better, being so grave myself, for her merry quips and fanciful ways, though I grant you that 'we cannot call her winds and waters, sighs and tears; they are greater storms and tempests than almanacs can report'—and oh, Harry, she is so beautiful!"

"Ay, Uniacke, I see how it is with you—'His soul is so enfeathered to her love, that she may make, unmake, do what she list.' You are 'shot through the ear with a love-song; the very pin of your heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's butt-shaft.' She's beautiful, I own it, but, as far as I am concerned, 'kindness in woman, not their beautiful looks, shall win my love.'"

"When do you sail, Harry? Have I time to make one more effort to turn Maude from her wilfulness?"

"Not you, George, and, if I know her, it would be useless; I am just going aboard, and we shall have to start at once, or we shall not clear the sand-bank. Morris has been trying to throw cold water on the voyage altogether. He declares there was a haze round the moon last night, and Jupiter dogging her, or some such rubbish; but he has a share in the hotel, and, of course, it is in his interest to keep us here for the ball."

The "Arethusa" lay alongside the pier, about a mile from the shore, gently rising and falling on the waters. The wind was happily rising a little, or, as Harry Hardinge declared, "they would scarcely have managed the start without steam."



"We are only waiting for you, George," he shouted, as his friend sprang back on to the iron steps, and bounded up them on to the pier itself.

"All right, I shall not be a minute—just a moment's grace." He had seen Maude looking down at them from above—after all, then, she did care, and had come to see the last of them. "What a whimsical darling it is," he said to himself; and then, as he grasped her hands delightedly: "This is kind, Maude, to let me have a last glimpse of your dear face, or—have you indeed relented, and are you coming after all?"

"Not I, George—I only wanted to have a look at the 'Arethusa'—and at Harry. He never bade me good-bye."

"He quite expected you were coming, Maude, until I told him, a while ago, that you had changed your mind."

Harry's powerful voice was heard, calling lustily on George to hurry.

"I must go, Maude. May I have one kiss before we part? No one knows, darling, when we may meet again, or if we shall meet again. There is always a certain amount of risk in these cranky little craft."

"You had better not let Harry hear you call his lady-love a 'cranky craft,' George—and thank you for wishing me to share the 'certain amount of risk.' Perhaps I shall be safer dancing with Lord Silvermere and Tom Ushant."

She did not give the required permission, and walked purposely into full view of the yacht's company.

"You refuse me everything, Maude," said George Uniacke. "Farewell, my bonny bride. Heaven bless and keep you till we meet again!"

"Repenting, I vow," exclaimed Harry, when Maude with a sudden impulse, as the boat sailed clear, drew out her handkerchief, and waved it above her head.

"I don't know, Harry. I feel as if we were all going to be shipwrecked and drowned," replied his friend. "I am almost thankful Maude is not here."

Harry growled something in reply that was inaudible, and blind Miss Uniacke, who, with her aunt, was sitting near, said gently:

"Harry doesn't wish to hear any more evil prognostications, George. Mr. Morris and Captain Herries have been to take a solemn leave of him just before you came down. They both say there will be foul weather before we get to Douglas."

"They are a couple of croakers," said Harry testily. "The wind has freshened just nicely for us, and so they choose to think a storm is brewing."

"Morris and Herries are both old salts," said George Uniacke; "and if they think there will be a storm, depend upon it there will be one. I am all the more glad that Maude didn't come; but," he added to himself, as he looked vainly through his glass to catch a glimpse of her white dress, "I wish she had kissed me."

## CHAPTER II.

WHEN Mrs. Strangways, with whom Maude was staying, entered the ball-room, extemporised in the Winter Gardens, a large glass building of the promenade-conservatory species, beautifully adorned with tropical plants, and ablaze with gorgeous flowers and gaslight, her party was at once reinforced by all Maude's promised partners, foremost in whose ranks were Lord Silvermere and Tom Ushant.

"I hope, Miss Hardinge," said the old nobleman, who had come to the town on purpose to find him a "wife, his braw house to keep," and thought that lovely Maude Hardinge would make a suitable and stately Lady Silvermere; "I hope that you approve the exchange from the stuffy rooms at The Queen's to this spacious and elegant crystal palace. I assure you it was no easy matter to persuade the authorities to allow of its perversion. They have only permitted such an innovation once before. I had to use all my influence."

"I am sorry you have had so much trouble, Lord Silvermere," said Maude, with only a semitone of pleasure in her rather languid voice. "I dare say the room at The Queen's would have done very well."

"Done very well, Miss Hardinge?" he asked, hurt at her want of appreciation of his gallantry and devotion to her service; "I thought I heard you say that nothing would induce you to attend the ball if they held it there? That was why I determined it should be elsewhere."

"Oh, really, Lord Silvermere," said Maude, "I often say things I don't mean; I am sorry—"

"Now, don't say that, Miss Hardinge—pray don't. I hope you don't mean that—I hope you are very glad, and that you are prepared to enjoy the evening. Don't forget—"

"Don't forget, Miss Hardinge," interrupted Tom Ushant, leaning forward, and putting his handsome young face close to the old beau's, who instinctively drew back to avoid the opportunity for comparisons which he felt might be odious, at any rate to him; "don't forget that you promised me the first waltz." He laid a stress on the

word, knowing well that poor Lord Silvermere would not venture to tread the giddy maze—waltzing was beyond him, and only in the more sober-going dances could he beg for Maude's hand.

"I haven't forgotten, Mr. Ushant," she answered calmly, "but I don't think I mean to dance to-night."

"Not dance, Miss Hardinge?" echoed all her promised partners in amazed and disconcerted chorus.

"Not dance, Maude?" said her chaperon; "why, dear? What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing—nothing at all, only I don't feel inclined, I'm sick of dancing—I've done nothing but dance ever since I came to this place."

"You sick of dancing, Miss Hardinge!" exclaimed Tom Ushant. "You make my hair stand on end—you, the very Terpsichore of Terpsichores! There must be something else. You don't look ill—you look—you look," said the young man, letting his admiration shine boldly out of his bright eyes—"you look too charming even to sit out one dance, much less not dance at all. Pray think of my forlorn destitution, if for this coming waltz, upon which I had set my heart, I am left minus my partner, and such a partner too—the queen of the ball!" He said this in a lower tone, but old Lord Silvermere jealously put his best ear forward.

"You never can mean seriously to carry out such a cruel intention, Miss Hardinge," he petitioned; and Mrs. Strangways interposed in an aside, wondering greatly at this new freak of her whimsical young guest's:

"My dear, you really must not sit out the whole evening—every one will be talking of it, and you such an inveterate dancer too. Ah, I see how it is—you are regretting, after all, that you did not go with Harry—I see."

Maude bridled up immediately, and, without a word of reply, she turned to Lord Silvermere and Tom Ushant with a merry smile, which was a little overdone, Tom, who had begun to understand her moods, thought; he saw that all was not right with her this evening.

"Of course I never meant it," she said; "on the contrary, I mean to dance every dance—dance till the gunpowder runs out at the heels of my blue shoes." She put out the said little blue shoes, and gazed at them comically for a few seconds, then, jumping up briskly, she put her hand on Tom Ushant's shoulder.

"Now, Mr. Ushant, they are just beginning that lovely 'Silver Rhine.' Let us dance waltzes while we may, for time is fast a-flying." Don't let's lose a demisemiquaver of your favourite. I shall be ready for your quadrille next, Lord Silvermere," she laughed, waving her hand as she whirled off with her handsome partner.

Tom Ushant was the best dancer in the room, and Maude and he made a suitable couple. Their first dance was by no means their last. Maude was not unwilling to forget the more clumsy partners to whom she had promised dances, and to make mistakes which gave him more and them less. As she would use no programme, refusing to have any names written on the little one that hung with her fan at her waist, it was easy to say, "I can't remember; I have forgotten."

One dance followed another till late in the evening, when, after an energetic polka with a young officer in the same regiment as Major Uniacke, Maude gladly agreed to rest a little while, whilst her partner foraged for refreshment.

"I'll go into the side wing, and sit there till you come," she said; "they won't find me out there, and I shall have a little peace."

Lieutenant Morton laughed, and departed, and Maude sat fanning herself under the shelter of some large ferns that screened her from the general observation.

As she sat there, two gentlemen came into the wing, and stopped in front of her hiding-place.

"Are you going down?" asked one of the other in an eager voice.

"Yes! I thought so. I should just like to make sure," replied the other, "though it is doubtful whether I could keep my legs in such a gale. I went out just now, after what I heard, and was almost blown away; and the wind's getting higher every minute."

"And you really think it may be the 'Arethusa'?" Well, I warned young Hardinge that there was dirty weather before them; but he wouldn't be warned."

"I told him the same; but he had made up his mind to go, and go he would. If it is the 'Arethusa,' Morris, there isn't the ghost of a chance for them; they're right on the sand-bank. The lifeboat has twice tried to reach them and failed. I'm afraid there's but a poor hope for them all. Of the whole lot, as far as I know, not one of them can swim but George Uniacke, and that poor blind girl and her old aunt are on board. I think I'll go down and see what is being done."

Maude tried to speak, to ask them to stop and tell her all she so wanted to know; but her voice made no audible sound, and they were gone before she could make them aware of her presence. She stood up, and pressed her hands to her forehead. Was it really true? And she had been dancing so wildly as not even to hear the rising tempest without. She looked around, and seeing a glass-door

looking out on to the outer gardens, she attempted to open it, that she might judge of the weather for herself; but the wind, which she could hear in spite of the noise of the music and dancing, beat furiously against her, and closed the door violently in her face.

"You mustn't venture to open any door or window to-night, Miss Hardinge," said her partner, hurrying to her, with ice in one hand and jelly in the other. "The wind is simply awful; away from the music you can hear it. If it were once to get inside, it would lift the roof of our ball-room clean off our heads in no time. Which will you have—shiver or shake? Whichever you don't take, I will, and we will sit down here and enjoy a little quiet." He walked to a seat close by, but Maude scarcely heard what he said.

"I can't sit down," she answered abruptly; "and I don't want anything to eat. I just want to ask a question of the woman in the cloak-room. Don't wait for me;" and she was off before the astonished young man could put down his two plates.

Dashing into the cloak-room, Maude searched desperately for a slip of paper. There was none, but as she searched, her fan fell to the ground, and seeing upon it her programme, she snatched it, and wrote on it: "I hear that the 'Arethusa' is on the sand-bank, and all in her likely to perish. I am going down to the shore. Don't trouble about me. I shall be all right."

She laid her fan with the card on the counter, and asked for her cloak.

"When Mrs. Strangways comes, give her that," she said, and hurried out. Not until she was fairly outside the covered way from the Winter Gardens did she realise the risk and difficulty of the object she had in view.

"Shall I call a fly, miss?" enquired the porter at the outer gate. "I'm afraid there's none within call neither, it's so early—but I'll see, if you wish it."

His voice scarcely reached her, although she stood close to him, and both he and she had to hold on by the iron palisade to prevent their being blown down the street by the violence of the wind. As he spoke, a fly drove up, and Maude hurried into it.

"To the Promenade," she said as the porter put his head in to ask for directions. "And as near to the beach as he can get."

The man drove off, but was obliged to lash his horse furiously to induce it to face the blast that swept down the street directly against them.

It was but a few minutes' drive, and the man came to the door.

"This is as high as I durst go, miss, to the water." He evidently did not expect her to alight—indeed, he had great difficulty in keeping his footing as he waited. "The horse won't stand, miss," he continued. "Where shall I take 'e to?"

"Nowhere," said Maud; "but just tell me, for I can't see, the right way, and the nearest, to get down to the sands."

"Sands, miss!" exclaimed the man in astonishment. "Why, for sure—you're never going down—"

"Never mind," said Maude; "here is your fare. Just say if I am near any of the openings off the Promenade."

"I've drove you close up to one of 'em," he replied. "Take hold of me, miss; horse is quiet. I'll just put you right for it. But bless my heart alive, why you've but shoes on! Well, if ever—"

Maude till that moment had forgotten her ball-dress and her delicate shoes. The "loveliest dress and the prettiest little shoes," as she had told George Uniacke.

The thought of his probable fate darted through her like a knife.

Had he not asked her if he could persuade Harry to postpone his trip, would she consent to go, and she had said "No." It was her fault, then, that they were in peril of death at that moment, for Harry might have consented. It was too late to go back now to change either her dress or her shoes. She groped her way, after the man left her, with infinite difficulty down the paved descent from the Promenade to the sands, and, as she clung with all her strength, during a mighty gust, to the low wall, she heard a heavy step coming down behind her, and saw dimly a stout figure, which she hoped might be Captain Herries.

At any rate, she must run the risk, whether or no, for she felt that alone she could get no farther.

"Is that you, Captain Herries?" she called out.

"Hallo! Who's there? Did any one call?" shouted the sturdy seaman, himself obliged to cling in his turn and close beside her, as the blast swept powerfully past them.

"Oh, I am glad, Captain Herries. I want to go down to the beach to see if it's true that—that—"

"Why, bless my soul, it's Miss Hardinge! Ah, I know what you're after. I know—I know! That's what I've come about myself. Here, Miss Maude, take my arm. You must hold on tight. I'm pretty firm on my legs for my age, but I've never experienced a wind like this before, either afloat or ashore—never. We must go cautiously. Down below it will be more sheltered."

He was shouting in her ear with all his might, but his voice only sounded like a hoarse whisper.

He guided her by slow degrees down the incline, holding on occasionally as the furious blast threatened to tear them asunder, and whirl them away before it; but at length they arrived below in safety, and, sheltered a little by the wall, the captain stopped to ask how she dared to venture out on such an awful night.

"I heard what you and Mr. Morris were talking about—the 'Arethusa,'" she answered.

"Ay, ay, my dear; but it is only supposition, after all. The lifeboat has never been near enough to tell for certain who or what she is. It is only guesswork, after all. So don't you fret yourself for nothing. It may be the 'Arethusa,' but, if it be she, her passengers and crew may not be aboard her."

"But could they get off, Captain Herries? How could any boat live in such a sea? Oh, don't speak so just to comfort me. I had rather be told the truth. It was all my fault that Harry sailed to-day."

"To-day! Yesterday, you mean. My dear young lady, it's past one o'clock now, if not past two, and Harry has had ample time to get to Douglas, or—to put in elsewhere. Why should we anticipate evil?"

"You seemed to think it was the 'Arethusa,'" said Maude, "when you were speaking to Mr. Morris."

"I didn't know you were listening, little pitcher," said the sailor, trying to speak cheerily. "But come along. You're a brave girl to venture down here on such a night, and alone too; though you can't do any good, and had much better be snug in bed, or dancing in the ball-room, safe and warm—though, by Jupiter!" he exclaimed, as a sudden thought struck him, "I don't think they're very safe in a crystal palace like those Winter Gardens. Let the wind once get inside, and the roof would be lifted clean off. It has been done once before, with a far less wind than this, and made terrible havoc. Bless my soul! I never thought of that. I hope Morris will see to it. We'll try to cross to where the lifeboat starts from. She should be back by now. Hold on tight, or we shall both be blown over."

Maude clung desperately to her sturdy companion, as they slipped and slid through the slushy mud and wet sandy soil of the flat shore.

"The boat must have come in," shouted the captain in her ear, as before them, across the sands, they saw a number of lights flitting about in the darkness. "There's quite a crowd down there by the water. We must look out for waves, Miss Maude, for the tide will not be long before it turns, if it hasn't turned already. Hey, my man, has the lifeboat come in?" he asked, as for a few minutes there was a sudden lull, and two men passed them coming from the group collected on the shore. "What's going on? Have they found out what she is?"

"No, sir, no," replied one of them. "The boat's been out twice, but she can't work her way to them, and, poor chaps, they're like to go to pieces on that bank."

"What do they make her out to be?" enquired the captain eagerly.

"A smallish craft, sir, as near as they can tell, but 'twere getting dark afore they started first time, and they can't get nigh enough to hail her."

"More than likely, sir," chimed in his companion, "it's the yacht, the 'Arethusa,' as set sail for Douglas this very arternoon. You said yourself, sir, as they'd no right to run into the dirty weather afore 'em."

"Lord forbid! Lord forbid!" said the captain, and that Maude might hear no more evil surmisings, he hurried on with her.

"Won't they try again, Captain Herries?" she said anxiously; "they won't leave them there without another effort to save them. Oh, won't you try to persuade the lifeboat men to go again?"

"My dear, they're all picked men—they're all brave fellows—they won't let anyone perish for want of trying to save them; but there are times when even a lifeboat can do nothing. I have a strong hope that it may not be the 'Arethusa,' after all, though it's bad enough for any poor ship to be in such a strait, and Heaven help them, whoever they are! Your brother is not wanting in seamanship, and his master wouldn't let him keep on for Douglas if he saw danger ahead. I hope the 'Arethusa' is riding safely in port somewhere, and all on board her in no risk of such a death as yonder poor ship's crew."

"Oh, Captain Herries!" cried Maude, "you are only trying to comfort me, I know you are; you don't want to frighten me; but oh, do try and persuade them to go again, and see if they cannot save them."

"I will—I will, Miss Hardinge, but they will do their best without any persuasion on my part. Hold on, my dear, there's another gust. Dear me! what a night it is. In all my experience I never felt such a wind."

They had now reached the group of people collected on the strand, but, not as the captain thought, round the lifeboat and her baffled crew.

"What's astir, my mates?" asked the captain, pushing his way amongst them.

"A body washed ashore," replied his nearest neighbour.

Captain Herries felt Maude clutch his arm.

"From yon wreck, no doubt," said another; "but they've only just been able to grapple him, and don't know for certain if he's dead or alive. Well, Jim, which is it?" he thundered out, amid the howling of the wind and the roaring of the still distant waves, though on so flat a shore the flux and reflux of the tide was a matter of but a few moments either way. The men were the more anxious to use all despatch.

"He'll never speak no more," answered Jim with another shout; "he wor a gentleman, too, to go by his dress. Is the cart a-coming, Bill? He maybe has vatables—a gold watch an' so forth, on him, and we mustn't meddle wi' him till the bobby comes."

Maude slipped her hand out of the captain's arm, and pressed frantically amongst the men, till she reached the spot where the drowned man lay on the sand.

The water was already rolling in around him, lashed to greater speed by the fury of the tempest. There was only the dim uncertain light of the flickering lanterns, shielded for the most part by the jackets of those who carried them, and these few were gradually diminishing as they were caught by a sudden squall and blown out, but Maude, as it were by instinct, found her way. One man was kneeling by the body, supporting the head on his knee, whilst a second held a lantern by which he was endeavouring to ascertain something more about him.

"Ay, he's dead!" he said, putting the lantern within the shelter of his jacket; "he wor a gentleman, that's certain; he has gotten a gold ring on his finger, and—"

"Oh, let me see him," gasped Maude, pressing forward, "I must see him." Her voice was drowned in the renewal of the tempest, which swept in a considerable volume of water, and drove the crowd a few paces back, and floated the body inshore a little farther.

Tidal waves were not unknown on this coast, and the sailors knew well the danger they ran in the darkness, with the tide flowing in on such a night.

"Eh, stars alive, there's a woman!" they cried out, as when the blast had passed them they again brought out their lanterns. "Come away, come away; you'll be carried off for certain if you don't look out."

Captain Herries had by this time made out where his young companion was, and caught her by the arm.

"You must not go there," he cried; "such sights are not fit for a young girl. Be persuaded, my dear; be persuaded. You couldn't see if you did."

"I must, Captain Herries," said Maude decidedly. "It was my fault they went. I know I have been the cause of his death. I must see—let me go."

She broke from him, and knelt down in the wet sand, now fairly covered by the incoming tide, by the side of the helpless body. But it was too dark to see the face, and she turned in the dimness beseechingly to the men around her.

"Let me have a light to see his face. Pray let me have a light!"

"No, no," interposed the captain, who had heard all that had been said, and feared for the consequences should Maude discover, or fancy that she had discovered, the dead man to be her betrothed or her brother. "Come away, my dear young lady; it can't be the one you think. Pray—pray come away."

He tried to lift her from her kneeling posture, but Maude clung desperately to her determination. She grasped the dead man's arm, and lifted the clammy hand, feeling its icy cold fingers.

"Oh, lend me a light!" she entreated. "I can feel his ring. Oh, it is—it is George! I knew it, I knew it! Captain Herries, if you have any pity for me, let me know the truth, make them lend me a light. I shall go mad if I cannot see his face. Fishermen," she almost shrieked in her agony, "lend me a light. Won't you lend me a light?"

The men needed no further entreaty as soon as the word passed from one to another that the drowned man was the "young lady's sweetheart—poor thing!" all who had them were eager to lend their lanterns.

They crowded round her, first, as was but natural, trying to catch a glimpse of her pale face, and tangled blown-about hair and dress; then with the ready sympathy always evoked in generous hearts by real sorrow and suffering, they held the lanterns, a little ashamed of their curiosity concerning herself, close to the dead man's face.

Maude had miscalculated her own nerve. She bent down eagerly as the light came, looking first at the poor dead hand she held in hers. The ring was a signet-ring, and a sharp pang darted through her as she remembered how George Uniacke's signet-ring had hurt her hand as he had wrung it when they parted. Ah, when they parted, never to meet again—and she would not kiss him!

A groan burst unwillingly from her, and again the captain tried to prevent any further inspection.

"I have looked, my dear. I assure you it is useless; you couldn't

tell, it is so mauled. Trust me, Maude; indeed—indeed, it is neither George Uniacke nor your brother."

But Maude was obstinate. She leaned over the dead man's face, her own looking white and scared in the lurid glare of the lanterns.

"Poor lass—poor lass! God pity thee if 'tis thy Joe," burst from one of the men as they watched her strained eyes fixed on the corpse with an agony of dreadful expectation. And after one long glance, Maude threw her hands above her head, and with a smothered cry, fell by his side, unconscious.

"Here comes the dead-cart; make way, lads, make way!" shouted the men. "There's no time to lose, the water's coming in fast. Pick up the poor chap, and let's get him in."

The cart drove up, and several men got down, bringing a fresh supply of lanterns.

"Is there a young lady here?" shouted a strong voice through the darkness. "Does anyone know if there's a lady here?"

Before Captain Herries, who had lifted Maude from the wet strand, could answer, a chorus of voices replied to the question.

"Aye, aye, sir, there's a lady, sure enough; she's just made out the dead man to be her sweetheart, and it's well-nigh killed her too, poor lass. Gentleman's gotten her there—close beside the body."

The owner of the voice pressed forward in the direction pointed out to him. He held up his lantern to Captain Herries' face.

"You here, Captain Herries! And—what? Is this Maude? Surely not Maude?"

"It is, indeed," cried the captain, and explained in few words what had brought her into such a state. "But is it really you, George Uniacke, or your ghost? I daren't make too sure that that poor fellow was not really either you or Harry Hardinge. Heaven be thanked that you are safe! Of course you all put into port elsewhere before the gale."

"Yes," began George Uniacke; "not exactly before it began, but in time to—"

He was cut short by a shout from the cart.

"Now then, sir, if the lady's going in the cart, you had better be quick, for the tide's coming in, and we have to get under the arch—another five minutes, and the horse will have to swim."

Maude was lifted into the cart, where George Uniacke and the captain supported her on one seat, whilst the corpse of the drowned man occupied the floor, and thus they reached the town in safety.

Maude was taken into the nearest shop, and means used for her restoration to consciousness.

"Her best medicine will be a sight of you," said Captain Herries to George Uniacke. "Never fear, stay by her, and as soon as she comes round let her know that you are all safe; that'll set her mind at rest at once, and turn her thoughts the right way."

Suddenly a boy darted into the room.

"Oh, father," he cried, breathless with excitement and haste, "the wind has blown the roof off the Winter Gardens, and there was a ball there, and all the people are crushed to death."

"For Heaven's sake don't let Miss Hardinge hear that, Uniacke!" exclaimed the captain. "Her aunt was there, she told me so. She was dancing till the moment she heard me say that a boat was stranded, and that it might be the 'Arethusa.' Look, she has her dancing-shoes on still, and her dress. I can't believe the tale, it is too horrible."

He seized the excited boy by the collar, and sternly bade him repeat his tale. But the child was frightened by his roughness, and burst out crying.

"I'm sure it's true," was all he could say.

And Captain Herries hurried out.

"It's only a step from this," he cried as he ran off. "I'll find out the truth for myself."

In a few minutes he returned.

"I met Morris coming away," he explained, as soon as his breathlessness and agitation would permit him to speak. "It is not all true, but still bad enough. Morris found that the hurricane was increasing tremendously. He felt the whole place rocking, and was afraid that if once the wind got inside the roof would go. He warned the dancers, and most of them left, only a few of the idiotic fools there always are insisted on dancing still, in spite of warning, aye, even after the band had left, and they danced to their deaths—as far as I can make out, not one of them has escaped. It was not more than ten minutes after Morris left that the catastrophe came, the roof was lifted up bodily, and fell in with an awful crash."

"What a mercy that Mrs. Strangways discovered Maude's absence so soon!" said Uniacke. "I went to her first, you know, as soon as I got here. She told me that she missed her directly after she left. Maude's note was given her in the cloak-room, and she returned home at once."

"It is, indeed," replied the captain. "I have brought a cab with

me to take Miss Hardinge home in. There is great difficulty in getting one at all, for they are busy taking people to see the wreck at the Gardens, even at this time of day, and of course there are relatives anxious to ascertain the fate of those who are still missing. Heaven be thanked," said the old man, lifting his hat, "that so many were rescued in time, and that you and all your party are safe! Ah, Miss Maudie," he added, as the young girl opened her eyes and sat up, "I told you George and Harry were safe, but you would have it the poor dead man was your Joe. Look up and see who's ready to prove that he's alive, as well as your brother. Eh, lassie, little lassie, it doesn't do to make too sure, and even our sight may deceive us, and especially on such a night as this. But I'll be off now. She's all right, and when you've put these dry wraps round her she'll be ready to drive home. Mrs. Strangways will be anxious to see her safe back. Good-night, Miss Maudie. You and I'll not forget our midnight adventure on the sands in a hurry."

"Oh, George!" exclaimed Maude next morning, when, after a few hours' sleep, restored, refreshed, and greatly sobered by all she had gone through, and all she had since heard of the disastrous hurricane, she met her betrothed, "can you forgive me? I shall never forgive myself. You might all have been drowned through my wilfulness and wickedness. I shudder still when I think that I was dancing whilst you—"

"Were safe in port, dearest. It was not your fault, dear Maude, and I can only be too thankful that you were so determined, and did not let me persuade you to go with us."

"You didn't care to have me share your fate, George." There was a trace of the old love of contrariety in this little speech that made George smile.

"Decidedly not, dearest. My one thought, as we wondered if we should ever make the port, was, 'How thankful I am that Maude is not here!'"

"You didn't want me," sighed Maude, a little piqued. "You could wish to die alone, without me; but no wonder after the cruel way I treated you. Well, it was just what I deserved. How could I be so cruel—so silly?"

"Ah, Maudie," said George, tenderly folding her in his arms, "don't think I didn't care, dear one. I kept saying to myself all the time, as first we thought we should win the port, and then again as all hope seemed lost, 'Heaven be thanked that Maude did not come, but I wish she had kissed me!' and see, Maude, I have bribed Selina to give me these." He drew out a pair of mud-bespattered, dabbled satin shoes, that once had been a pale blue. "Don't laugh at me—nay, darling—but rather that than cry. I shall treasure them all my life long. To think how you went down in them to the shore, and braved all the peril and misery of that night for my sake! If ever I doubted your love for me, Maude, these little shoes, the prettiest pair in the room last night, have proved what a true, brave heart yours is. It is I who must crave forgiveness, darling, for I did think you were cold to me."

The above facts are all separately true. They all occurred within a few days of each other, and are fiction only so far as they are grouped together with one set of actors.

## Spring.

SWEET child-empress of the year,  
Wake the earth from winter sleep;  
Come, and in thy bosom bear  
Buds new-born, a mingled heap,  
Blossoms of the future strewing,  
Each new hope, and each new wooing,  
All good deeds that shall be doing.

Zephyrus thy courier is  
Who a-tiptoe ever goes,  
Underneath his flying feet,  
Bloom the pretty pale primrose,  
Royal lilies high aspiring,  
Violets in shade retiring,  
Daffodils the sun-desiring.

Hark! a fairy harp he brings,  
Sweeps his hand across the strings,  
And the forest answer makes  
To the melody he wakes.  
And the pine, with odorous sigh,  
Waveth, as he passeth by,  
His tall branches tremblingly.

Zephyr, still your wild harp play;  
April, hasten on to May,  
Till in all her rosy charms,  
Spring is clasped in Summer's arms.  
Till our heart chords with the singing  
Of the skylark, heavenward springing,  
Are in softest concord ringing.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," &c., &c.

### Book IV.

#### CHAPTER IV. THE PRICE OF SILENCE.

THE exigencies of polite society don't often allow for the intrusion of anything so vulgar and inconvenient as "feelings."

Ivor Grant, hastily donning a dress-coat, and Beryl Marsden, trembling under the hurried hands of her maid, were somewhat unlike the two grief-stricken and passionate people who had suddenly faced the tragic side of life, and now looked out upon its desolation.

Appearances must be kept up. There was no time for debate or discussion. Ivor knew he must face all these people, dine, talk, act as if nothing had happened—try, if possible, to screen Beryl from the consequences of his own folly—throw dust in the eyes of that hateful spy whose evil smile had been to him the first revelation of what the world would say and think, did it guess his secret or hers.

He went down to dinner, entering the room late, and taking his seat far from Beryl Marsden, yet not so far but that his eyes caught sight of the fair, sad face, and noted, with a sudden flush of eager delight, the spray of white heath and maidenhair at her breast.

The Count Savona was opposite to him, and caught the look and the flush, and smiled cynically.

"What transparent fools men in love are," he thought to himself. "How well they arranged to meet here, those two! I scarcely expected to find them so quickly. It is not a bad idea to get both mother and son into my toils, though he's a more difficult subject to manage. No fool at bottom, whatever he looks. Curse his impudence and conceit!"

Tongues were running riot; laughter and discussion were at their height. Beryl's unusual silence and Ivor Grant's unusual gaiety met with no comment. Everyone was talking of the tableaux and the costumes, and the various difficulties arising from them.

It was not until after the ladies had left, and the men drawn closer round the table, that Ivor Grant managed to get near his host and whisper:

"Cosmo, how did that Italian count get here?"

"Brookes brought him," said Colonel Dunbar in some surprise. "Why, what's the matter with him? Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Not that I'm aware of," said Ivor Grant, shrugging his shoulders as he leant back again in his chair, "only—I hate him!"

His host looked at him in astonishment.

"You! My dear fellow, I thought you were too lazy and too indifferent to dislike anyone. What's he done?"

"Nothing—that's just it," said Ivor coolly. "But one may see a snake lying curled up at one's feet and shrink back from it with repulsion, not for what it's done, but for what it would do if it had the chance. That's how I feel towards the man."

"You surprise me," said the colonel with a somewhat uneasy glance at the pale, handsome face of the Italian. "Of course I know nothing about him. But he's only going to stay a few days, and Brookes says he's a capital fellow, so clever and accomplished and all that."

"No doubt," said Ivor, draining his glass quickly and setting it down. "To quote Mr. Toots, it's of 'no consequence'; avoidance is easy enough here."

"By the way," said Cosmo Dunbar, who was as essentially open and blundering as he was good-natured, "I'll tell you a good joke. My wife was telling me before dinner that she and Mrs. Marsden had a—bet, was it?—well, something of the sort, about your finding out a nickname she gave you the first time you met. Madge says 'twas at our house. I don't know about that, but women have such deuced memories for details. Well, Madge was crowing over this, for she said, as only she and Beryl knew, you could never find out. But the stupid little puss forgot she'd told me that same night, for she thought the name suited you to a T, and so I just held my tongue and listened to all this, and I thought, 'Oh no, my lady, I'll just open your eyes a bit,' so I said 'I know it too, my dear.' Bless me, you ought to have seen how she looked. 'Now, you dear stupid old Cosmo,' she says, 'you'll never go and let it out,' and of course," he added with a solemn wink at Ivor, "I said, 'On no account.'"

"And what was it?" asked Ivor eagerly.

"Oh no, no; honour among thieves," said the colonel, laughing. "I mustn't tell you, but I'll write it down."

"Done!" said Ivor, quickly producing a pencil and tablet.

"I haven't told you, have I?" said the colonel, chuckling over his own cleverness. "I do like to circumvent women, they're so uncommon sharp, or at least think they are."

He handed the tablet back to Ivor as he spoke, and with the

colour rising hot and swift to his brow he read the words written there—"My Lord Conceit."

"Good, wasn't it?" laughed the colonel. "You were a very haw-haw looking sort of individual in those days, don't you know. Had a trick of half closing your eyes and looking at people as if it was too much trouble. She hit you off capitally."

"Yes," said Ivor, putting the tablets back into his pocket, "she read me very correctly."

His heart was sore and pained. He felt a sharp sense of humiliation as he thought of that night, and how he had thrown himself down at her feet in involuntary admiration of the beauty, and brilliance, and charm that he had never found in any woman before. He thought, too, of how she had defied him to find out that name, and how he had laughingly said he would take vengeance on her when he did. But now there was no longer time for jest between them.

In deep and solemn earnest they had to face life as it stood arrayed against them in the tempting, the treachery, the agony and shame of a hopeless passion.

Trying to evolve some order out of the chaos of suffering into which he was plunged, Ivor Grant sat there, deaf to the buzz of tongues and arguments of voices around him.

He knew he must leave her—there was no help, no other way to serve her now; but for a moment, as he thought of the queenly head that had lain on his breast, and the tearful eyes that had so unconsciously betrayed their secret, his heart seemed to grow still with a great dread, and a most bitter remorse.

He loved her so, and yet he must add to her sufferings—he would have counted no sacrifice too great for her happiness, and he had only given her pain.

"To-morrow I will leave her," he said to himself. "Just a few more hours to keep on the mask—to laugh and jest, and be society's puppet, and then it will be all over. I wonder if a man feels as I do when the rope is round his neck, and he looks up at the blue sky for the last—last time!"

There was a stir and bustle at the table. Those who had to take part in the tableaux were impatient to attire themselves in the wonderful and novel costumes whose unfamiliarity would take longer to adjust than the ordinary garb of nineteenth century life.

Ivor Grant was almost the last to leave the table. As he neared the door he found himself beside Count Savona. Instinctively he shrank away. The Italian noted the gesture of repugnance, and half smiled.

"I was about to ask the favour of a word with you," he said. "Will you smoke a cigarette with me in the conservatory, before you make your toilette for the tableaux? I should not ask you, but I have something particular to say."

"Concerning myself?" asked Ivor brusquely.

"Concerning yourself and one other person," said the count—"a lady."

The hot blood rushed to Ivor's face.

"How much does the brute guess?" he thought. "I suppose I had better find out."

"I am at your service for a quarter of an hour," he said aloud. "After that I must dress."

The count only bowed and led the way.

That scene was fresh in the memory of both as they entered the beautiful glass-house, with its mass of tropical verdure. The count lit a cigarette. Ivor coldly declined the one he proffered. They walked slowly up the aisle of flowers and shrubs.

"Well, your business?" said Ivor brusquely.

"You are impatient, my friend. It is as well to see we are quite alone before I commence," said the count, glancing around in a way that made Ivor Grant's blood grow hot as he thought of his own late imprudence. "Eavesdroppers are not conducive to the freedom of a *tête-à-tête*."

They reached the farthest end of the conservatory. It was quite deserted. Then the count took a low basket-chair, and leaning negligently back in it, poised the cigarette in his fingers and blew a cloud of light smoke from between his lips.

"You gave me fifteen minutes," he said coolly. "Ten will do. Have you ever met Beryl Marsden's husband?"

The insolent familiarity of the words, even more than the insolence of the manner, inspired Ivor Grant with the fiercest longing he had ever known to knock this man down.

"Speak more respectfully of the lady if you wish me to listen to you," he said fiercely. "What right have you to ask such a question?"

"Oh, mere friendly interest in you both," said the count, replacing the cigarette between his lips. "I will accept your reply as a negative. You don't know him. Perhaps it's as well. He is a brute. Not only that, but he is a swindler. He has one virtue, however; he is jealous of his wife, even though he does not profess to be faithful to her. I doubt if her life or

yours would be worth an hour's purchase, if this same John Marsden knew of a certain little tender scene in this conservatory some two hours ago."

In all his life Ivor Grant had never felt how keen and cruel a thing humiliation might be, till he faced it now for the sake of the woman he loved better than his life. Yet even while facing and defying it, he knew how powerless he was to shield her name or vindicate her honour.

"You—you wish me to buy your silence, I suppose," he said, with such utter contempt of the man he addressed in his face and voice, that even callous and case-hardened as he was, the count winced beneath it.

"I simply wish to caution you," he said, lowering his eyes that their lurid, evil light might not yet betray his hatred of the man he held at bay. "What do you intend to do—run away with her?"

"You—!"

"Hush!" said the count, raising his hand warningly. "Do not use strong language. We are both men of the world. You do not suppose you can throw dust in my eyes at this time of day, and there's really no reason why you shouldn't—shall I say elope? If she knew what her husband was, her views as to wifely duty might undergo a change. Facts do alter cases, you know, and some good women—"

"Silence!" thundered Ivor, turning on him like a lion in his wrath. "If you dare utter another word of disrespect towards that lady, it will be at your peril."

"I am willing to take the risk," said the count coolly, but he rose from his chair, and tossed the cigarette away. "Duelling's out of fashion, but perhaps you've a fancy for heroics. It might please her, even if her name is compromised by your folly. Come," he added, dropping his voice, "don't let us quarrel. We can do better than that."

They stood and faced each other full of deadly anger and of deadly hate, yet prudence whispered to Ivor Grant that open defiance of this man would only injure instead of serve the woman he wished to protect, and, smothering his anger down, he stood there silent, waiting for the count's next words.

"I know more about Mrs. Marsden than you imagine," he said, after a moment's silence. "She is a very unhappy woman, and her life in India has been one long martyrdom to the caprices and tyrannies of a selfish despot. These embarrassments are due to a cause of which every one in the place—except perhaps his wife—was cognisant. His name is covered with ignominy, and he has retired to a remote district on the hills with a snug fund of his own securing, and a companion about whom the less said the better. I give you the information, and you may verify it very easily. Having done that—"

He paused. His look said all, and more than all, that his words would have implied, and Ivor could only stand there with clenched hands and throbbing pulses, longing to silence sneers and insinuations with one blow on the foul mouth that uttered them, yet withheld from yielding to the impulse by thought of that tearful, idolised face that once again seemed beseeching him to spare her, since he alone in all the world of men and women among which she moved, could she call friend.

"What you say may be true or not," he said at last, his voice only mastered by a strong effort. "It has nothing to do with me. I will not pretend to misunderstand your insinuations. You think I—I love the wife of the man you defame. Perhaps I do; but it is with a love that such men as you can no more understand than the toad beneath its stone can comprehend the light and glory of a world it never sees. Do you fancy," he added with rising passion that flamed and fired his glance until those evil eyes before him sank abashed for once; "do you fancy there is only one way for men to love?—that by robbing a woman of her good name and ruining her in the sight of the world they prove that love? You are mistaken for once. Beryl Marsden as a wife could be nothing to me, even though the man whose name she bears were a deeper blackguard than—yourself. I reverence her too well to lower her in the world's sight, and, perhaps, in my own. To-night, for the first time, I betrayed myself. To-night I leave her. Now, if you can believe truth exists, accept my words, and do your worst."

"You defy me, then? I think you are foolish. Your suffering and hers will be dearly bought, and you might have all the gain."

"Another such word, and I shall take the liberty of throwing you through that glass door," said Ivor coolly. "There is a nice easy drop of ten or fifteen feet before you make acquaintance with the terrace."

"You would regret it if you did," said the count quite as coolly. "I shouldn't advise you to try. Heroics and herculean feats are bad form, you know. I thought you were a sensible man. There was not much sainthood about you once, or 'reverence' for women either. However," and he drew out his watch, "I have said all I need. The fifteen minutes are up. So you are going to part?



Well, in a few years' time I dare say you'll find some one else has run away with her instead of yourself. You'll be sorry then you missed the chance. Meanwhile we'll see what John Marsden thinks of your 'reverence' for his wife."

"Stop!" cried Ivor suddenly; "bad as you are, you can't mean that. You won't threaten a woman for your own black malice? What is your object—money?"

"Yes," answered the count coolly; "I am not quite so disinterested as to give valuable information for nothing."

"I will buy your silence then," said Ivor contemptuously; "not from fear—do not fancy that—but for sake of the trouble and shame it may spare an innocent woman."

"It will cost you dear," said the count with the old evil smile on his thin lips.

"Name it," said Ivor shortly, his scorn of the mean and cowardly creature before him speaking out in every line of his face.

"That will require consideration," said the count tranquilly. "I cannot discuss it with you now. Besides——"

He stopped abruptly. A servant had entered the conservatory, and was looking round as if in search of someone. Catching sight of the two figures he advanced, holding a salver, on which lay a telegraphic message.

"For you, sir," he said to Ivor.

He took it, tore it open, then turned ghastly white.

"Great Heaven!" he muttered. "Dead—so sudden."

"Who is dead?" asked Count Savona eagerly. "Not—not your mother?"

"My mother? No, my uncle. He died this morning."

"Allow me to congratulate you, Sir Ivor Grant," said the mocking voice beside him. To himself the count added: "Twas well I waited; the price to an heir expectant and a baronet are two different things. How Providence favours the prudent!"

# CHAPTER V.

I love you so much  
That I only can leave you.

SOMEONE else had to take the part of "my lord of Leicester" that night. Ivor ascertained that a train left in an hour's time, and sent for Colonel Dunbar and begged him to make all excuses to his wife for his hurried departure.

No need of false excuses now. Fate had played into his hand again. For a moment he hesitated as to whether he should see Beryl or not, finally resolved that he would, and sent her a pencilled note begging her to come to him for a few moments in the library.

The room was quite deserted. Everyone was dressing, and the county guests had not arrived. Wondering greatly at the message, Beryl, who did not intend to change her simple dinner-dress, left her room and came as he had asked her.

He was pacing up and down the library in terrible agitation. The ghastliness and suffering of his face almost frightened her as she saw it.

He came up and placed the telegram in her hands.

"I leave in half an hour's time," he said.

She read it and her face changed.

"I am so sorry," she faltered. "And—your mother?"

"It will be a great blow to her," said Ivor sadly. "But I cannot speak of that now. I—I sent for you to warn you. That foreign spy saw us in the conservatory, as I feared. He puts the worst construction possible on our interview. Oh, my dear, don't look like that! It cuts me to the heart."

"He has spoken—told you this?" she cried, growing very white.

"For what purpose?"

Ivor was silent for a moment, wondering how much he dared tell her, or how little.

"I—I think he is safe," he said hurriedly; "but it is best not to make an enemy of him, and I thought I would warn you. Oh, Beryl," he added sorrowfully, "I can never forgive myself for bringing all this misery upon you, and I can't even shield you without making things worse."

He looked at her with all his soul in his longing eyes. He had been faithful to a dream so long, had struggled so bravely, and all for this!

"Tell me," he cried, "is there any way I can help you—is there anything I can do?"

She shook her head.

"Nothing; and do not reproach yourself. I am quite as much to blame. And why should we fear this man? We have done no wrong in sight of God or man. We know our weakness, and once knowing it resolved to suffer sooner than to yield. Why," she went on, looking up in his face with her brave, sweet smile, "I would myself tell my husband all that has passed between us, so sure am I that he could not but excuse it."

"Ah, my dear," said Ivor sadly, "you don't know much of men. The very fact of my self-betrayal brands me as a scoundrel in the eyes of others who have only had to look on, while I have had to endure. Oh, it is all so hard! It seems cowardly to run away and leave you to face unknown dangers, and unknown foes; to be alone, and I can't come to you; to suffer, and I can't aid you; to want help, sympathy, counsel, and I daren't give them you. I—I must not even ask you to write!"

"No," she said, turning very pale, and remembering how precious and how welcome had been those letters during her year of absence—how full of thought and kindness, and every trifling detail that might interest or amuse her in her exile from her darlings. "No, that would not do. Our parting must be complete as it is final."

"No, don't say that," he cried passionately. "It is like sending me out to meet my death-blow. Somewhere, somehow—even if the time be very far off—I shall hope to see you again. Think what a hard thing I am doing for you now. I leave you, because my love might harm you, and I would not have the shadow of dishonour fall upon your head. You know that, do you not?" bending and seizing her hands, and looking down into her upraised face with eyes that tears had dimmed.

"Oh yes," she said with a little pitiful sob. "You—you are far too good to me—you have always been."

"I wish I had the right, my dearest," he said tenderly. "For I would work for you, care for you, live for you as I think no man on earth could ever do. But it is not to be," he added with a heavy sigh. "You might judge how I love you if you only knew what it costs me to say—good-bye."

"In all your sorrow now—you can still think of me," she faltered, and involuntarily her hand went up to hide the slow, hot tears of weakness gathering in her eyes.

"I must always think of you," he said simply and earnestly. "I told you I had done so from the first hour we met. I am not a romantic fellow, or one who talks much about his feelings; but I did feel a changed man from that hour, though to you I was only a languid, idle fop, whose character you gauged more accurately than he did yours."

"Not that—oh, never that!" she said, flushing crimson. "I—I was mistaken."

"In 'My Lord Conceit' I hope so, sweet. He has a grain of something better in his heart, though he might never have known it but for you."

"You—you have found that out?" she cried, stepping back and paling and crimsoning alternately as she met his eyes.

"Yes; I told you I should if you defied me. Do you remember the vengeance I vowed? Perhaps had I been what you fancied, I might not care now for what the world would say. I might have even tried to blind your eyes, and teach you how little all other things look in comparison with love—love like mine. But I won't do anything that will bring a blush to your face, because—because I love you. And I will make no foolish vows or promises, because that love is so much deeper than mere empty words. I will only leave you now, without even a kiss on your lips, to make them less innocent for your children's angel touch. You know I meant no wrong, and I know it, for a man can't be strong always, however hard he tries, and I—I tried such a long time, dear. Now, no more tears; I can't bear to add to your unhappiness. If ever you need me, be quite sure you can always trust me, and that I should never misjudge you—never, though the whole world stood arrayed against you. But that I think you know. And now," with a sudden sharp catch of his breath, "I must go. I have run my time as close as I can. Only one word of caution—distrust Count Savona; and, if possible, avoid him. And now——"

There was no need to say it. The two pale, agonised faces looked up at each other as eyes might look in Death's farewell. The blood seemed to flow back to their suffering hearts, and the scorch of burning tears lay on cheek and lash. Her hands lay in his, close clasped in a trembling pressure. He raised them to his lips in silence.

"Heaven bless and guard you!" fell brokenly from him.

Then her hands dropped. She was alone.

For one moment of cold and passive despair she threw herself down on the couch, too wretched for tears, too sad for words, too weak for any movement or any thought. Only a numbing sense of desolation lay heavy upon soul and body, and she wondered dimly how her life would drag itself on, and how much longer that life was to be only a synonym for suffering.

The necessity of keeping up appearances made itself felt at last, and Beryl rose and went to her room and bathed her eyes and had her hair re-arranged, and then, with the weariest heartache she had ever known, took herself to the scene of the evening's festivities.

The *tableaux vivants* were a brilliant success. Madge Dunbar was

radiant with delight, and seemed to have forgotten her momentary displeasure at the substituted Earl of Leicester.

After the tableaux there was a dance, and Beryl Marsden took the opportunity of retiring. She felt too wearied and wretched to play her part any longer, and only longed for solitude.

To think clearly was impossible. She was too unnerved and unstrung for that. At first she thought she would write to her husband, and beg him to let her go back to India.

The more distasteful duty looked, the more rigidly did she steel herself to fulfil it. A bitter disclaim of her own weakness and folly swept over her from time to time, but amidst it all she yet could not find it in her heart to blame Ivor Grant, nor could she think of anything in these past years that had spoilt that loyal friendship, or seemed aught but the outspring of a very generous and unselfish devotion; and a woman who has once known that, and felt its strong and gentle protection round her like an encircling arm, knows too that few things in life are more bitter than its sudden loss.

"If only he had not spoken!" she thought; and yet she knew well that he must have been sorely tried often and often if he had so loved her. There comes a time when human strength fails—when sophisms can no longer blind the eyes, and dull the ears, to sight or knowledge of danger.

That time had come to her as well as to him, taking vengeance on a long blindness. Through all the long dark hours of that night she lay there battling with her misery and her weakness. It was harder to fight now because her life was so empty and so loveless. All the harder because no childish touch could draw the arrow of suffering from her breast, or soothe her tortured heart with words of love.

As the dawn was breaking she closed her eyes in very weariness, and fell asleep. In her sleep she dreamt that she saw little Jack dancing over the cowslip meadows towards her, and that as she stretched her arms towards him he seemed to fade away, and kneeling at her feet was Ivor Grant.

She woke sobbing as if her heart would break.

The next mail took out a letter from her to John Marsden, entreating permission to go out to India once more.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## A Family Feud.

(A STORY IN FIVE WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER IV.

It is said by the gentlemen who are at the greatest pains to analyse and weigh and label human emotions, that a lover's chief bliss precedes the formal engagement. In a sense this is frequently true. The first kiss of dawn on eastern hills is purer and more entrancingly beautiful than is the full blaze of day over the richest landscape; and the rosy, hushed thrill of opening passion—when doubt and subtle assurance are linked like twin shadows—has a charm peculiarly its own. But there are exceptions. Not seldom the lover's uncertainty has an element of pain in it, drawn from untoward surroundings and circumstances. He understands the power of the environment and knows that a cruel fate may in a moment blast his most promising schemes. It is as though the Alpine watcher were harassed by the continual fear that his early vision of dawn might after all prove a delusion and black night come back.

It had been largely thus with Harry Bradwell and Agnes Fenton, and each was happier and better content now that the ordeal of the avowal was over and that each was committed to a paramount interest in the other's future and fortunes. Confident in their love they could face a possible storm with courage and calmness. Doubt had lost its chief terrors and was incapable of inflicting a tithe of the sufferings of an earlier day. Harry, especially, felt relieved now that for good or ill he had taken a decisive step.

It was settled that for the present the engagement should be kept a secret. No idea of immediate marriage was entertained by either Harry or Agnes, and it could serve no useful purpose to vex Sir Raymond with the knowledge of his son's contumacy until it was necessary to do so.

At first Harry had found some little difficulty in persuading Agnes to take this view of the affair. To her frank, transparent habits of thought concealment in such a matter savoured of shame.

"I do not like clandestine contracts of any kind, Harry," she said, "and it seems to me that between parent and child there ought to be the fullest confidence."

"I perfectly agree with you in that as in other things," Harry replied, "but the proverb is a wise one which says that circumstances alter cases. They do—and alter them very materially. My

father will object; that, I fear, is a foregone conclusion. And the principal grounds of his objection will be those to which you yourself have referred—grounds which as I hold are foolish, and even morally wrong. You would not carry your obedience so far as to wish me to yield to such a prejudice and embrace misery for life?"

"Certainly I should not wish you to be unhappy, if yielding would really make you so," answered the maiden with a demure smile.

"You know that such would be the result," and the young man emphasised his assurance with a caress. "Then why should I invite his condemnation before the disclosure is absolutely necessary?" Harry continued. "And there is another consideration which inclines me to a policy of silence. My father has met with some serious losses recently, I believe, and is already considerably worried. The time is very inopportune for an addition to his cares."

"I am sorry for him, and for you."

"So you see, dearest, it will be charity as well as wise policy to keep him in the dark for a while."

"Perhaps he will be the more angry afterwards. Ought I not for his sake, and in spite of your protestations, to have said 'No'? I am a selfish girl."

"You are the sweetest, best, most generous——"

A playful hand stopped the torrent of Harry's adjectives. When it was removed he proceeded with his arguments for delay as though Agnes were not already convinced.

"Then, as far as my own prospects apart from the Hunstone estate are concerned, I shall be much better prepared for a struggle in a year or two's time. I intend to work and master my profession, so that if the worse comes to the worst I shall yet be able to maintain a wife in reasonable comfort. I am heartily glad now that I have entered the law, dry-as-dust as its routine is."

"I hope, Harry, you will not allow me to be in any degree a drag on your studies."

"As if your smile were not my greatest encouragement!"

Mrs. Holby was delighted beyond measure at the turn events had taken. She had watched every phase of the little drama with an excitement and eager interest only second to those of the actors themselves. With feminine quickness of apprehension she had observed the approach, and progress, and passage of the crisis. She needed no telling of what had in this instance been the issue of the old-new question. She read her niece's happiness in the soft love-light that gleamed in Agnes's eyes, in the added sweetness of Agnes's smile, in the quivering music of Agnes's voice. She rejoiced with her adopted daughter as sincerely as any mother could have done. She lived over again the ecstasies of her own long buried past in the contemplation of this simple, innocent joy of Agnes Fenton.

Fortunately for the girl's peace and shrinking modesty she refrained from many questions. One, as she conceived, of some importance, she asked.

"And you did not inform your Harry that you had a tie already with his Brakeshire home?" she said.

"But indeed I did, aunt," Agnes answered.

The old lady started so severely that her gold-rimmed eye-glasses came with a clatter upon the tea-table, and narrowly escaped fracture on the edge of an antique sugar-basin.

"You did! And was he not disturbed?"

"I think he was troubled a little. But he would willingly heal that breach in his family if he could. Harry regrets his father's pride and severity. He explained everything to me after a time—how the quarrel began, and how it has been continued."

"Ah, just so! Ah!" and with a gradually subsiding volley of interjections, the widow suffered the subject to drop. But she did not cease to mentally revolve and debate it.

These were halcyon days at No. 90, Frome Road. Harry Bradwell was free to come and go when he pleased, and if he had been a frequent visitor before his betrothal, he was still more so now. And then there were the picture-galleries, and a score of other spring and summer exhibitions to escort Agnes to. Moreover, occasionally trips full of a strange and subtle delight were projected to places of interest within easy reach. Windsor, with its stately home of Royalty, Rochester, with its ruins and its memories, St. Albans, with its venerable abbey, were all explored; to say nothing of the pleasant villages down the valley of the Thames and elsewhere, which the great city is year by year drawing more closely into its whirlpool of commerce and fashion.

On one of these unpretending excursions an incident occurred which, all unwittingly to the joyous young couple, was destined to have a very real and potent influence on each of their lives in the near future.

They had been wandering into Surrey, and, returning, were hurrying out of Victoria Station, when the attention of both was simultaneously attracted by a group gathered around a gesticulating cabman. It was a typical London crowd. The artisan and the professional idler, the dandy and the man of many markets, the fine

lady and the outcast of the gin-shop, the grey-haired cynic, who mistakenly believed himself a gentleman, and the irrepressible *gamin*, who would have betted on his chance of becoming one, were all represented. And in the centre of the throng stood the actors in the show—the one brazen, indignant, resenting injury; his fare meek, and terror-stricken, and in tears.

"What is wrong? Has there been an accident?" Agnes asked.

"No, no; only a cabman's dispute about distance, I expect," Harry answered, his shrewder glance taking in the salient features of the situation at once. As he spoke, the wrathful driver's invective broke out afresh and revealed the truth.

"And you reckon as I'm to be cheated by a story of that sort!" he shouted; "but you've mistook your man, missie. Lost your purse, or left it behind, indeed! Who'd believe ye? Nobody here believes ye, I'll be bound. You're a nice baggage, you are!" and a string of opprobrious epithets seemed likely to follow; but, perhaps, desiring to retain the sympathy of those to whom he was playing, he refrained, and concluded with a muttered oath instead.

The terrified expression on the victim's face awoke Agnes Fenton's pity. It seemed impossible to regard that shrinking, trembling agony as the mask of trickery and fraud. The girl whom the cabman was so bitterly upbraiding was, in appearance, younger even than Agnes's self. She was dressed with an amusing affectation of a gentility which she evidently did not possess. She was round and supple of figure, with dark, lustrous features which, under happier conditions, might have passed as beautiful. In her agitation she spoke with a disregard of the aspirate and of the rules of grammar which betrayed her humble rearing, and perhaps encouraged her antagonist in his abuse.

"I can't 'elp it a bit, and I tell you so. There isn't any money in my pocket at all. I wish—I wish some was in it," she said, with a pathetic little gasp in the pauses of her sentences.

"You're a liar!" said the cabman.

"Harry, Harry, let me lend her the money; it can't be much," Agnes whispered impulsively, and her hand was on the cabman's arm at the same instant.

"What is your claim?" she asked.

"Two shillin's, miss," the man replied with sulky surprise.

With a lightning flash of intuition the tortured defaulter divined what was taking place. She clasped her hands in a wild passionate appeal, and addressed herself to Agnes.

"Indeed I will make it good, if you will give me your name and where I can find you," she said. "I thought I had my purse until—until just now, and I must walk back, for I cannot go where I was going without money. Oh, do help me, miss."

Agnes was forestalled. With a private shrugging of the shoulders at what he thought the quixotic generosity of his *fiancée*, Harry had paid the florin, and the girl was free. Her thanks were profuse, and, Agnes believed, gushed from an overflowing heart. Harry was not so sanguine.

"Wait and see if the girl keeps her word and repays you," he said. "I have given her a written address, so that she will have no excuse for forgetfulness."

"I am sure she will repay the trifling loan," answered Agnes, almost with indignation in her accent; "if I ever know truth and honesty when I see them they were stamped upon that young woman's face, and I would rather have lost the silver twice over than have seen her suffer longer before that unfeeling crowd."

Harry Bradwell wisely declined a conflict with this enthusiasm.

"You have acted as a Good Samaritan, a friend in need, once more," he said, smiling; "anyhow you deserve praise for that. But what did your *protégée* say was her name?"

"Miriam Huke."

"An unusual one, and with quite an Israelitish ring about it."

With this the conversation turned into a fresh and more conventional channel.

#### CHAPTER V.

THE next day Agnes Fenton had her triumph. Miriam Huke proved the accuracy of her befriender's judgment by returning the price of her deliverance without delay. With the stamps she sent also a very modest, grateful letter.

"I shall always remember your kindness," she said. "I cannot tell you how much I thank you."

"So you see my charity was not misplaced, after all," Agnes remarked demurely to her lover. "You supposed that when we left Victoria Station last evening I had in all probability seen and heard the last of Miss Huke. Come, make a candid confession of your want of faith—was it not so?"

Harry laughed a little ruefully, yet with an undertone of genuine pleasure at the evidence of the stranger's honesty.

"Yes, I will own that I did," he replied. "I apologise to the

absent young lady for my unfounded suspicions, which I'll guarantee were shared, more or less, by every other onlooker."

"That may be; 'tis a cold heartless world; and such a fact does not excuse you, Harry."

"Decidedly not. I will surrender at discretion; but I invariably am at your mercy, you know; and this is one more proof of what a lucky fellow I am—to win a wife as amiable as she is lovely, and as sagacious as she is forgiving."

Agnes threatened to beat a retreat.

"Fie on such barefaced flatteries!" she said. "Your compliments, sir, are worse than your subterfuges."

"They are sincere," he answered.

But Harry Bradwell had news to convey as well as Agnes, and regarded in some lights, his was less pleasant. It was now advanced summer, and Harry could not longer defer his return to Hunstone Manor. Sir Raymond had written an imperative demand for an interview, at least; and Harry feared that unless he obeyed, the attraction which kept him so perseveringly in the hot and dusty town might become the subject of awkward and premature investigations. To obviate the slightest danger, he proposed to leave for Brakeshire on the morrow, and he might be absent from Agnes's side for several months.

"But one thing is certain—we can trust each other, whatever the material distance between us," he said. "Yes, and in the face of all conceivable eventualities."

"I hope so," the maiden replied.

"I will send you all my news if you will let me," Harry went on. "It will be prosaic enough, no doubt."

"Not in my opinion," Agnes murmured sweetly.

"And we must arrange some plan by which I can receive letters in return—without running the risk of scrutiny, I mean. But this will not be difficult."

The girl was silent. Though convinced of the present advisability of concealment, she was but partially reconciled to it. Reserve was foreign to her ingenuous nature.

Harry observed the slight shadow on her face, and correctly interpreted its cause.

"I can understand that you think me a sad coward, and I know that I am very unworthy of your love," he said; "but I am trying to scheme for the best."

"I believe it. I do not reproach you in the smallest degree," Agnes answered quickly. "You should neither say nor imagine such things."

"At any rate, I will pledge my word that at the very earliest practicable opportunity my father shall be informed of everything, whether he approves or disapproves, whether he turns me out of his house or consents to receive you into it."

"And with that promise I will be satisfied, Harry."

The young man fully meant to carry out his engagement, and half looked to find his father in a sufficiently softened mood to render the confession safe in the first hours of reunion; but his hopes were doomed to a long disappointment.

If the flight of the months had brought joy and placid contentment to Harry Bradwell, the exact reverse was the case with Sir Raymond. On entering the familiar library to pay his tribute of respect and affection in the very instant of arrival, Harry was startled and grieved to see the miserable change that so short a space had wrought in his father's appearance. Haggard unhappiness was stamped upon every line of the baronet's countenance. He was thinner, and stooped more; there were more threads of silver in his beard, and there was a fiercer, more hopeless gloom in his eyes.

"Well, Harry, my boy, so 'tis 'Home, sweet home,' with you once again," he said with a forced gratulation in his voice—a gratulation that sounded as hollow and unreal as might the laughter of a ghost.

"Yes, I am back at Hunstone at last," Harry answered. "Have you been unwell, sir? You did not mention your health very frequently in your letters, I remember."

"Didn't I? Perhaps there was no need. I am well enough, thank you, Harry. Pressure of many cares makes me look a bit worn, I suppose. I want a holiday in Norway, if I could only afford the time and the hard cash."

"I am sorry, sir—" Harry was beginning; but Sir Raymond interrupted him and dexterously changed the subject.

"Your sister and her husband are prospering, and immersed in pleasure and business, I presume?" he said. "I hear but little from them except through you."

He did not explain that a temporary intermission of correspondence had followed an unsuccessful application on his part for a very considerable loan.

"Yes, Dr. Marshbury's practice is steadily increasing, and Bertha and he mix in society a great deal," Harry answered. An unwonted increase of colour on his cheeks testified to his self-consciousness under the enquiry. He was thinking how infrequent a visitor he

had been of late at his brother-in-law's residence, and what had been the reason. It was fortunate that Sir Raymond had no clue to the facts.

"Ah, it was a first-rate match for Bertha; I hope my son will do as well one of these days."

This was a perilous topic, and it was Harry's turn now to sheer off from the rocks.

"Nothing of very special importance has happened in Hunstone, I suppose, sir?" he said huskily. "Our village is not like London. There, the city is being transformed, and in one shape or another re-made, every day almost. Here, things run in a groove, and I have sometimes thought that one might imagine a Brakeshire hamlet to be the identical spot where Rip Van Winkle dropped off into his century's nap."

"And yet he found a difference or two when he awoke, if I've read the narrative aright. Still, I will admit that Hunstone is pretty sedate and steady-going. We are not revolutionists as a rule—in the northern half of the county, anyhow."

"On the contrary, sir—Conservatives to a man."

"No, no; I only wish that we were—in a social sense at least. But there are scoundrels who never care what amount of ignominy they bring on the name they own. And the strange thing is that by some incomprehensible freak fortune seems to favour them. They grow rich while their betters go downhill. To me it is a crying shame."

Sir Raymond's voice rose, and his speech became more of a monologue than an address to his son. It was with a pang and a sinking spirit that the young man listened to this outburst. It was a proof that the family feud was as far from amicable adjustment as ever, that, if anything, the baronet was even more embittered in his anger against the farmer-brother.

And it was so. Sir Raymond felt a sense of keen personal injury in his brother's prosperity as contrasted with his own repeated losses and threatened embarrassments. He hated Francis the more for every good bargain of which he chanced to hear in the Sellworth, or other neighbouring market; as his words showed, he had even begun to extend his quarrel to circumstances, and to criticise with severity those particular arrangements of the universe which made such events possible.

Harry took refuge in a truism, not appearing to place any very definite construction on his father's remarks.

"Probably there will always be mystery in human affairs, sir," he said; "I fancy that not to worry about life's ups and downs is much the wisest policy."

But his attempt to throw oil on the troubled billows was futile; the tempest only raged the higher.

"You do not know of what you are speaking," thundered Sir Raymond. "It isn't merely that he—Mr. Francis Bradwell—succeeds too often where I fail, but it is the constant disgrace of a kinship which cannot be denied, if it may be ignored; it is that which annoys me almost past endurance. Every clodhopper in the countryside is acquainted with my family history, and sees the blot upon the escutcheon. It is easy for you to talk, you never have appeared to comprehend sufficiently the wrong which has been done. Captain Middleford, now, thinks precisely as I do."

The reference to Captain Middleford enabled Harry to pass by the implied censure.

"Is Captain Middleford still here, sir?" he asked.

The baronet was saved the necessity of a reply, for at that moment the door opened and the gentleman in question entered the room.

#### CHAPTER VI.

DAME FORTUNE, as is exceedingly well known, has her favourites. Upon some she showers the supposed good things of life in lavish abundance. She appears to ransack her treasure-house for gifts of wealth and position, friends and fame, and to be never tired of heaping them upon the lap of those whom with fickle choice she delights to honour; others year by year live under her frown. They are but distant pensioners upon her bounty, and, like poor relations, have to sit at a minor table and to discuss—with not a little grumbling and bickering—inferior dishes. But after all there is more of compensation in her arrangements than the surface seems to show. The millionaire is sometimes a fool, the peer would like a little ready cash, and the lion of the social season longs for one heart to honestly admire and trust him. There are conditions in which even the poor relation would hesitate to exchange seats with his be-jewelled and radiant cousin behind the centre-piece.

It is the contemplation of the character and status of Captain Middleford that has given rise to these reflections. That ornament of Her Majesty's Service was neither rich nor enviably famous. Even his birth was more humble than he chose to admit, and his friends were not usually those who knew him the best. Yet in person and

in address, as well as in certain original and weighty qualities of mind, he had the advantage of many contemporaries.

"The captain," as he was familiarly called in Hunstone, was a tall, finely-built man of, perhaps, fifty. He had a dark, weather-beaten face, bronzed by an Indian sun and much travel; bold aquiline features, piercing grey eyes, somewhat shifty in expression if the observer were very exacting; thick, curly, iron-grey locks, and a faultlessly-groomed "imperial."

The captain's *tout ensemble* was undeniably striking and handsome. And the fascination of his manners and conversation was scarcely second, when he elected to put forth his whole powers, to that of his personal appearance. He had a native talent for impressing strangers with his own individuality, and with a belief in his *bona fides* on any subject which he might please to take in hand. In addition, he had the air of easy authority which comes insensibly from the habit of command.

On Sir Raymond Bradwell, Captain Middleford had come to exercise a well-nigh magnetic influence, and an influence as malign as it was subtle and all-pervading. The baronet consulted him in everything, and treated his advice as the utterance of a most satisfactory and reliable oracle. Apartments at the manor had long since been placed unreservedly at his disposal, and where the accommodation was so comfortable, and, beyond all things, cheap, it was no wonder that the adventurer was content to firmly establish himself.

In the village he was now regarded in the light of a resident, except by two or three. There were sceptics, and individuals convinced of the abounding depravity of the human heart, in Hunstone as in larger places, and these shrugged their shoulders, and winked at one another, and murmured ambiguous prophecies. They had heard rumours which led them to believe that the captain was inveigling his host into serious financial difficulties, and they gave Sir Raymond credit for shrewdness enough to by-and-by find this out and discard his untrustworthy guide.

One of these wider awake neighbours ventured to bring the matter to Harry's notice before the young man had been home a week. It was Keith, the old Scotch bookseller and postmaster, whose age and acknowledged probity gave him a tacit license to say pretty much as he liked.

"And indeed I'm glad to see ye in Hunstone once again, Master Harry; it looks like old times, that it does," he said, giving his patron's palm a tight, northern grip across the full extent of package-strewn counter. "An' ye're lookin' well, too; I wish I could say the like o' your father—o' Sir Raymond."

"Ah, I'm afraid the years are beginning to tell on him. He's not so young as his son, you must remember, Mr. Keith."

"Tisn't only the years; why, take a glimpse of me else. How should I be?"

"Time doesn't test everybody alike."

"Nay, but it's trouble, Master Harry. It's worry that has driven the deepest furrow across your father's brow, and," sinking his voice to a whisper, "if you want to know the cause, make enquiry of Captain Middleford."

"Of Captain Middleford!" echoed Harry slowly, some faint intangible suspicions of his own returning to him with new force.

"Aye, I've said," answered the excited little tradesman, with a nod of ominous emphasis.

"You are surely not going to leave me in suspense thus," Harry pleaded; "let me know your exact meaning, Mr. Keith, please. I will carefully respect your confidence."

Pressed closely, the bookseller revealed his scanty store of information, and his very considerable supply of awkward interpretations and forebodings.

Harry listened eagerly, and now stood as though lost in thought.

"You'll not mention my name to anybody," Keith added. "I'm too auld to be fashed wi' more than my ain concerns."

"Decidedly I will not," Harry replied. "I am deeply grateful to you, Mr. Keith, for your hints, and shall certainly not repay you by such treachery as that would be."

All the way up the long village-street Harry was revolving this disagreeable intelligence in his mind, and he worked himself by degrees into a state of wrath that would almost have compared with his father's anger against his uncle. Keith's story tallied only too well with numerous trivial incidents which had already forced themselves upon Harry's attention, and with the doubts which his parent's gloom and mysterious reticence had brought to him. The business on which he, Harry, had been summoned so authoritatively to Hunstone at that date mainly concerned the cutting down of some timber, for which operation his consent was necessary. He could understand now for what purpose the money was wanted. He could guess also into whose pockets it would ultimately find its way.

"And Captain Middleford no doubt imagines that the game is entirely in his hands. He shall find out his mistake. I'll check-mate him if there is still a chance," Harry soliloquised. Then the question arose whether it would be advisable to boldly attack the enemy

without loss of time. If the intriguer found that suspicions of his true character had penetrated into the manor precincts, it seemed possible that he might at once relieve the house of his presence. Alas! Harry had but a vague idea of the lengths to which Captain Middleford had carried his duplicity, or of the extent to which Sir Raymond's credit was already involved. With a young man's ardour he panted for the struggle, and pitifully miscalculated the odds against him.

As a perverse fate would have it, while this problem was yet undecided, he met the captain face to face, and was startled into the immediate action which, up to that moment, had trembled in the balances.

"Are you engaged for a few minutes, Captain Middleford?" he asked, after a very formal and chilly greeting had passed.

"No, I am quite at your disposal, Mr. Bradwell," the officer answered, curiously scanning Harry's countenance, as if to discover whether the undisguised hostility of his tone was based on anything more than mere feeling.

"Then suppose we turn along the avenue yonder; we shall have the opportunity for a quiet talk under the trees."

"I am perfectly willing."

"It is about my father and yourself that I wish to speak," Harry said; "my father has been speculating very wildly and incautiously of late, as it seems to me, and has lost heavily. I have reason to believe that for this you are largely responsible."

The listener was provokingly calm. He twirled the ends of his grizzled moustache, and met Harry's gaze without flinching.

"Indeed, you must have strange informants," he answered, "and you will permit me to express my surprise that you do not credit your father with the power and will to exercise his own judgment."

"You are continually leading him astray."

"That is a grave accusation, Mr. Bradwell, even despite the compliment implied in your thinking that I could influence Sir Raymond's decisions. But you are the victim of some very peculiar hallucination, and are using language of which you will by-and-by repent."

"Never!"

The captain steadily finished his sentence.

"Hence I will readily forgive you," he said.

Harry's anger burst all bounds. His opponent was adding insult to injury.

"You are a villain!" he replied. "You live by devising schemes to defraud and ruin honest men, and you imagine that in my father you have found another dupe, and one who will repay an extensive operation. But if you do succeed you shall suffer for it—aye, if it is my own hand that wreaks the vengeance."

An ugly expression stole over the captain's countenance. He took a very short and summary way of showing his contempt. With a deep satirical obeisance he left his foe.

"It is open war, then?" Harry murmured, shaking his fist involuntarily after the retreating figure.

The gesture was seen and the words were overheard by an astonished spectator, in whose mind they were soon to stand out in hues of blood, and to bear a terrible interpretation.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 149.)

## Disenchanted.

You meet my gaze with swift surprise,  
That shows the fear you dare not speak;  
The ready tears are in your eyes,  
The sudden crimson on your cheek.  
Too late! it cannot move me now,  
Nor lull to rest the wakened mind;  
Deceit is stamped on lip and brow;  
Love saw it not—but Love is blind.

I thought—vain fool!—that simple trust  
Might well an answering trust obtain;  
That true and strong affection must  
Some future day a guerdon gain;  
And when I sued, you whispered "Yes,"  
With drooping head and timid air,  
And I believed you—who could guess  
That heart so false had face so fair?

Well, let it pass—it matters not;  
'Tis shame to manhood to be grieved.  
And mine is but the common lot,  
To love, and trust, and be deceived.  
Far better than the chance that rolled  
The clouds aside, the mists away,  
And showed that what I thought was gold,  
Was, after all, but common clay.

## By Perugino's City.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

JUST a white sun-scorched road and children playing.

Italy owns many such sun-bleached roads, and as for the children—well, beggary, and rags, and dirt, and the frolic of children may be found on any day, at any moment, by town or village or rural byway.

But amid such surroundings? Scarcely. The place was historic. Lake Trasymene lay shining, silent and placid under the summer sky, fields were richly planted round about the gleaming water, wheat and maize waved green and graceful, as the gentle breeze of the evening came cool and fresh across the lake which lay in a circle—nay, in the soft overlapping, as one might say, of many circles—of hills green and grey which enfolded the peaceful valley, the fields, and the hushed waters. Forests clothed some hills; a monastic town, the white Assisi, shone like a beacon of light, with its long, outstretching, terraced corridor on the spur of its one particular hill, struck by the sunlight and the vague distance into a perfection of outline which seemed to ignore the power and the wear of ages.

What did the ragged playing children know of the mighty clash of Roman and Carthaginian sword and shield? What did the fair summer night reek of the din of war, or of the shrieks and groans of wounded men? What mattered it whether Rome rose or Carthage fell? Did they care any more for the second history which spoke only of peace? for the words of the holy man who would have all men be brothers? whose rapt spirit saw even perceptible brotherhood in birds and flowers, in sun and stars?

If history touched them at all it was in the modern reflex of it which brought strangers from the old world and the new to see the famous pictures of the great Perugino. Did not the coming of these people bring trade to the city—bring stray *soldi* to children who were wise enough to play in the dusty roads about the places where there was a sight to be seen, or ruin to be shown?

The merchant spirit is the spirit of the age, even a baby can dance for a *soldo*!

Seven of them there were—seven bits of picturesque raggedy and dirt, but with faces like the faces of the angels the old painters set upon their canvases. Bare feet, brown by nature, but whitened with the white dust of the road; eyes dark, like wells of laughter, and actions which no words can match for emphasis and grace, certainly which no copying can ever reproduce.

A white marble doorway stood flush against the roadway, behind the doorway was a kind of building. Not a house certainly, for it rose barely any distance above the lintel of the doorway, also of windows there were none. Neither did it extend far inwards; there was a mystery about it; why so grand a portal for a building which could own no dwellers? Some Latin words above the closed doorway solved the mystery. It was a tomb, the family burial-place of an ancient race.

Everywhere in Italy one meets these bizarre unions. Before the home of the antique dead strangers of modern fashion, richly-dressed sight-seers from a young nation across the Atlantic, were stepping from a dusty carriage, just one of the public conveyances that modern needs have called into existence, and that ply for hire in the streets of the near-by city of Perugia.

It was a duty to see this tomb. Baedeker told them to go down into the marble chambers, to look at the urns, to wonder. They might when they got home talk of cremation; there are advantages; generations may rest together in one room.

The coachman had seized one of the ragged children.

"Go! Call Pucci. Tell him to bring the key and the tapers quickly."

The child flew.

Then the rest of the children went and looked at the strangers. Presently a girl came sauntering along from her work in the fields. She likewise was barefoot, and her head of brilliant gold, like an aureoled saint, shone uncovered in the evening cool. She wore an old pink cotton skirt, and her loose bodice of faded purple stuff was unfastened at the throat; round her neck she had a string of bright beads, and in her ears were earrings.

All the children clustered about her. Evidently they were telling her to look at the strangers. Suddenly one, a boy with a cropped head and garments decidedly elementary, darted from her, executed an impish dance in the road, and ran to the carriage, crying:

"Un soldo, signore—un soldo!"

"Come back!" called the girl; "come back. You promised me yesterday you would not beg. Where is your word, Tito?"

She had energy, this girl, and she shook the wild Tito.

"Kept true," he answered sturdily. "I have not begged. Do I not dance well? They will give me a *soldo* for my dance."

"Pah! Your dance! I know where you might get some roses. The signore like roses always."



"In your garden," said one child.

"Over the wall, there? Can I climb that? you think I am a man—two men?" So dashed the impudent Tito.

"You steal from the *cavaliere's* garden—no, I do not mean that," decided the girl. "Come with me; you may sell what I give you, if you can find any lady to buy."

The girl went on her way with her hoe over her shoulder, Tito and two smaller ones ran after her.

The strangers tried to get the rest to come up to the carriage and talk, but they were like young wild creatures; they could shout a "*soldo!*" with the lustiest, but to speak to a stranger was an impossibility. They ran away, hid down a turning, darted forth and laughed; they had no fear, they were simply little savages at play.

But old Pucci came along with his big key and his tapers, and the heavy door was opened, and a spacious entrance and descending staircase of marble showed the way to the old tomb.

The strangers entered, and the children clustered within and about the doorway—every day they did the same.

By the time the strangers were back from the silent room below the children were also back with hands full of fresh roses.

"Where did you get them?" asked an American lady quickly.

"From your own garden? Have you a garden?"

An infinity of nods answered, but never a word.

"Nanna gave them," called one of the smallest from a distance.

"Nanna—who is Nanna?"

"The girl who was with them but just now, signora. She has two gardens," the coachman ended with a low laugh.

"Two gardens?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"That is so. Has she not Maso's garden as well as her own?"

"She and Maso are going to be married when it is San Giovanni." This was from the boy who had made the impish dance. "Will the signora give a *soldo* for the roses?"

His face was a picture of laughter and of the beggar's pitifulness striving for mastery.

"Not if you look like that. I don't love beggars! Why, the girl is to be married in less than a week, then—is it so?"

"Signora, yes."

"I wish I had spoken to her."

Surely a bride is no such wonder; but ladies do talk in this impulsive way at times.

"She is very poor—eh?"

Again came the shrug of the shoulders.

"I do not know, signora. She works—she will not work in the fields when she has Maso's soup to make, and his clothes to mend. He is over there at work," and the coachman jerked his head townwards.

"At work—how?"

"On the new house behind the hotel. Does not the signora hear the hammering all day long? It will be a grand house. Maso lays the bricks."

"Oh!"

The matter seemed ended. Every child had a *soldo* and the ladies got into their carriage. The door was being shut. Old Pucci with his big key stood cap in hand bowing his thanks for the fee in his pocket. All at once he gave a more profound bow, and his look was not to the ladies, but towards another carriage that drove swiftly past. Pompeo the coachman doffed his hat and bowed too, the children stood and stared, and Tito jumped and made a somersault.

Two ladies were in the passing carriage; one was pale and sad, the other was sad too, but with a great calmness and quiet strength in her face. A lovely, clear-browed face, with eyes shining and alight.

Two fair girls, one might almost at the moment have said two fair English girls—maybe the thought was a just one. A golden-haired boy of, say, three or four years of age stood on the floor of the carriage between the two ladies; he had had the whole of their attention until the wayside bows had called for smiles and nods of recognition. The child was dressed in a white sailor dress, English fashion; the ladies wore—well, one looked at their sweet sad faces, and one did not think of clothes.

The strangers looked at each other; there seemed something unusual, something almost like worship in the earnestness and profoundness of the reverence shown to the passers-by. They looked their question.

"La Marchesa," said Pompeo.

"Our Marchesa," said old Pucci.

"Who?"

"La Marchesa Rallegra," and Pompeo mounted his coachbox.

"Everyone knows her—is she not good to all?"

"Good!" struck in the old man. "Good! She is an angel—

Madonna herself could do no more. Ah, signora, she was rich once—a mother and a wife. Then a day rose and the fever came, and she stood alone. But God is good—another day broke, and a little angel was given to her to bid her live. She lives now for him," and the old man threw out his arms dramatically, lifting his face to the sky, "and for the people. We are her husband and her children."

Was this a rhapsody, or was it truth?

Dry, plain truth.

There is an old palace, and there is a modern villa among the hills where a guardian spirit lives. What a brave man would have done, what strength and succour might have been generously dealt by a strong and helpful man, are all now done by a gentle and noble lady.

Beyond the circle of the hills about her house she is not known; the world would perhaps ask her name and know it not; yet it may be that her deeds are worthier far than the old wars and fightings the valley once saw, as worthy surely as the saintly ascetic life that stands midway between antiquity and modernism, and that has made one hill stand out for ever white with the shine of sanctity.

Days ran on. San Giovanni's sun had risen, scorching summer was flaming over hill, and valley, and lake. Can we say, too, that the cottage home outside the old city of Perugia was glad with the joy of a bridal?

Ah no!

Nanna had gathered the roses for the children, and she had set down her hoe, and then she had gone on to meet Maso. He would be late at work, but still she would meet him at the very foot of his high scaffolding.

Ah me! ah me!

Maso was indeed at the foot of the high ladder, but he did not stand a bright, radiant man, he was still and white.

That very moment he had fallen—she saw him fall.

They carried him home; they passed even the carriage with the strangers in; they passed the children still playing in the white road, tossing their lately-won *soldi* in the air.

They missed the marchesa; Nanna's wild cry was for her.

By the morning she had come—come in at once from her villa to help.

Nanna could not weep, she only sat and looked; if any help could come, surely it would come when that gentle lady spoke, when her soft hand touched the pale brow of the unconscious Maso.

But the sun sank. How many days did he rise and set? No one thought. Only at last San Giovanni had come, and it seemed as if it would be a day for death instead of the day of marriage.

The old priest stood by. He would have made the two man and wife; now he was calmly saying the grave words which the Church orders for a dying man. His monotonous, chanting voice was the only sound in the room.

There had been gesticulations and violent weeping—not on the part of Nanna, but all was hushed by the awe of that little-comprehended last service.

Nanna's eyes, like those of a wild creature, were fixed on Maso; by her side stood the fair, calm marchesa. On her sweet face was a sharper sadness. Did not she remember? But her hand was firm and cool, and she held Nanna's hot hand within it. There was nothing for her to do.

So it went on. Slowly, wearily, surely. In a few moments the priest's monotone would cease, and silent, motionless Maso would be travelling under the blessing of the Church.

A quiver broke the awful hush.

Then the air rang with a long, piercing shriek from Nanna.

She took that quivering for the trembling of new life—returning life.

She was right. Perhaps it was but a dumb, agonised instinct which drove that wild shriek from her. Nevertheless, it spoke the truth. The strong, vivid life within her was only making its untutored answer to the weak life that lay trembling before her.

There is nothing more to say. The story of Nanna's life was not spoilt, her hopes and Maso's hopes got their fulfilment, and they live and work, and are glad under the sunny skies of their home.

The people are very ignorant. They do not know who worked the cure, whether it was the doctor, or the old priest, or the good marchesa.

"I know," said Nanna. "The marchesa kept me still—Maso rested. She—"

Nanna here kisses a little silver cross she wears. Her religion is very vague. It stirs the most when she thinks of her marchesa.

## The Editor's Note Book.

I THINK it is in "Vanity Fair" that Mr. Thackeray remarks how, in the face of the saddest domestic calamities, the routine of life goes steadily and unswervingly on, how new clothes have to be bought, dinner to be ordered, and all the petty details of the house to be considered, even while the blinds are still drawn in the room where lies the corpse of the best beloved of the family. The passage is brought to my mind when I read of Mr. Gladstone and his Government going through the solemn formalities of electing a Speaker and of bringing in a new Reform Bill, for which none but professional politicians even pretend to care, ignoring the while this miserable Egyptian business, which really involves some of the most tremendous issues which even this country has ever had to face.

THE declarations of the late Czar and his Ministers, that Russia had no intention of going to Merv, have turned out as delusive as all the experts told us they would. The troops of the Czar are practically in possession of the city, and the inevitable day, when the question of supremacy must be fought out between England and Russia in Afghanistan, is rapidly approaching.

SIR CHARLES DILKE's speech in answer to Mr. Stanhope's first question on the subject was, as far as it went, satisfactory. But it is earnestly to be desired that Lord George Hamilton's hope that the Prime Minister will make up his mind what he means to do in regard to the Russian advance, and will state his views in language intelligible both in England and Russia, may be realised.

THE Royal Commission on the housing of the working classes has a tough piece of work before it, seeing that it has all England for a field in which to labour. Perhaps it would have been better to have begun more modestly, and to have confined the enquiry, in the first instance, to populous places. But this is the sort of gift-horse in whose mouth it would be most ungracious to look—even if one thinks that it would have also been better if the names of a few more men (and, perhaps, women) with some really practical knowledge of the subject were to be found on the list of members of the Commission.

I AM glad to find that none of the charitable institutions of this country are any longer in want of funds. At least I cannot but suppose that this desirable consummation has been arrived at, when I read that a committee of distinguished personages have organised a meeting, to be held in the Jerusalem Chamber, for the purpose of raising money to assist in the erection in Paris of a statue to Admiral Coligny, "the celebrated Huguenot leader."

TWO questions, both of considerable importance, arise out of the explosion at Victoria Station. The first, and most serious, of course, is whether or not the disaster was the result of a Fenian outrage; the second, whether, in this case, the explosion occurred at the time intended by the person who arranged the infernal machine, whatever it was. If, as seems probable, the first question is to receive an affirmative answer, and if the second assumption is also well founded, some little comfort may possibly be drawn from the conclusion that wanton destruction of property rather than of life or limb is what the terrorists are aiming at.

MR. COLERIDGE KENNARD no doubt means well by his proposal to abolish what are known as "off-licenses," but the letter by which he prefaced the introduction of his Bill certainly does not prove his case. The "off license," it should be explained, means that license to sell single bottles of wine or spirits which is held by many grocers.

MR. KENNARD states boldly—but, so far as I can see, without an atom of proof to back him—that the fact that "the license has proved most dangerous to thousands, especially to women, in various ranks of life," is notorious, and that it affords them the "opportunity of taking unnoticed, either by their family or the public, what they would be ashamed to take openly at home or in any of the ordinary licensed premises."

THAT a good many people do indulge in secret drinking of alcoholic beverages—as a good many other people indulge in private opium, chloral, or morphia—is an undoubted fact, but that such persons would allow any delicacy of feeling to stand in the way of the gratification of their cherished vice, no man of experience or observation can admit for a moment. "Qui a bu, boira." He (or she) who has been drunken will be drunken still, and if he (or she) is obliged to go to the public-house for the desired stimulant, no consideration of modesty, and no fear of public opinion, will stand in the way.

BESIDES, as an excellent leader in the *Daily Telegraph* of the 27th of February pointed out, the facilities offered by the grocers for

the purchase of the domestic bottle of wine or gin save many a young girl from being sent on errands to the neighbouring public-house, with which, however respectably it may be conducted, it is certainly desirable that she should not form too intimate an acquaintance.

WHATEVER views we may entertain on the Deceased Wife's Sister question, there can be, I should imagine, but one opinion as to the behaviour of the Rev. Mr. Fort in the matter of Mr. Josiah Hobson. Mr. Hobson, fifty years ago, married his deceased wife's sister, and such marriages were subsequently made valid by the passing of Lord Lyndhurst's Act. Mr. Fort has taken upon himself to refuse the Holy Communion to Mr. Hobson, thus displaying a view of Christianity which it may be hoped is almost unique.

SUCH people as Mr. Fort may possibly be excused on the score of ignorance of the law, but what is to be said of the Bishop of St. Albans, who backed up the reverend gentleman in his wrongdoing? Surely a bishop—who, it must never be forgotten, is *ex officio* a legislator—ought to know more of his rights and duties than this.

MR. ANDERSON'S Bill for the suppression of pigeon-shooting was talked out of the House last week, owing, to a large extent, to the exuberant verbosity of one of its supporters. The question itself is one of small importance, except in so far as it illustrates the modern tendency to parental or, as Colonel Tottenham called it, "grand-maternal," legislation.

THE debate on the Bill, if debate it can be called, was, however, remarkable for the extreme imbecility of the arguments, if they may be dignified by the name, which were brought forward by honourable gentlemen on both sides. Thus, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, against the Bill, remarked that if it were passed it would put a stop to one of the few sports which are accessible to the poor, while it would leave untouched those of the rich; Colonel Tottenham, following on the same side, declared that the giving of prizes by gun clubs encourages arts and manufactures; and Sir F. A. Millbank—himself a champion killer of driven grouse—stated that pigeon matches are principally promoted by publicans for the sake of betting.

How wildly beside the question all this insincere and worthless talk was will be seen, when one stops to consider that the only point really raised by Mr. Anderson's Bill is whether or not there is sufficient cruelty in shooting pigeons from a trap to call for legislative interference.

IT is reported that, when the case of *Fortescue v. Garmoye* comes on for hearing, the tactics of the defence will be to allow judgment to go by default, with a view of having the damages assessed in the Sheriff's Court. This plan would probably considerably diminish Lord Garmoye's pecuniary punishment and prevent Miss Fortescue's story from being fully heard, but it would be at the same time so very shabby a trick that I hope there is no truth in the rumour.

THE usual farce of closing the London Theatres and Music Halls on the north side of the Thames was gone through as usual on Ash Wednesday, to the satisfaction of nobody in particular, and to the harm of a great many people. If Ash Wednesday were a general fast, with a reason for its observance, like Good Friday, and if all public entertainers were tarred with the same brush, there would be, at least, uniformity to plead in favour of the present practice.

AS it is, the Lord Chamberlain and the Middlesex magistrates arbitrarily fine a great number of people within their district, whose fellows can earn their night's salary at any theatre or music-hall out of it. How serious a matter this is, may be judged from the fact that the prohibition of the two performances which, under ordinary circumstances, would have taken place at Drury Lane on Wednesday of last week, cost the company and staff of the theatre the highly respectable sum of six hundred pounds, or thereabouts.

AND surely, if shops and public-houses may be opened and Parliament may sit on Ash Wednesday, there can be no earthly reason why people connected with theatres should be made to suffer in this way.

THE correspondence which has been going on in the *Standard* in reference to the value of gymnastics for girls will very likely carry dismay to the heart of many an anxious mother, but consolation may be found in remembering that here, as well as in most other cases, safety lies in a discreet middle course. Gymnastics are excellent in their way, but can be overdone like everything else. If parents are in doubt as to the amount of muscular education which their children require, they will find that a consultation with their family doctor will be of far more value than the study of any amount of newspaper controversy.

## Cookery.

### A LITTLE SUPPER.

It not unfrequently happens that in an establishment where there is but a limited staff of servants, and where the resources of the kitchen are also limited, a nice supper for a few friends is required. To cook and serve enough hot dishes for the party seems out of the question, and yet an objection to have cold dishes also is often felt. But there really is no reason, if the bill of fare is well arranged, why this plan should not be adopted. No doubt if the hot dishes are savoury, and the cold dishes dry and insipid—as, for instance, is cold roast chicken—they would not go well together, but if the dishes are well selected, such an arrangement should have a successful result.

The best plan when hot and cold dishes are given is to have the former handed round as *entrées*, and the latter placed on and served from the table. A very pretty and, at the same time, economical supper can thus be arranged. The chickens *en bechamel* are a delicious dish, and, when decorated tastefully, or as directed in the recipe, have a handsome effect. This dish can be placed at the top of the table. The mutton-patties at the bottom. On one side the collared sole; on the other the salmon salad. The sweet dishes, carefully arranged as to colour and kind, will fill up the table.

However simple the entertainment, when all the dishes are not placed on the table, it will be well to have menu cards, so that the guests may have no difficulty in deciding on what they will take. Some people who entertain in a quiet way think that menu cards give an air of pretension to the meal, but as they are now so generally seen, and are besides so useful, this idea may be dismissed.

All the dishes of which our bill of fare is composed are inexpensive and simple, such as could readily be prepared in any kitchen; of course, in an entertainment of any kind some expense must be incurred, but this may be reduced greatly by careful marketing, and by observing the directions given from time to time in HOUSEHOLD WORDS for economical yet good cookery.

#### BILL OF FARE.

Chickens en Bechamel.	Mutton Patties.
Collared Soles.	Salmon Salad.
Grenadines of Beef.	Croquettes of Veal.
Strawberry Soufflé.	Coffee Cream.
Cherry Jelly.	Vanilla Meringues.
	Cheese Fondue.

#### CHICKENS EN BECHAMEL.

Choose white plump birds of moderate size. Boil them gently either in the liquor in which bacon has been boiled, or in water with a little bacon, two or three onions, and a bay-leaf. The object is to heighten the flavour of the chickens, and if the liquor is not salt enough add a little more.

When the chickens are done take off the skin, let them stand until cold, then cut them into joints. Take off the pinions of the wings, cut the meat from the breast in thick handsome slices, bone the legs, place all the pieces as closely together, and as neatly as possible, on a dish. Pour over the whole, so as to mask it entirely, a sauce made as follows: Put two minced onions in a quart of milk, which boil until it is reduced to a pint and a half. Strain out the onion, pressing to get all the juice. Boil the milk, put in two ounces of fine flour mixed in half a gill of cold milk, stir it over a slow fire until it simmers, and is as thick as rich cream; add salt and cayenne pepper. Put in two ounces of butter, and, when it is melted, stir in half an ounce of Nelson's Gelatine dissolved in a gill of water. Pour this sauce over the chickens whilst it is hot, then let the dish stand until cold. If preferred, each piece of chicken can be dipped in the hot sauce, and then placed on the dish; for this method, however, nearly double the quantity of sauce will be required. For decoration, round the edge of the dish put a lightly arranged border of watercress, carefully picked and dried after washing. Roll thin slices of ham neatly, and place at equal distances among the cress. Cut beetroot into pretty shapes with pastry cutters, and arrange it tastefully also among the cress.

#### MUTTON PATTIES.

Mince a quarter of a pound of underdone mutton, taking care to have it free from skin and fat. Mix with it a tablespoonful of rich gravy—that which is found under the cake of dripping from a joint is particularly suitable for this purpose—add a few drops of essence of anchovy, a pinch of cayenne pepper, and a small teaspoonful of minced parsley. If necessary add salt. Line four patty-pans with puff paste, divide the mutton into equal portions, and put it into the pans, cover each with a lid of paste, and bake in a quick oven for half an hour. Of course, for a large party the quantities given will have to be increased according to the numbers.

#### COLLARED SOLES.

Cut two pounds of lean beefsteak or veal cutlet into dice, put it on in two quarts of cold water, and as soon as it boils, take off the scum as it rises. Let it simmer gently for half an hour; then add four onions, a turnip, carrot, small bundle of sweet herbs, blade of mace, half-a-dozen white peppercorns, and when it has again boiled for an hour, strain it through a napkin. Let it stand until cold, remove all the fat, boil it up, and to a quart of the liquor put an ounce of Nelson's Gelatine, previously soaked in cold water. Add salt and a pinch of

cayenne pepper, and when the jelly is cool stir in the whites and shells of two eggs well beaten. Let the jelly boil briskly for two minutes, then strain through a jelly-bag and use as directed. Take the fillets of a pair of large thick soles, cut them into neat square pieces, leaving the trimmings for other dishes, and lay them in vinegar with a little salt for an hour. As they must be kept very white the best French vinegar should be used. Boil the fillets gently in salted water, with a little vinegar, till done; take them up and dry them in a cloth. Have ready some picked parsley and hard-boiled eggs cut in quarters; arrange these neatly at the bottom of a plain mould so as to form a pretty pattern. Pour in very gently enough jelly to cover the first layer, let it stand until beginning to set, then put another layer of fish, eggs, and parsley, then more jelly, and so on until the mould is full. When done set the mould on ice, or allow it to stand some hours in a cold place to get well set. Turn it out, ornament lightly with parsley and cut lemon.

#### SALMON SALAD.

Have a steak cut not more than half an inch thick, put it into a stewpan with a little dissolved butter, sprinkle with pepper and salt, cover the pan, and cook very slowly until done, which will probably be in twenty minutes. When cold break the fish into flakes and cover with a sauce made as follows: Mix the yolks of two raw eggs with a teaspoonful of mustard, a saltspoonful of salt, and a teaspoonful of essence of anchovies, add by degrees two teaspoonfuls of French vinegar and the same quantity of chili vinegar. Measure a gill of the finest salad-oil, and mix with the other ingredients drop by drop until the sauce is very thick; a little more vinegar may be added at the last if liked.

The salad for this dish should be in moderate proportion to the fish and be very carefully prepared. Each kind of vegetable should be separately treated: the small salad be well washed in a colander, drained and lightly shaken in a cloth until thoroughly dry, and the lettuce leaf by leaf be freed from grit and insects, and then be dried like the cress. Care must be taken that the salad does not lose its crispness. In addition to cress, endive, and lettuce, slices of cucumber and tomato should be used in such a way as to give an ornamental effect. Shred the lettuce finely, pick the endive into neat shreds, using only the best parts of a small head; put a border of them with cress tastefully round the dish, and finally the cucumber and tomato. Put the dressed salmon in the centre of the dish, and sprinkle lightly over it a small portion of the salad.

#### GRENADINES OF BEEF.

Cut two pounds of the undercut of either the sirloin or the rump of beef into neat cutlets, about the third of an inch thick, lard them with thin strips of bacon, and put them into a stewpan with a small piece of butter, lightly sprinkling the upper side with pepper and salt. Let them cook very slowly, without approaching frying-point, for fifteen minutes, then turn them on the other side, which lightly pepper and salt, and allow the grenadines to cook for another fifteen minutes. Have ready half a pint of rich, well-flavoured, thick gravy of a good brown colour; place the grenadines on a dish, pouring the gravy slowly over them. The dish may be made to look very pretty by a little garnish of sprigs of cauliflower, or any vegetable in season, and after these are boiled and drained from the water, they must be tossed in a stewpan with a little butter.

#### CROQUETTES.

Put one ounce of fine flour into a stewpan with half a gill of cold water, stir this over a slow fire very rapidly until it forms a paste, then add one ounce of butter and stir until well mixed. Mix in a small teaspoonful of essence of shrimps or anchovies, with a pinch of salt and pepper. Take the stewpan off the fire, and stir the yolk of an egg briskly into the sauce; thoroughly mix it with half a pound of pounded veal, and spread it out on a plate until it is cool. Care is required in making the sauce; if it is too thin it is difficult to mould the croquettes, and ice will be required to set the mixture. Flour your hands, take a small piece of the croquette mixture, roll into a ball, or into the shape of a cork, then pass it through finely sifted and dried breadcrumbs. Repeat the process until all the mixture is used. Put the croquettes as you do them into a wire frying-basket, which shake very gently when all are placed in it, in order to free them from superfluous crumbs. Have ready a stewpan half full of boiling-fat, dip the basket in, gently moving it about, taking care the croquettes are covered with fat. In about a minute they will become a delicate brown, and will then be done. Turn them on a paper to absorb any superfluous fat, serve them on a napkin or ornamental dish-paper. No more croquettes than will lie on the bottom of the basket without touching each other should be fried at once.

#### STRAWBERRY SOUFFLÉ.

Spread strawberry-jam about half an inch thick at the bottom of a tart-dish, put over it a layer of sponge finger-biscuits. Make a custard as follows: Pour on the yolks of four eggs a pint of boiling cream or milk, stir it over a slow fire until it becomes thick, taking care it does not curdle; sweeten lightly, and add a few drops of almond-flavouring. Put the custard when cold over the jam, and on the top of it the whites of the eggs whisked to a very strong froth. Sift some fine sugar over the soufflé, and put it in the oven until it assumes a pretty golden colour. Serve cold.

#### COFFEE CREAM.

Soak an ounce of Nelson's Gelatine in a gill of water for some

hours, or all night if convenient, dissolve it in a pint of hot milk, add a quarter of a pound of lump sugar, and when nearly cold stir in three gills of cream and a large tablespoonful of "Café Vierge," to be obtained of Messrs. Ridgway and all good grocers. Mix well together, and when the cream is on the point of setting, put it in moulds which have well cooled either on ice or by soaking in cold water. These precautions ensure the creams turning out without difficulty.

If preferred, half of the cream can be flavoured with coffee essence—that above recommended being the best—and the other half with extract of vanilla, curaçao, or maraschino.

#### CHERRY JELLY.

This jelly can be made exactly in the same way as ordinary wine jelly, without lemon; Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy being added as flavouring after it is cleared. In a small household, where all the appliances are not at hand, or the cook has not had experience in jelly-making, it is recommended to use Nelson's Cherry Jelly, which is exceedingly brilliant, of fine flavour, and merely requires the addition of hot water to prepare it for the table.

#### VANILLA MERINGUES.

Whip the whites of six eggs very firm, mix with them three-quarters of a pound of the finest icing sugar, and half a teaspoonful of essence of vanilla. As quickly as possible fill a tablespoonful with the mixture, which turn upon a strip of paper placed on a baking-board; repeat this, working rapidly, until all the meringues are made, then sift fine sugar over them, and put them without loss of time in the oven, the heat of which must only be sufficient to dry the meringues and give them a delicate brown tint. When the meringues are coloured and feel firm to the touch, take them off the papers, and with great care scoop out from the inside as much of the soft sugar mixture as you can without injuring the case. When this is done, again place the meringues, the hollow side uppermost, on fresh strips of paper, and let them remain in the same moderate heat until perfectly crisp. When cold fill one case with whipped cream, place another over it, and if necessary to keep it in position, use a very little white of egg. The meringues must not be filled with cream until just before serving, as of course the moisture may dissolve them.

A nice inexpensive cream for filling meringues may be made as follows: Boil two ounces of sugar with a pint of milk and half an ounce of Nelson's Gelatine, previously soaked; strain it, let it get cold, and flavour it with vanilla. When the cream appears likely to set, add by degrees the juice of half a lemon, and whisk it until it becomes frothy and thick. Put it aside and use as required.

#### CHEESE FONDUE.

Boil a pint of milk, pour it over a French roll, beat up and mix with it half a pound of good cheese grated, and the yolks of four eggs well beaten. When about to bake it, beat the whites of the eggs to a strong froth, and stir them in lightly. Put the fondue into a tart-dish if you have no silver one suitable, and bake in a quick oven. It will take about twenty minutes.

## A Mississippi Race.

IT is now many years ago that I took my passage one afternoon upon the good steamer Habakkuk E. Dodge, bound from St. Louis to New Orleans. I describe her as "good" because she was so described in the "sheddle" in the hall of the Granite House, St. Louis. But so far as my subsequent experience went she turned out to be anything but good, although the skipper, a rank Kentuckian, declared that he'd "fixed the voyage between St. Louis and New Orleans in five hours less time than any other boat, he had, and that's a fact."

As I stepped on board I saw another steamer lying alongside the quay, which had steam up, and was advertised to start with us; and the pilot, with whom I was already friends, guessed there'd be a race.

This was not comforting, for I had read in books of travel and adventure of midnight races between the high pressure boats of the Mississippi, and the chief associations in my mind with these events were the bursting of boilers, blowing up, conflagrations, and horrible collisions with snags.

However, I had taken my ticket, my baggage was aboard, and the presence of two or three hundred other passengers solaced me with the idea that, after all, these were but travellers' yarns, or people would not travel so frequently by the steamers. Little was I acquainted with the recklessness of the American people, whose monopoly of "big things," in catastrophes as in all else, makes them living exponents of the proverb that "familiarity breeds contempt."

We started at midnight, and I was relieved to see that the St. Louis, the opposition steamer, was still at her moorings, although her smoke-stacks were in full operation and her bell and whistle were going furiously. To re-tread old ground in the shape of describing a Mississippi steamboat voyage does not come within the scope of this paper; suffice it, therefore, to say that we reached Memphis, which is about a third of the way, without mishap, and without having even sighted the smoke of the St. Louis.

Off Blues Point, however, some miles from Memphis, there was a visible excitement in the neighbourhood of the glass steering-house,

and I, who was the only passenger awake, went up to enquire the reason.

"Look thar, sir, astern," said the skipper, pointing with the thumb of his right hand over his shoulder without turning his head. "That thar's the St. Louis; we oughter be ten miles ahead of her, but them derned niggers were so powerful slow in gettin' aboard them molasses at Memphis."

I looked and beheld, amid the dense blackness of the night, what seemed to be some unearthly fiery creature rounding the point we had passed some five minutes previously—the two side-lights representing the eyes, the glare of her furnace a horrible mouth, and the distinctly audible beats of the huge paddles simulating her angry pantings to come up with us.

"Keppins is spry, and that's a fact," said the skipper, lighting a huge cigar; "and I reckon he won't spare an inch of timber to send the St. Louis along. But the old Hab, she's got legs, too, and ef Keppins beats us, as he oughter do, considerin' his boat's new and this ere has been runnin' five years, it'll be an accident, I'm thinkin'."

"Accident!" I thought with a shudder, "that means to say that this reckless fellow is going to send us along at full speed until we either blow up or catch fire;" the latter seeming to be the most probable to me, when I thought that we were but a huge mass of dry woodwork heaped like spare fuel about a seething fiery furnace.

However, here I was, so I quieted my fears as best I could, and even took sufficient interest in the race to take a quiet bet with the skipper that we would win.

Our furnace roared, our stacks poured forth volumes of smoke and sparks, our huge paddles thrashed the waters until we shook and throbbed as if the boat herself was audibly expressing her interest in the race.

"See, sir, he's firing up," said the skipper. "Let her have it, boys," he roared down the tube communicating with the engine-room; "four more revolutions a minute, and five dollars a head if we whip her."

Our craft seemed to bound over the sullen black waters; the irregular, fantastic outlines of the trees on the banks sped by us like affrighted phantoms. Still, the fiery eyes and mouth of the St. Louis grew bigger and bigger, and the sound of her pantings more and more distinct.

Our skipper was almost beside himself. Cigar after cigar he smoked and threw away; he pulled his broad hat over his brows and flopped it back again; he plunged his hands into his pockets and withdrew them with a jerk as if they had been stung, all the while muttering execrations and charitable wishes, any single one of which, if it had taken effect, would certainly have sent the St. Louis and all on board her to the bottom.

Suddenly, as the nose of the enemy was within a steamer's length of our stern in a parallel line about three hundred yards away, there was a sharp click at our feet, followed by a rattling of chains.

"Steering-gear's snapped, sir," roared out a voice from somewhere amid the black recesses of our stern.

What the skipper said upon reception of this news I need not repeat; but he subsequently roared down the communication-tube in a voice of frenzy, "Stop her!"

Our paddles stopped, but our way on was considerable, and we drifted ahead for some yards ere it was patent that the Habakkuk E. Dodge was out of the race.

"Whipped yer this time," was wafted over the waters to us from the St. Louis, which was now directly ahead of us. Our skipper had not framed his stinging retort, when a sheet of flame leapt into the air from where the St. Louis was, followed by an unearthly roar, then for a second or two there was a dead silence, then came a confused cry of agony from many directions.

"Lower away the boats!" yelled our skipper; and although this was done smartly enough, their progress from our boat to the scene of the disaster was considerably delayed by the frantic exertions of our passengers to get into them, for the fearful roar and the blaze of light had awakened them, and nothing but absolute exertion of force could make them believe for some minutes that the accident had not happened to us.

## How to Work With the Microscope.

### PART II.

THERE is still one piece of the apparatus furnished with the microscope before referred to which requires a few words of description, and this is the "live-box." This useful and important article is intended to aid in the examination of the various minute beings which live in water, and which, but for some such contrivance, could scarcely be induced to remain in focus even for a second or two at a time. It will be found in the form of a circular brass cell, about three-quarters of an inch in diameter, which is fastened in the centre of a slip of the same metal, of the dimensions of an ordinary slide, and which is provided with a glass cover, capable of removal by raising and not by unscrewing it.

This live-box is used in the following manner. Get your microscope in working order, obtain the approximate focus required, and have the

condenser ready to hand. Remove the lid of the cell, and place a single drop of water upon the bottom. Then fasten the lid down tolerably tightly upon it, place the box upon the stage after the fashion of an ordinary slide, and then proceed as in the examination of an opaque object. The drop of water should never be a large one, or the inhabitants will be able to swim with so much facility that it will be far from easy to persuade them to remain in focus while under inspection.

A WONDERFUL amount of work may be done by the aid of this simple piece of apparatus, for the name of the microscopical beings inhabiting water is legion, and their examination will always be found an unfailing source of interest and amusement, more especially as they may be seen pursuing the ordinary avocations of their life, chasing, capturing, and preying upon one another, and so on. Any water, almost, will do for the purpose; even that supplied by the best regulated water companies will sometimes be found to contain "living organisms." But a puddle, a ditch, a pond, or a stream will furnish a far more bounteous supply, and will keep the microscopist busily employed as long as his supply of water lasts. Some of the more minute forms may be more easily examined by the simple expedient of damping an ordinary glass slide with the water containing them. The plan, however, has one or two counterbalancing disadvantages, chief among which is the fact that the water upon the slide is sure to evaporate very rapidly, its living contents, of course, consequently meeting with an untimely end.

Now as to the important question of light, which may be either natural or artificial. The former, of course, is best, as it is for most pursuits, but it is by no means indispensable. If you can work by daylight, however, so much the better. Choose a window facing the north or west, so as to avoid any unnecessary glare of sunshine, and arrange your table so that every available ray of light may be at your service. If the day be a little cloudy, that is rather an advantage than otherwise, for, strange to say, there is no light more trying than that which proceeds from a perfectly clear and cloudless sky. On the other hand, of course, work with the microscope is out of the question on very dark days, or at times when the light is constantly changing owing to the passage of heavy clouds across the sun. On such occasions it is far better not to attempt to work at all, but to await a more suitable opportunity; the result will only be failure and a strain upon the eyes.

THERE are many, however, whose circumstances permit them to follow their favourite occupation by artificial light only, and among these are some of our most successful and enthusiastic workers. The best form in which this light can be furnished is undoubtedly that of a good paraffin-lamp, which must be carefully trimmed in order that the flame may burn quite steadily, and without the occasional flicker which is annoying enough at any time, and especially so while one is occupied with so delicate a matter as work with a microscope. The lamp need not be an expensive one, those to be purchased everywhere at from two shillings to half-a-crown answering every purpose. But it must be properly trimmed. Gas should always be avoided, even in the form of an argand burner, for it is never satisfactory in any way.

WHILE in actual use the lamp should never be placed more than six or seven inches distant from the microscope, and the light must not be too powerful, or the eyes will be so dazzled that work will be impossible. The mirror, it must be remembered, is concave, so that the rays are concentrated before being reflected into the tube. The proper amount of light may be easily judged by adjusting the mirror in question in such a manner as to reflect the rays upwards into the object-glass, and then looking down the tube before placing a slide upon the stage. If the light is clear and brilliant, but not trying to the eye, you have managed things correctly.

A SHADE of some sort will, of course, be necessary to shield the eyes from the direct rays of the lamp. This is a very important point. Nor should any other light, if possible, be allowed in the same room. You will be able to work twice as long and in far greater comfort, if the upper part of the instrument can be kept in semi-darkness. In daylight, of course, this is not necessary, but artificial light is so much more trying, that the adoption of this plan will be found to afford a wonderful relief.

MANY workers seem to find great difficulty in abstracting their attention from the objects seen by the unoccupied eye, which should never be closed. There are two remedies for this trouble. The first consists in working only with a binocular microscope, which naturally involves considerable expense. The second, which is practicable to everyone, is merely to procure a sheet of dark-coloured card-board, and cut out a kind of shade, which can be fixed round the centre of the tube so as entirely to shut off the view of the table, etc., by the un-employed eye. A third plan consists merely in persistent attention to the object under examination, when after a time, objects seen by the unoccupied eye will cease to convey any impression to the brain. This, I think, is merely a matter of practice, and is sure to come sooner or later, in proportion to the degree of concentration of the attention attained by the worker; just in the same way as, when writing a letter,

for instance, we see the objects for some distance around us, and are yet quite unconscious that we do so.

BEFORE beginning work, see that all your glasses are thoroughly clean. Those in the tube will seldom require attention, but the object-glasses, unless carefully seen to, are very apt to harbour specks of dust upon the lenses, which greatly obscure the view of any slide seen through them. And it is extremely irritating when one has got the microscope nicely into working order, and is just settling down for an hour or two of steady work, to find that one of the lenses is dusty, and that the objective must consequently be taken off, cleaned, and replaced before any further progress can be made.

So, make a regular rule of seeing to the condition of the glasses before beginning work, and carefully clean any that may require it. In doing this, however, the very greatest care is necessary. Never brush off the dust with a handkerchief, or any other object which happens to come ready to hand, for the glass of which the lenses are composed is so extremely soft that it is scratched by the merest trifle, and were a fragment of any hard substance included amongst the dust, you would probably spoil your objective. For cleansing purposes there is no better material than the softest wash-leather, a piece of which should always be kept in the drawer for this very object. In default of this a camel's-hair pencil makes a very efficient substitute, and has the merit of working well round the edges without difficulty.

WHILE working with the microscope, adjust it in such a position that you can use it while sitting comfortably at the table without the necessity of either straining your neck or crouching in your endeavours to look through the tube. The instrument is so made that it can be used equally well in a perpendicular or in a horizontal position, so that tall and short people may use it with equal comfort. If you are very short, however, it is better to employ a low table, as unless the instrument is placed at above a certain angle it is not very easy to manage the light.

WHEN you have done with it, put your microscope away at once, either in its box, or beneath a glass case. If the latter, have a soft fluffy mat upon which to stand it (the case), in order to prevent the admission of dust from below. If you leave the instrument standing about, the chances are, that sooner or later, you will find it knocked off the table and every lens broken, the "cat" being the probable delinquent. Moreover, if the air is at all damp, the brass is sure to become rusty, rendering the instrument unsightly to the eye and extremely disagreeable to the touch, and entailing some little trouble before it can be cleaned. Should you have occasion to lift it bodily from the table, do so by grasping the square of mahogany to which it is clamped; never raise it by means of the tube, for fear of dragging some part out of its due adjustment to the remainder.

It may not be out of place here to offer a hint or two with regard to the examination of objects under glasses of different powers. I have before stated that the object-glasses of low power (the one-inch, and half-inch, more especially) are the most useful for general purposes, but I would here suggest that these be used for the examination of every object before proceeding to those of higher magnifying properties. One great advantage of this plan is that you can get even the most minute object into focus without difficulty, for you will have no trouble in doing so with the lower powers, and can leave it *in situ* upon the stage while you are shifting your object-glass. Another advantage is that you distinguish delicate points of structure, etc., by degrees. If you begin at once with the higher powers you must miss many of these, for they are so greatly enlarged that their character is often not perceived. So, begin always with a lower power, and from that work up to the high ones.

THERE are certain pieces of auxiliary apparatus furnished with the higher priced microscopes which are intended to aid the advanced student in his work, such as the polariscope, etc. For the description of these, however, it is impossible to find space in the present article, which is intended for beginners, and not for those who are attacking the higher branches of the study. For beginners only have the foregoing remarks been intended, and we trust that the few hints which we have been able to offer may be of use to them in their studies.

## Some Facts About Hair.

IN the early ages of the world's history kings wore their hair long, in imitation of Samson and the golden Sun-God Mithias. From this we find that the first men shorn were slaves and labourers; the free-men wore their hair uncut, as the crown of a perfect manhood and manliness.

There have been many instances of extraordinary growth of the hair in a single member of a family, but there is an entire long-haired family. Reference is made to the seven Sutherland sisters (Americans, of course), whose marvellous hirsute crops surpass anything of the kind ever presented to the public. Sarah N. Sutherland, the eldest, has



long, massive, and jet-black hair falling below the waist; Miss Victoria, whose hair is the longest worn by any woman in the world, and the longest on record, shows a growth reaching to a length of seven and a half feet; Miss Isabella's hair, which is of exceeding fineness, is more than six feet long; Miss Grace is proud of her endowment of hirsute wealth, which reaches a length of almost six feet; Miss Naomi's hair, which almost touches the ground when she stands erect, is the most massive and beautiful ever seen upon woman's head. It is fully six inches through, and when spread out covers her completely like a cloak; it is just such hair as the fair Godiva, who rode garmentless as to all else through Coventry, was gifted with. Miss Dora's hair is abundant, and five feet long. Miss Mary is the youngest; her hair has already attained a wonderful growth, and is rapidly tending towards such length and massiveness as will make it the most wonderful capillary decoration the world ever saw. But their long hair is not the only attraction offered by the seven sisters. They are a highly endowed, thoroughly educated, refined, and accomplished family, being gifted vocally and otherwise with extraordinary musical talent, which has been so completely educated that this feature alone recommends itself as worthy the attention of educated people. In their manners and actions they give full evidence of their high breeding and thorough education. To give the reader an idea of the remarkable length of the seven sisters' hair, it may be stated that Miss Victoria alone has thirty miles of hair on her head, and if the seven bulked their capillary possessions and each hair were placed end to end, the whole quantity would reach a distance of one hundred and sixty miles. Their heads are their fortunes in more senses than one. In Kansas City a hairdresser offered one thousand five hundred dollars for Miss Victoria's hair, and in St. Louis a jeweller paid twenty-five dollars for a single hair, by which he suspended a ten-carat diamond in his show-window. They are very careful in guarding their glorious head adornments, as frequent attempts have been made to cut their hair by villainously inclined people, who, no doubt, attempted the robbery with a view to selling their spoils.

In Japan much may be read from the arrangement of a woman's hair. The age and sex of a baby may be known by the tuft in the back of the neck, or the ring around the crown, or the bunch left in front while all the rest is shaved. A girl of eight or nine has her hair made into a bow on the back and wound round with red crape, while the front is shaved bare and bangs dangle at the sides. A young lady combs hers high in front and arranges it as a butterfly on the back of her head, plumed with gold or silver cord and gay hair-pins of gilt balls. Some very stylish young ladies prefer to have their back-hair resemble a half-open fan instead of a butterfly. A married woman must keep the waterfall style, while a widow who is willing to think of matrimony, wears her hair tied and twisted around a long shell hair-pin placed horizontally across the back of the head. But when a widow resolves never to change her name again, she cuts off her hair short on her neck and combs it back without any parting.

The difficulty of keeping a secret for ever has seldom been more quaintly illustrated than by the accident by which a sturdy heart of oak has been compelled to yield up its charge after keeping it for two centuries and a half.

A lock of hair once bestowed by some generous maid upon a too secretive lover has just been discovered in an oak-tree three feet six inches in diameter, which was sawn up into planks. One of these planks found its way to a carpenter's shop, where it attracted attention by an old-looking branch-like knot traversing its substance. This knot, excised from the tree out of sheer curiosity by one of the workmen, proved to be a peg of yew, containing a lock of bright red hair.

Further investigation demonstrated that a hole had been bored into the trunk of the tree with an auger, and that the plug, freighted with love's gift, had been driven into the aperture thus opened for it. In course of time the wound inflicted upon the tree had healed over the plug so effectually that the portion of the trunk under which the ruddy lock lay concealed exhibited no fewer than two hundred and fifty "rings," each one representing a year's growth of the brave old oak, chosen A.D. 1632, as the hiding-place of a sweetheart's ringlet.

Frequenters of picture-galleries must have observed that all portraits of French noblemen during the mediæval times, and up to the year 1530, represent men with abundant and flowing locks, but that from that year there is an abrupt change; the hair of Frenchmen becoming from that date as short as that of a modern gaol-bird. The reason of that was as follows: His Majesty Francis I. happening to spend the Christmas of 1529 at Fontainebleau, organised a series of routs and revels in honour of the New Year. On the 6th of January, it used to be customary for the mummers to elect a king, and engage in a mimic war against a rival party, who would attempt to depose the mock monarch. Francis, hearing that the lord of a neighbouring castle had been elected "king" by his friends, disguised himself and went with a party of twenty courtiers to offer battle to the revellers. The challenge was accepted. A fort was erected in the great hall of the castle, which Francis endeavoured to carry by storm. It was usual to fight with eggs in guise of shot, and with bags of flour in place of maces; but after a while the strife waxed hot, and somebody threw a lighted brand, which fell upon the disguised king's head, and felled him senseless to the ground. The wound was a very serious one. For some time Francis had to remain in bed, and when he again

made his appearance amidst his Court, his hair was found to be cropped quite close; while his beard, on the contrary, which he had always up to that time shaved off, had been suffered to grow luxuriantly. Imitation being the sincerest flattery, the courtiers hurried off to put themselves into the hairdresser's hands. Gradually their example was generally followed, and hair became short and beards lengthened. From France the new fashion passed into England and other countries, and lasted for nearly a hundred years.

## Early Days of John Ruskin.

"I HAD Walter Scott's novels," says Mr. Ruskin, "and the 'Iliad'—Pope's translation—for my reading when I was a child. On week days; on Sundays their effect was tempered by 'Robinson Crusoe' and the 'Pilgrim's Progress'; my mother having it deeply in her heart to make an evangelical clergyman of me. Fortunately, I had an aunt more evangelical than my mother; and my aunt gave me cold mutton for Sunday's dinner, which—as I much prefer it hot—greatly diminished the influence of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and the end of the matter was, that I got all the noble imaginative teaching of Defoe and Bunyan, and yet—I am not an evangelical clergyman. I had, however, still better teaching than theirs, and that compulsorily and every day of the week. Walter Scott and Pope's 'Homer' were reading of my own election, but my mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year; and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature. For toys," he says, "I had a bunch of keys to play with, as long as I was capable of pleasure in what glittered and jingled; as I grew older I had a cart, and a ball; and when I was five or six years old, two boxes of well-cut bricks. With these modest, but, I still think, entirely sufficient possessions, and being always summarily whipped if I cried, did not do as I was bid, or tumbled on the stairs, I soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion; and could pass my days contentedly in tracing the squares and comparing the colours of my carpet—examining the knots in the wood of the floor, or counting the bricks in the opposite houses. But the carpet, and what patterns I could find in bed-covers, dresses, or wall-papers to be examined, were my chief resources, and my attention to the particulars in these was soon so accurate, that when at three-and-a-half I was taken to have my portrait painted by Mr. Northcote, I had not been ten minutes alone with him before I asked him why there were holes in his carpet."

## Household Gardening.

### GREENHOUSE AND WINDOW PLANTS.

LAST week we referred to plants in glass structures, and gave instructions for repotting small healthy examples that required additional space for development; larger and older plants similarly need attention, but somewhat different treatment, which may be appropriately described, because it can be successfully practised at the present time.

### OVERPOTTING.

Not a few persons appear to think that every time a plant is repotted it must necessarily have a larger pot than the one in which it may be established. This is a great mistake. Young free-growing plants with their roots crowded in very small pots and struggling for more room by attempting to pass through the drainage, must, of course, have larger pots to enable the Geraniums, Fuchsias, Ferns, or whatever they may be to attain the desired size for flowering and occupying greenhouse or window-space effectually; but plants already large enough may be repotted and invigorated without increasing the size of the pots at all, may, indeed, often with great advantage be placed in smaller pots than those which they at present occupy. Overpotting is a great and, moreover, a too common evil, involving a waste of space and soil, while the plants so treated languish instead of flourish.

### GERANIUMS IN SPRING.

We employ the popular name of the most popular of all greenhouse and window plants, in order to be better understood than if we referred to the plants under their botanically accurate name of Pelargoniums. The plants under notice now are those with round leaves, some with a dark zone in them, others variegated with white or yellow, but all producing in their season trusses of rather small, and more or less round, scarlet, pink, and white flowers; not to that type with crisped and more or less deeply cut leaves, and large two or more coloured flowers. These latter are called Show Pelargoniums, the others immediately in question are technically known as Zonals, or popularly, Zonal Geraniums.

## CHARACTER OF THE PLANTS.

Numbers of these plants flowered last year, and rendered rooms, window-boxes, greenhouses, and flower-beds bright and cheerful in the summer. The plants that flowered in pots remain in the same pots still. They may be large plants now, and not required to occupy more space; still, it is hoped they will grow healthily and flower freely in the ensuing summer. They will certainly do so if rightly managed, while at the same time their size need not be materially increased.

Some of the plants may have been cut down in the autumn and the cuttings inserted, as was advised at the time. Such plants will be dwarf now, with numerous short branches, and these only need support to render them healthy and floriferous.

## NEGLECTED PLANTS.

Other plants were not cut down, as there are always a few thousands of persons who greedily read advice that may be tendered on subjects in which they are interested, but who hesitate to act with the necessary promptitude to turn the teaching to profitable account. It is thus with not a few owners of cherished window-plants. They refrain from pruning lest they should spoil them, preferring to let them extend until they are too tall to be attractive, and consist of a few long thin stems with a tuft of leaves on the top, and few or none on the lower portions of the plants.

There are thousands of such neglected plants in rooms and greenhouses at the present moment, and unless any of them may be needed specially tall and thin for some particular purpose or position, they should be cut down now. Unhesitatingly the too tall growths may be shortened to any extent desired, provided the stems are not severed below the wood that was made last summer. There can be no difficulty in determining the last summer's growth from that of the season before, and the last-made portion may be cut off anywhere according to the judgment and taste of the operator. The pruning should be done with a knife as sharp as a razor, and if the tops removed are made into cuttings five or six inches long and inserted in small pots of sandy soil, they will emit roots, and in a short time make healthy plants.

Old plants cut down now should not be potted at the same time. It is better to allow them to push fresh growths from the shortened stems, and then, when those are about an inch or so long, may have fresh soil given them in the manner that will be described.

## REPOTTING OLD PLANTS.

Plants that were cut down in the autumn, or plants that were not shortened, and which are desired to be tall, and consequently will not be pruned to any extent now, may with advantage be given fresh soil at once, but not necessarily larger pots.

If a Geranium is cut down in the autumn, or if it is left unpruned and loses a number of its leaves in the winter, as is certain to be the case, a number of the roots, all the small fibrous portions, almost invariably die.

Let a plant be turned out of its pot now, and if nearly all the roots are seen to be brown and dry, like a mass of hair or cobwebs, at once boldly crush the soil until it falls from the roots, then with a knife trim off the dried portions of these, and place the plant either in the same pot, or in a smaller, never in a larger, using fresh soil—two-thirds fresh loam, one-third leaf-soil; a little wood, not coal, ashes; and a sprinkling of sand, forming a suitable compost.

The pots used must be perfectly clean, dry, and well drained, and the soil pleasantly moist, not disagreeably wet, when handled. The pots cannot be too small, provided there is just room for inserting the fingers between the roots and sides of the pots for pressing down the soil. Placing such partially divested plants in large unwieldy pots as are often used is almost tantamount to placing them in their graves, and it should always be remembered that the nearer the roots are to the sides of the pots the better will the plants flourish.

## SURFACE DRESSING PLANTS.

Some Geraniums that have been steadily growing through the winter will have white fleshy roots when turned out of the pots. These plants must not be disrooted like the others with dead fibrous roots, but may have about a third part of the old soil removed from the surface, not materially disturbing the roots that are seen to be fresh, then filling up the pots with fresh soil and pressing it down firmly. If the soil in the pots both of these surface-dressed plants and of the others that have been disrooted and repotted be kept regularly moist, fresh roots will quickly form and partake of the viands supplied, the certain result being a healthy growth, and in due time a profusion of fine flowers; that is, if the plants are well tended and have a light position, sun and air being absolutely essential to the well-being of these deservedly admired greenhouse and window plants.

## LAST YEAR'S FUCHSIAS.

These most elegant of window-plants may be grown and flowered with the greatest satisfaction year after year if they are rightly treated, and this treatment is so simple that it is not easy for any intelligent person to fail in carrying it out.

In the autumn after the plants have ceased flowering, the supply of water, as was advised at the time, ought to have been reduced. In time the leaves would turn yellow and fall, just as they fall from apple-trees in the garden or oak-trees in the woods.

Thus defoliated, Fuchsias may be wintered in any dark or light place, and the cooler it is the better, provided frost cannot enter, the soil in the meantime being kept almost quite dry, yet not as dry as dust. In that condition the plants rest for two or three months, but at this period of the year, they awake from their slumber and commence pushing their buds.

On plants in a dark place these buds will be white; in a light place they will be green. Those in the dark must be brought to the light, but not at once into the full sun, a gradation from darkness to light always being desirable.

Thoroughly water the dry soil, and at the same time, with a pair of scissors or a sharp knife, trim off most of the last year's shoots, cutting them off close to the strongest buds that may be seen starting, even if these buds are close to the main stem; it is not easy, indeed, to err in pruning too severely.

With the soil kept moist the growths will extend rapidly, and, when they are from a quarter to half an inch long, turn the plants out of the pots, shake all the old soil from the roots, and place in fresh, and, if possible, smaller pots, in the same manner as advised for Geraniums; sprinkle the Fuchsias daily in bright weather, apply water to the roots judiciously, keeping the soil moist, without soddening it, and fresh root-action will be prompt, and induce healthy vigorous growth.

When the pots are filled with active roots, larger pots can be given if required, and failing these, the plants can be kept healthy by the aid of top-dressings of rich compost, or frequent applications of weak liquid manure. Such stimulants will, however, not be needed for some time, pure water at present being all that is needed, and those who exercise the soundest judgment in its application will succeed the best.

## A "Spirit-Stirring" Adventure.

THE compiler of a book, published a good many years ago, called "Zoological Notes and Anecdotes," quoted an account of a giraffe hunt, from the "Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of South Africa," by Sir Cornwallis Harris, and designated it as a "spirit-stirring adventure." What sort of spirit it stirred in us, our readers will not find it difficult to conjecture.

Sir Cornwallis Harris had for weeks sought in vain to get a shot at a giraffe. One day he saw what he took to be a large branchless stump of some withered tree in the distance; but presently it moved along above the tops of the thicket, and he was soon able to distinguish a stately giraffe gliding among the trees, "its graceful head nodding like a lofty pine." He set spurs to his horse, and soon found himself "half choked with excitement" close upon the heels of the giraffe, who went "sailing before him," with great velocity, "like some tall ship upon the ocean's bosom." The half-choked sportsman dismounts to fire, and "the mottled carcass presenting a fair and inviting mark," he has "the satisfaction of hearing two balls tell roundly" upon the back of his towering victim. They are not sufficient; so he remounts and again pursues. He and his horse tumble into a hole, by which his rifle is broken; he scrambles up again, however, and binding his rifle-barrel to the stock with his handkerchief, once more gives chase. Meanwhile the poor, weary, and innocent giraffe had stood still to allow of his approach. The hunter is now in a state of wild excitement at finding that the lock of his rifle will not act; in vain he looks round for a stone, and seeks in every pocket for a knife with which either to strike the copper cap, or hamstring the colossal but harmless animal, who stood waiting for his doom. The reader will rejoice to hear that the giraffe escaped. A few days afterwards, however, Sir Cornwallis Harris suddenly came upon a herd of thirty giraffes, and his blood "coursed like quicksilver through his veins" as he galloped after them. Coming up with the fugitives he singled out their "lordly chief," and, "applying the muzzle of the rifle towards his dappled shoulder, drew both triggers."

The conclusion of the affair is given in these words:

"Mute, dignified, and majestic, stood the unfortunate victim, occasionally stooping his elastic neck towards his persecutor, the tears trickling from the lashes of his dark humid eye, as broadside after broadside was poured into his brawny front.

"His drooping head sinks gradually low,  
And through his side the last drops ebbing slow,  
From the red gash," etc.

Presently a convulsive shivering seized his limbs, his coat stood on end, his lofty frame began to totter, and, at the seventeenth discharge from the deadly grooved bore, "like a fallen minaret, bowing his graceful head from the skies, his proud form was prostrate in the dust." "Never shall I forget the intoxicating excitement of the moment! At last, then, the summit of my ambition was attained, and the towering giraffe laid low. Tossing my turbanless cap into the air, alone in the wild wood, I hurrahed with bursting exultation, and unsaddling my steed, sank, exhausted with delight, beside the noble prize I had won."

All this is very pretty and imposing, especially the poetry. Whether the poetry and the bursting exultation go quite well together, is a point the curious reader will perhaps consider.

## Odds and Ends.

AN amusing story comes from Simla, which shows that the strenuous opposition of the majority of Anglo-Indians to the passing of the Ilbert Bill is not without a cause. Treachery and cunning seem to be inseparable from the native character, and marvellous is the ingenuity with which on all occasions the Hindoos succeed in cheating their European employers. It is a well-known fact that the greatest care has to be taken in the holding of competitive examinations, as it is the amiable custom of the native printers to steal copies of the questions and sell them beforehand to the candidates. On a recent occasion one of the examiners determined that he would prevent this; and accordingly he went to the trouble and expense of having his questions lithographed. He sat and watched the preparation of the stone; he saw all the impressions struck off, counted them himself, took the printer out of the room with him, and locked the door. And yet copies were sold at a rupee each that night to the students. The lithographer wore a white suit, and before he left the room he sat for one moment on the stone.

HORNE TOOKE, whose father was poulterer to the Royal Family, whilst at Westminster and Eton Schools, was of course accustomed to associate occasionally with the sons of people of distinction, and being aware of the ridicule too generally attached to a humble origin, he found means to spare himself from all mortification of this kind by calling in either his wit or invention to his aid. Once, while a few idle boys, who had formed themselves into a circle, were interrogating each other about the rank and condition of their respective parents, one said he was the son of Sir Robert A.; the next, that his father was the Earl of B.; and the third, that his grandmother was the Duchess of C.; when it came to young Horne's turn, he observed that he could not boast of any titles in his family, and, on being more closely pressed, added, with a well-affected reluctance, that his father was an eminent Turkey merchant. This reply was both conclusive and satisfactory, for at the period alluded to England enjoyed a large share of the Levant trade, and a Turkey merchant was but another name for opulence.

IN the attack on the strong fortress of St. Fernando de Omaco, in the year 1780, an English sailor, who had scrambled singly over the wall, had, for better annoyance of the enemy on all sides, armed himself with a cutlass in each hand. Thus equipped he fell in with a Spanish officer just roused from sleep, and who, in the hurry and confusion, had forgotten his sword. The circumstance restrained the fury of the British tar, who, disdaining to attack an unarmed foe, but unwilling to relinquish so happy an opportunity of displaying his courage in single combat, presented one of the cutlasses to him, saying: "I scorn any advantage; you are now upon an equal footing with me." The astonishment of the officer at such an act of generosity, and the facility with which a friendly parley took place, when he expected nothing else from the uncouth and hostile appearance of his foe than being cut into pieces instantly, and without mercy, could only be rivalled by the admiration which his relation of the story excited in his countrymen.

ONCE, at a little dinner-party in America, one of the guests, the younger brother of an English nobleman, expressed with commendable freedom his opinion of America and its people. "I do not altogether like the country," said the young gentleman, "for one reason, because you have no gentry here." "What do you mean by gentry?" asked another of the company. "Well, you know," replied the Englishman, "well—oh, gentry are those who never do any work themselves, and whose fathers before them never did any." "Ah!" exclaimed his interlocutor, "then we have plenty of gentry in America. But we don't call them gentry; we call them tramps." A laugh went round the table, and the young Englishman turned his conversation into another channel.

FROM the beginning of the world to the time of Hierocles, in the early Christian days, mankind had perpetrated only about twenty-one jokes. During nearly five thousand years the world had only these twenty-one funny sayings to laugh at. A new joke was made on an average every two hundred and fifty years. From the time of Hierocles to the present day the number of jocose sayings has increased from twenty-one to pretty nearly twenty-one millions—an enormous proportion of this vast aggregate, however, consisting of some modification or combination of the original twenty-one.

SHERIDAN was once dining with Peter Moore, when a servant, in passing between Sheridan and the fire, knocked down the plate-warmer with a tremendous clatter. Sheridan started and trembled. Moore, provoked at this, scolded the servant, adding: "I suppose you have broken all the plates?" "No, sir," replied the servant; "not one." "Not one!" exclaimed Sheridan; "then, hang it, you have made all the noise for nothing!"

A GENTLEMAN was constantly in the habit of calling his servants before their faces "necessary evils." He quarrelled with one of them, who left him in a rage, said he was sick of service, and vowed that he would never enter it again. A few days after, his master meeting him in livery, said: "Pooh, you are gone into service again after all." "Ah, sir! I have found that masters are necessary evils."

"I DON'T take much stock in proverbs," said Brown to Jones. "For instance, look at the oft-quoted one, 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.' Now, most of my experience with friends in need has been that they wanted to borrow. Give me a friend who is not in need."

"WHAT a pity it is," said a lady to Garrick, "that you are not taller!" "I should be happy indeed, madam," replied Garrick, "to be higher in your estimation."

AN obituary notice contains the touching intelligence that the deceased "had accumulated a little money and ten children."

BROWN: "My dear fellow—two umbrellas! What on earth's that for?" Jones: "Why, in case I leave one anywhere."

LORD CHESTERFIELD designates ugly women as the third sex; how shall we place ugly men?

A SICK man is considered out of danger when the doctor discontinues his visits.

## A MILITARY WARNING, FOUND AT WINCHESTER.

"IN Memory of Thomas Thetcher, a grenadier in the North Regiment of Hants Militia, who died of a violent fever, contracted by drinking small beer when hot, the 12th of May, 1764, aged twenty-six years. In grateful remembrance of whose universal good will towards his comrades, this stone is placed here at their expense, as a small testimony of their regard and concern."

"Here sleeps in peace a Hampshire Grenadier.  
Who caught his death by drinking cold small beer.  
Soldiers, be wise from his untimely fall,  
And when ye're hot drink strong or none at all."

This memorial being decayed was restored by the officers of the garrison A.D. 1781.

"An honest soldier never is forgot,  
Whether he die by musket or by pot."

This stone was placed by the North Hants Militia, when disembodied at Winchester on 26th April, 1802, in consequence of the original stone being destroyed."

A PLUMBER was sent for to the house of a wealthy stockbroker to execute some repairs. He was taken by the butler into the dining-room, and was beginning his work when the lady of the house entered. "John," said she, with a suspicious glance towards the plumber, "remove the silver from the sideboard, and lock it up at once." But the man of lead was in no wise disconcerted. "Tom," said he to his apprentice, who accompanied him, "Take my watch and chain and these coppers home to my missus at once. There seems to be dishonest people about this house."

"Look to de right," said a French peepshow-man, whose box was perched upon the balustrade of London Bridge, "and I will show you de Grand Monarque of France on a horsey-back, vid all de nobility around him, and look to de left and I will show you de King of de English valking on foot, vid all de mob hollaring after him." A sailor, a true lover of his king and country, who was standing by, gave the box a push, adding: "Look you over de bridge, and I will show you your box in de water."

THE Chinese nation almost entirely clothes itself in cotton, in one form or another, warmth in winter being obtained by means of wadded garments, which are piled on until the wearer assumes something like the aspect of a stuffed doll. Hence the severity of the weather is not infrequently expressed in terms of clothing—as, for instance, "a two-coat-day," or "a three-coat-day."

AN English bishop was always very glad to see one of the clerical workers in his diocese, but the latter being rather eccentric in his dress, he was obliged now and then to administer a gentle reprimand. "Mr. X., are those white trousers quite clerical?" he once asked. "Oh, my lord, they've washed white!" answered Mr. X. "Then, sir, I suppose," said the bishop, "your tie has washed black!"

VERY thin and miserable-looking passenger in an omnibus, after half an hour's torture to every passenger: "I think it would be only fair if people travelling by 'bus were charged by weight." Stout and jolly-looking ditto: "You may be thankful it isn't so, as no conductor would think it worth his while to pick you up."

AN ingenious individual has hit upon a scheme whereby he expects to make a fortune. He will advertise largely: "For half-a-crown I will disclose a plan whereby halfpenny postage-stamps can be made to do the work of penny ones." His plan is perfectly simple, and cannot fail. Use two of them.

A POSTESS had begun a poem in uncompromising blank verse on the degeneracy of man: "Man was a noble being once; but he—". And here she was compelled to leave it. A degenerate one came in and took the liberty of helping her forward a little: "Would probably have remained so; but she—."

THAT was a fine piece of irony of Pugin's when he had got out the designs for a magnificent cathedral, to cost thirty thousand pounds, and the committee of the building fund wanted him to reduce the price to ten thousand: "Say thirty shillings more, gentleman," he wrote, "and have a nice spire!"

"How did you come to get married?" asked a man of a very homely friend. "Well, you see," he replied, "after I'd vainly tried to win several girls that I wanted, I finally turned my attention to one that wanted me, and then it didn't take long to arrange matters."

AN elderly person entering the hotel, asked a waiter what he could have for dinner. "Roastbeef, lamb, mutton and ham," replied the waiter. "Well," said the old gentleman, "I've never tasted it, but you may bring me in some and I'll see what it is like."

A SPIRIT-MERCHANT applied to a customer for a letter of recommendation of a certain brand of whisky he had recently sold him. The customer wrote: "I have tried all sorts of insect poison, and find none equal your old cabinet whisky."

AN eminent Jew stockbroker was lately asked why people preferred venison to mutton, which was much cheaper and better. "Vy, I will tell you," was the reply; "in dish vorld de peoples alwaysh prefersh vat ish dear to vat is sheep."

"MY dear Miss A.—This ring, which I would ask you to accept of me, is emblematic of my love for you; it has no end." "Thank you very much, Mr. B.; it curiously resembles my love for you: it has no beginning."

"I WISH I had lived in anger," said a little fellow whose mother had just been punishing him. "What do you mean by that nonsense?" she said sharply. "Because teacher said people should never be punished in anger."

A WIDOW, intending to succeed her husband in the management of an hotel, advertised that "The hotel will be kept by the widow of the former landlord, Mr. Brown, who died last summer on a new and improved plan."

A CLEVER witticism is attributed to the late Prince Imperial. When asked why people always said "brave as a sword," and never "brave as a cannon," he replied: "Because a cannon always recoils when it is fired."

EVERY machinist is expected to have at least one vice.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## QUESTION.

LAWYER JONES will be glad if anyone will tell him who wrote the following lines, and where they are to be found:

This box contains a man of wit;  
A man of sense, a man not fit;  
A man of strength, a man of place;  
A man devoid of every grace;  
A man of rank, a man of none;  
A man who'd rather be at home;  
A man of luck, a man of taste;  
A man who would his country waste;  
These men, when sworn, a jury make,  
To clear up many a mistake.

## ANSWERS.

A. J. L. M.—We do not know anything about the advertisement.

COUSIN JONATHAN.—1. A number of ingenious explanations of the origin of the sign used to represent the American dollar have been given. One writer says it comes from the letters U.S., which, after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, were prefixed to the Federal currency, and which afterwards, in the hurry of writing, were run into one another, the U being made first and the S over it. Another idea is that it is derived from a contraction of the Spanish word for dollars, and yet another that the stars and stripes afford an obvious explanation. 2. There is a very useful book entitled "Hardy Perennials," by John Wood, published by Upcott Gill, which treats of old-fashioned flowers. It contains a large number of capital illustrations, and cannot fail to give you every necessary cultural hint on each of, as you well call them, "the dear old plants."

DARBY AND JOAN.—The tin wedding day is less frequently kept than the silver and golden wedding, but may be made a very interesting and amusing celebration of the matrimonial decade. The following is an account of how these things are managed in New York: "Cards" are sent out made of tin, on which is printed a suitable inscription, and, by the way, for the benefit of all printers, I will say this should be done with a rubber stereotype, because type-metal will indent the tin. The inscription gives the year of the marriage and the current year, and, leaving out of view the material, is much like any 'At Home' card. Each guest is expected to bring a present, which must be partly or wholly of tin, and may be a tin drinking-cup worth twopence, or a costly piece of lace in an old tin mustard-box. Dealers in tin-ware prepare articles assimilated in shape to wearing apparel, laundry utensils, or furniture, utterly useless, of course, and only intended to cause merriment. Fancy a broad-brimmed hat or a flat-iron made of tin, or a writing-desk made of the same material. At a tin wedding I recently attended, a guest brought a tin pail filled with lemonade, and a silver ladle to serve the beverage. Another brought a fog-horn, such as the fishing schooners use on the high seas in thick weather, to give warning of their presence and avoid collision with other vessels. Its note is an exceedingly low C, so low that after one solo on it, the hearer would be glad to see it so low in the sea that none would ever see it again. The tin wedding is an excellent occasion for the renewal of the kitchen tins, while it affords much merriment by the ludicrous offerings which are sometimes made."

ENQUIRER.—"The Third of February, 1852," refers to the famous debate held in the House of Lords on that evening, when the Peers advocated what Lord Tennyson considered a pusillanimous and time-serving policy in regard to the then ruler of France.

ETHEL NEWCOME.—1. If the redness be round the edges of your eyelids, it is probably due to over-reading, especially by poor light or by gaslight. Always have the light coming from behind or above you when you are reading or doing fine work. You might wear "London Smoke" spectacles if you have to do much reading at night. Apply the following lotion two or three times a day; bathe the eyes with it, or else use an eye-cup as supplied by chemists. At night you may anoint your eyelids with simple ointment. The lotion is two grains of alum dissolved in one ounce of water; a chemist will make this up for you. 2. We regret that we have not space to print the poem. 3. Your handwriting is legible and good, though at present too child-like.

FRIEND IN TROUBLE.—We are not aware that the "Funeral Reform Association" advocates cremation. The secretary of the association is the Rev. F. Lawrence, vicar of Weston, York, who will give you any information. Send stamps certainly.

HIBERNIA.—Queenstown was formerly called the Cove of Cork; the name was changed in 1850 out of compliment to Queen Victoria when she visited Ireland with her husband in that year. Some wag said that the Royal couple "went to Cork to see a cove that was there."

JOAN D.—"Cantab" kindly writes that the lines,

Lightly beats the heart that never  
Felt the pangs that wait on love, etc.,

are taken from "Sweetly O'er My Senses Stealing," sung by Miss Paton in the opera of "Native Land," at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

J. G. C.—"The King Shall Have His Own Again" is an old Royalist song, dating from 1647. A modern edition has been edited by Sir George Macfarren, price 1s. If not out of print, can be had from Robinson, 95, St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross.

MOLLYPOLLIAN.—1. The myth of "Der Erl-könig" belongs to German and Scandinavian poetical mythology. Goethe's celebrated poem has rendered this malicious spirit universally known. 2. Here are some easy subjects, which might possibly suit your essay, "Society": 1. Mourning Reform; 2. Rational Dress; 3. Good Manners; 4. The Wives of Men of Genius; 5. An Old Epitaph, "What I spent I had. What I gave I have. What I saved I lost"; 6. On the Influence of a Belief in Good Luck.

S. NORWOOD.—We shall publish the information you require very shortly, probably next week, or, at any rate, in time to be of service to yourself and other readers.

TREKLEIG.—As at present arranged, no.

TRIX TEMPEST.—Castanets can be had from Messrs. H. Potter and Co., 30, Charing Cross. They are made of hard wood, shaped somewhat like the bowl of a spoon, or of a scallop-shell. The two are hinged together by a cord, which passes over the thumb and first finger, the remaining fingers striking the two halves together, either in single strokes or in trills. Castanets are also made attached to a handle, so that by shaking the whole the desired effect is produced. Amateurs find the unmounted castanets most difficult to manage, and the string wears out, requiring renewal. Those with the handle are easily learned, and cost 5s. a pair. Those without are 3s. You would require a pair for each hand.

TWEEDLE-DE-DEE.—Cheese Canapées are neatly-cut pieces of fried bread sprinkled with cheese; here is a recipe: Cut the crumb of a stale French roll into slices half an inch thick, which put into the frying-basket, and immerse in a saucepan half full of boiling fat for half a minute, when they should be brown and crisp, but not hard. Thoroughly drain the fried bread, and cover each piece thickly with grated cheese. Sprinkle with pepper and salt, and put the canapées in the Dutch-oven before a clear fire until the cheese is melted; serve immediately.

VERITAS.—In the *Times* of February 17th there is a long letter to the Editor from Mr. J. C. Robinson, who is a great authority on art matters. The letter is entitled "The Conservation of Sir Joshua Reynolds's Pictures," and treats fully of the best methods of cleaning oil-paintings, relining, etc. We can give you no more trustworthy or useful hints and directions than are to be found in Mr. Robinson's letter.

WHEREFORE?—The parody of verses from "In Memoriam" appeared in *Punch* at the time when all the world was looking for a solution of the mysterious announcement placarded everywhere—"Ozokerit":

Wild rumours through the air did flit,  
Wild rumours shaped to mystic hints,  
When bright through breadth of public prints  
Flamed the great word Ozokerit.

And much the peoples marvelled when  
That mystic thing should come to view;  
And what is it, and whereunto?  
Rung frequent in the mouths of men.

WILHELM.—The opera of "Moro, or the Painter of Antwerp," was published by Cramer at 10s. 6d. nett about the beginning of 1882. It was performed by the Carl Rosa Company in January, 1882, and was a dead failure here, as it had been before in Trieste. It is never likely to be popular, for it is not at all a good opera, nor is it written in Balfe's usual style. Here is what the critic of the *Musical Times* says of it: "Not only has Balfe translated his style into Italian, but he has boldly pressed themes from the modern Italian composers into his service, and produced a 'musical mixture' which defies artistic criticism."

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 151.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Paul's Love Token.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"COME, M. Paul, you have just returned from Paris; tell me if any of the smart ladies there had a cap equal to mine?" And she placed the dainty head-dress on the top of her sunny locks, looking laughingly up into the grave face of her staunch friend, in a way that dazzled his eyes and confused his brain.

"Not one of them," he answered with a slow smile, whilst the compliment he had thought of halted on the tip of his tongue.

"They were prettier, I presume?" with a challenging glance which ought to have brought it to the fore.

"Don't know about that," digging his spade deeper in the earth; "richer, perhaps, with all their jewels, but—"

"Oh, of course, you can't think anything of mine, with a rose that cost only half-a-franc," and, snatching it from her head, she threw it disdainfully into her work-basket. "It's a pity when people come back from seeing the world only to be discontented with all they find at home."

Paul Gilbert said nothing, but went on digging till all the rich brown earth was turned up to meet the evening dew.

Ninette Duvergnay watched him admiringly, though she would have bitten her tongue out rather than confess it. He was so strong, so resolute! What he did, he did with all his might; what he said, he meant; what he promised, he carried out; and what he thought, nobody could guess. His figure was tall and muscular, his face picturesque, though scarcely handsome, with dark hair growing low on a broad forehead, and covering the lower part of his face with a thick brown beard. His eyes were brown, like his beard, with a dog-like expression of fidelity in their honest depths, but capable of flashing like a vivid flame when excited by passion.

"There, mademoiselle, it is finished," as he stooped to wipe the earth off the edge of the spade, before replacing it in its accustomed corner. "Is there anything else to be done?"

She looked round with a nod of approval.

"The beans are picked, the creepers tied up, the potato-ground dug, the caterpillars taken off the roses. Nothing more, thank you, M. Paul. You have been very good," with the air of an Empress thanking a faithful servant.

"Ah, I forgot the water!" and, shouldering a pail, he walked off between the rows of cabbages to the little stream outside. "There it is!" And he set it down with a clang at her feet, on the stone step of the vine-covered porch.

She started back with an impatient exclamation. "You needn't have wetted my shoes!"

He drew out his pocket-handkerchief. "Will you wipe them? I am so terribly clumsy."

"I'll do it for you," said a cheerful voice behind them, and Raoul Favarger, a young fellow with merry blue eyes, and a good-looking face, who had strolled into the garden unperceived, possessed himself of Paul's pocket-handkerchief, and kneeling down on the flags, wiped the little shoes with the greatest care.

"I thought you were over at Mons," said Ninette, for reasons of her own pretending to be engrossed by the new comer.

"So I was, but I tore back as fast as my legs could bring me. What for, do you suppose?" leaning against the trellis-work, his light hair shining in the moonlight.

"To be sure of having a good night's rest before to-morrow," looking demurely down at her work-basket.

"Something much more important."

"Good-night, mademoiselle," said Paul abruptly.

Accustomed to find himself in the way as soon as Favarger appeared, this evening it struck him with unusual bitterness. When his work was over on his own little farm, he was welcome to slave himself to death on Madame Duvergnay's small patch of ground, to prevent a girl's dimpled hands from being soiled; but when the work was done, the reward was for the man who did nothing. Paul loved the work, but he desired a reward. The love was chivalrous, the longing only natural.

"Good-evening," and Ninette smiled. "We shall meet at the fête to-morrow."

The two men exchanged careless nods, and Paul went away, leaving Raoul in possession.

"Ninette, you lazy girl, you haven't done a bit of work this evening," said a shrill voice from the interior of the cottage.

"It is all done—every bit of it. Thanks to M. Paul," she added sotto voce.

"Lucky dog, he always has the best of it."

"He has all the work," said Ninette remorsefully; "I don't think that's the best."

"No, the pay is best—and I mean to have the first dance to-morrow."

"What have you done to earn it?" looking up at him doubtfully from under her long lashes.

"Rushed home like a madman from Mons."

"And he worked hard all the evening!"

"Let him, he likes it; work comes as naturally to him as idleness to you and me. We have a soul above it; he has not a wish beyond it."

"How do you know?" she asked sharply, roused by perversity into taking his part.

"If he had, do you think he would go home and leave me here?" he said with his bold, bright eyes fixed on her face. "If I had twice the farm that he has, I would let the whole place go to ruin for the sake of one word with you."

"And when the word was spoken how sorry you would be!"

"Not I, so long as I had got what I wanted."

"Fancy coming back to your desolate farm, how bad you would feel, M. Raoul!"

"Not if I had you with me."

"Thank you, sir," dropping a curtsy. "You think I should help you to milk the cows, to cut the hay, and to sow the corn."

"You should help me," with a light laugh, "but only by looking on."

"And the work would do itself whilst we were talking nonsense on a stile."

"Paul Gilbert couldn't talk nonsense to save his life."

"He has too much sense."

"Does that make him as solemn as a priest at a funeral? I would rather be without it."

"How very lucky!"

"Do you take me for an idiot?" drawing himself up with a frown.

"I don't take you at all," with a charming smile. "Good-night, grannie is calling me."

"Come to the gate with me," he entreated, and she tripped down the path by his side, with her work-basket over her arm.

Raoul leant his arm on the gate, as soon as he had passed through it, and seemed in no hurry to be off.

"The first dance," he whispered. "I came on purpose to ask for it."

"I always give that to M. Paul," a slight blush stealing up her cheek.

"Then it is high time to give it to some one else; he has had it long enough."

"Quite long enough, if mademoiselle grudges it," said a deep voice from the other side of the hedge, as Paul Gilbert, who happened to be smoking his pipe in the lane, passed on.

Raoul raised his head, angry at the interruption. Ninette started, and, without a word, fled back to the cottage. He followed her to the porch.

"Mademoiselle, it may be the last we shall ever have together."

"Why?" looking back over her shoulder.

"The next day the lots are drawn, and the luck may go against me—that detestable conscription!" he muttered beneath his breath.

"But it shan't. I have set my heart on my friends escaping."

"Set your heart on me, and bring me luck. Give me the dance, and there will be no going off into exile for me."

"Nor for M. Paul?" wistfully.

"Bother M. Paul! Who cares?"

"I do," and she whisked into the house, blushing at her own confession, whilst Raoul was kept outside by the fear of the grandmother.

### CHAPTER II.

It was the day of the annual fête at St. Eustache, in honour of the saint who had given his name to the little village, and as yet neither Atheism nor Communism had penetrated amongst its simple-hearted peasantry; the procession which followed the sacred banner into the old grey church was not insulted, and the subsequent dinner was eaten without the now time-honoured accompaniments of dynamite and petroleum. It was many years ago, when the conscription was in full force, and the hearts of most of the women were saddened by thoughts of the morrow, when the lots were to be drawn. Those who drew high numbers were exempt from service till the next call; but there always seemed to be more low numbers than high, and very few of the men who went up came back to settle down again to the old peaceful life at the plough.



It was a splendid day, the scorching sun beat down upon the valley, making the river glow like a flame, whilst the roses hung their heads, longing for dewy eve.

In the afternoon, when Nature was panting, and every cow had found its way to the nearest bit of water, the whole village gathered in a level meadow, fringed on one side by the stream, on the other by a coppice. The elders threw themselves down on the grass under the shade of the trees, and played at cards or dominoes, whilst the young people strolled about, waiting for the Mons band to give the signal for dancing.

Ninette Duvergny, arrayed in her best cotton gown, looped up over a red petticoat, with the lace cap adorned with the red rose stuck coquettishly at the top of her yellow curls, leant against the stem of a lime, waiting for someone who, though willing enough to do so, would not come. She looked like an impersonation of the summer brightness, with her smiling lips, her laughing eyes; her soft white skin unmarred by a furrow of care. And more than one pair of eyes rested admiringly on her slight figure, and wanted to linger, but were warned off by the frown of her companion.

Raoul Favarger had chosen to comport himself during the day as if he had been Ninette's affianced husband. His moustaches actually bristled with anger if any man attempted to pay her a compliment. In St. Eustache, lovers were very jealous of the girls they considered as their own property, so Raoul's conduct, judged from false premises, was tolerated as only natural.

Ninette, trying to pique Paul Gilbert into jealousy, talked and laughed with the younger man all through that summer's day. Perhaps she succeeded, for Paul never came near her; but if so, she was not content with that kind of success, and when the band struck up the familiar tune of "The Baker," she looked round with wistful eyes, seeking his tall form amongst the crowd.

"You needn't look far for your partner," said Favarger with a smile.

"But I cannot see him."

"Because you will look for him amongst the old women, when he is close by your side."

"I wish he were," with an involuntary sigh.

"Do you really want any one else?" his eyes opening wide with surprise.

"Not at all. Two are better company than three."

"But I could go and leave my place to another."

"Suppose you do."

"Suppose I don't, which is far nicer."

"Do you know, M. Favarger," suddenly rousing herself, "I have scarcely spoken to any one but you this whole day long."

"Am I likely to forget it?" his bright eyes fixed on hers. "I wish it were a foretaste of the future."

"Don't, for we have nothing left to talk about."

"When my tongue is worn out I shall still have my eyes."

"Not when it's dark."

"And when it is dark, my heart," his voice dropping to a whisper.

"Are you sure it is yours?"

"I am sure that it isn't."

"Then you won't have that."

"But I may have another."

"How will you get it?"

"By patience and perseverance."

"You haven't an ounce of either."

"How can you say so after last week?"

"How can I say anything else? Your paths are choked with weeds, your roses eaten up by caterpillars, slugs have taken possession of your cabbages!"

"And why?" he broke in eagerly. "If I am careless you are the cause. Come, or the dance will be over."

She looked east and west, north and south, but there was no sign of Paul, so she gave her hand to Raoul with a sigh, and, woman-like, felt inclined to be cross with him because Gilbert kept away.

When the sun was sinking behind the hills, leaving its crimson mantle still flung across the sky, Ninette was sitting on the bank of the stream, nearly hidden in a bed of rushes. Raoul was lounging stretched at full length upon the sloping ground, his elbows resting on the grass, his blue eyes fixed upon her face.

"Before the sun rises again I shall have started for Mons; before it sets I shall know whether I am to go or stay."

"You must not go."

Her heart was troubled with doubts and fears, and in the midst of her idle chatter the dread of the morrow hung, like the sword of Damocles, over her head. To-morrow she might lose the best friend that girl ever had, and to-day she had meant to make up to him for all her past ingratitude in a thousand little ways. Only Raoul had stuck to her through the long hours, and Paul had seemed to be happy without her.

It seemed so absurd to be jealous of a rival like Marie Chauchard, the deformed little girl at the post-office; but Paul had danced with her again and again, till her sad eyes sparkled with delight, and her pale cheeks flushed with happiness. It was just like him to be so kind to the unfortunate, but was it only pity that made him look down so tenderly into Marie's face?

Ninette shook her head impatiently and told herself that she was not the sort of girl to pine for a man who did not care for her—as if the neglect of a day cancelled the care of years—and turned with a sigh to the other man, who certainly seemed faithful enough at present.

"Should you mind it much if I went, Ninette?" and Raoul moved a little closer.

"Mind! of course I should. What should I do without you to tease?"

"Die! You couldn't exist. Give me that rose to bring me good luck."

"Bring it back to morrow, and tell me both my friends are safe;" taking it from the bosom of her dress.

"Both!" in angry discontent; "won't one be enough?"

"Depends upon the one!" scrambling to her feet.

"If the one were me?"

She laughed and shook her head.

"There must be another, or the fun would be spoilt."

"You wicked coquette! You only want to play us off—one against another."

"Precisely, monsieur."

"My turn to-night!" catching hold of her hand.

"Wait till to-morrow! Bring me good news, and I'll adore you. Ah, M. Paul, how you startled me!"

His face was very stern, as he lifted his slouched hat.

"Pardon, I did not wish to interrupt; I was looking for Mdlle. Marie's dog."

Away he went, trampling the rushes under his feet, and the girl, looking after him with wistful eyes, wished the search had been for her. It would have been so pleasant to be found!

When she woke the next morning, and popped her head out of the window, which was close beside her little bed, she knew that Paul had thought of her before starting. The pail, which had been empty when she went to bed, was full, the basket of food for the chickens was empty.

The tears came into her eyes as she recognised his true worth. Through all the years of her young life, he had been like a tower of strength beside her. She remembered a dreadful time, when her grandmother, over-persuaded by the practical wisdom of her eldest son, Simon Duvergny, had almost consented to let her be brought up in that prosperous tradesman's family at Mons. Paul Gilbert found the child sobbing her heart out in the orchard, and lifting her in his arms, swore that if she could find no other home in her native village amongst the people who loved her, she should find one in his little farm, where she should be brought up as his sister.

It was always so, his kindness was as constant to her as the sun through all the bright summer. He worked for her when his own day's labour was over; he had watched over her like father, brother, and friend rolled into one; and yet she delighted in teasing him—treating him to gusts of ill-temper, knowing that he was too chivalrous to resent it—laughing at him, and stabbing him with cutting words, feeling that he was too proud to show how much they hurt.

Oh, if he would only come back when the long day was ended, she would take his rough hand and kiss it, and ask him humbly to forgive her!

But repentance generally comes too late to uproot one weed on earth, though it may plant a flower in the garden of heaven.

#### CHAPTER III.

AMIDST a laughing, mocking crowd, the peasants and farmers from the surrounding district went up the stone steps of the Mairie at Mons to draw their lots from the lottery of Fate. Some walked in with a jaunty air, as if the laurel-wreath of glory were already dangling before their eyes, whilst others, and they were decidedly in the majority, looked as if they had left their hearts in their farm-yards or orchards, and had nothing but a limp framework of flesh and bone to offer for the service of the state.

Raoul Favarger was amongst the latter. Idle by nature, and desperately in love, it seemed to him little short of death to be uprooted from his familiar surroundings, and sent nobody knew where. He could not brace his mind to face the worst. Ninette's soft eyes and his own love of ease seemed to chain him to St. Eustache, and although he held his head high, for fear of the ever-ready ridicule of his countrymen, he went up the steps with a slow tread, as if he had been summoned to his execution.

Paul Gilbert was grave and collected. His mind was too strong

to be shaken by the wind of circumstance, and his courage never failed, however black the look-out.

A pitying smile came over his face as Raoul dashed past him with a ticket in his hand.

No need to ask if he had won or lost. His face told its own story. His cheeks were white as death, his eyes fixed. He looked like a man who had been drinking for days, and yet nothing had passed his lips since the early cup of coffee in the morning.

"Courage, my friend!" murmured Paul as he laid his hand on the young fellow's arm. "There is always the return to look forward to."

Raoul shook off his rival's hand as if it burnt him, and muttered an oath—"to return when everything worth living for is lost!"

Then he rushed up the street like a madman, whilst Paul Gilbert went in to take his chance.

He drew a deep breath as he looked down at the number on his ticket. It was seven hundred and one. Only six hundred men at most had been drawn from that district, so he was perfectly safe. Free to go back and win his bride, whilst the impertinent boy who had tried to stand in his way was marching and counter-marching under the tricolour far away from St. Eustache!

It seemed like a dream, but his heart bounded within his breast with the joy of a known reality.

Meanwhile Ninette Duvergny had been all the day like a bird without a nest. Incessantly flitting to and fro, able to settle to nothing, she ran down to the gate a hundred times long before it was possible for anyone of the band which had started in the morning to return to the village.

"It is as bad as having a small earthquake in the house," grumbled Madame Duvergny, who, being frequently tied to her chair by rheumatism, objected to much movement as in bad taste. "Have you swallowed a dose of quicksilver, or taken a vow to destroy my nerves?"

"How could I sit still like a stock or a stone," exclaimed Ninette wrathfully, "when I don't know if all my friends are to be sent off to the war or not? This time next week there may not be a man's voice to be heard in the place, and that will be nice, won't it?"

"Very nice. I may chance to get some good out of my grand-child."

The girl caught up her knitting, and running out of the house, took refuge in a small arbour, overgrown with Travellers' Joy, close to the hedge which separated the garden from the lane. She tried to sing, but her voice was hoarse; she tried to knit, but she dropped her stitches; she endeavoured to while away the time in any fashion she could think of, but the hours dragged slowly by, as a cripple in a pair of heavy boots.

Presently her work fell down in her lap, and she lost herself in a dream—a pleasant dream, full of little kindnesses tendered by a friend.

The latch of the gate clicked, and she thought the friend was there. But it was only Raoul Favarger who stood in the gateway, his hair dishevelled, his neckerchief untied, his eyes red and inflamed. She ran to meet him, her eyes asking the question her lips did not dare to utter.

He showed her the ticket he held in his hand, and nodded sullenly. It was dirty and crumpled, but the figure nine was easily read, printed in black on a white ground. She caught it from him and threw it on the path.

"There let it lie," she cried passionately, "and come with me."

Murmuring gentle words of compassion, she drew him into the arbour and sat down on the seat beside him, the tears standing in her eyes as he grasped her hands in his.

"I'm done for, little one," he said hoarsely. "I've got to go, and you'll forget me."

"Never! I shall always think of you, and pray for you. Don't look like that, Raoul. It is not as if you were going to prison. You'll be a brave soldier, and we shall be so proud of you when you come back."

"When I come back!" his lips quivering.

"And Paul Gilbert?" she said timidly.

"Oh, he's right enough," with a muttered curse.

Her heart gave a bound; tears gushed from her eyes.

Raoul thought they were for him, and a tiny ray of comfort stole into his heart.

"You promised me something if my news were good; you ought to comfort me as they are so infernally bad."

Infernally bad, when Paul was safe!

Conscious of her secret joy, her heart was full of compunction. Touched by the poor fellow's despair, she let his lips rest for one moment on her blushing cheek, whilst she stroked his face in tenderest pity.

"My poor Raoul!" she said softly; "I would give anything to buy you off."

She did not hear a step in the lane, she did not see a dark head peering over the hedge and hastily withdrawn; but whilst she sat by Raoul's side comforting him to the best of her ability, she was wondering why Paul Gilbert tarried so long before he came to bring her the good news about himself.

It was some time before Favarger could summon resolution to tear himself away. As he passed through the gate he looked for his ticket, but it was nowhere to be seen.

"Never mind," he said carelessly; "if I bring myself, they are not likely to fidget about my ticket."

"And when do you join?"

"We are to report ourselves at headquarters before ten o'clock the day after to-morrow."

"Just time for your mother and sisters to stop crying and begin again."

He nodded, squeezed her hand as if he meant to dislocate every bone in it, and shut the gate behind him, then walked slowly homewards down the dusky lane.

In spite of her grandmother's repeated enquiries as to what she was doing out there, Ninette stayed in the garden till past nine, but Paul Gilbert never came. The stars peeped from amongst the patches of fleecy clouds; a missel-thrush, perched on the bough of a lilac bush, sang a song so like the nightingale's, that it seemed, like hers, to be asking for a lost mate. The joy in the girl's heart was damped by disappointment, and a vague misgiving crept over her as no eager step came hurrying up the path, and she listened to the bird's unanswered song.

"Surely he might have thought I should be glad to know," she said to herself as she turned away from the gate and went into the cottage.

The pail was empty, but she let it be. Day after day he had taken it to the brook, and she had not the heart to fill it for the first time for herself.

#### CHAPTER IV.

ALL the next day she looked for him, but he never came till tea was over, and she was sitting, with her knitting in her hand, under the white blossoms of the clematis. He opened the gate suddenly, and walked straight towards her, his face stern and pale, his bearing that of a man who had braced himself up to meet a crisis.

A sudden shyness stole over her, and the joyous congratulations she had prepared died away on her lips, and she only said:

"How late you are!"

"Late? Time enough to do all there is to be done." And he took off his coat. "I will finish my work first, and then come back and talk to you."

With a sense of disappointment, she watched his tall figure about the garden, whilst the stocking which she had begun to knit made but small progress. When the beds were raked, the vine secured against the white wall, the weeds pulled up, and the pail filled, he washed his hands at the pump, put away his tools, and put on his coat.

Then he came and stood before her, looking down, not at the pretty face upturned so eagerly to his, but at the small white blossoms which framed the sunny head.

"For twelve long years I have done the best I could for you, child, little as that has been. I have often been rude and disagreeable—that is my nature; but," with a slow smile, "I thought it was well for you to have a prickly hedge round you till you were old enough to know evil from good. Now it is no longer needed, so the hedge is cut down."

"What do you mean?" her breast heaving, her eyes wide-open with sudden fear.

She had never seen him like this before, and a panic seized her.

"To-morrow I start on a long journey. When I come back you will be married."

"Oh, no doubt I shall be married!" with an attempt at a scornful laugh. "Is it for an eternity that you are going, M. Paul?"

"The time is uncertain. You know I would not leave you if I were not sure you would be consoled."

He did not understand why she turned away her head so abruptly, and he must have been blind as a bat not to see how the hand was trembling which she stretched out to pick a spray of clematis. There was a sudden silence. The girl's heart felt ready to break, but she would have died rather than confess it.

He stepped back in great bitterness of spirit. After all that he had done for her, not a single word of regret or thanks.

"It is time to be off," he said coldly, "and I have much to see after to-night. Etienne Toupain will look after my bit of land, and if you want a word of advice he will give it you readily."

She bent her head, fearing to break down if she attempted to

speak. Her eyes were full to the brim; if she could only keep them from running over till his back was turned!

He wondered that she could not spare him one kindly word after all these years of his watchful care. Surely the ingratitude of woman was boundless as the sea.

"Good-bye, Ninette," he said after a pause, during which his eyes dwelt on the small, sweet face he had known since childhood. "Give a thought to your old friend now and then; and if Favarger be not kind to you, tell him I will make him shake in his skin when I come back."

He held her hand in a close grip, then slowly released it, and walked away, stopping when he reached the gate to cast one long, lingering look at the little white cottage, with its air of homely comfort, at the roses in the garden which he had budded from those on his own farm, two or three years before, at the girl still standing where he had left her, under the shadowing branches of the clematis. He was giving it all up out of the generosity of his heart to his unsuspecting rival, and she, for whom he had sacrificed everything, scarcely cared to say good-bye. In more senses than one he saw that it was time to go.

When he was safe out of sight, Ninette ran into the house, and climbing up the steep staircase with unsteady steps, threw herself down upon her bed, and broke into a tempest of sobs. One word spoken in time might have kept him by her side for ever, to be the guardian of her life, but all the words in the language would not bring him back, now that she had once let him go.

She cried herself to sleep like a child, and never woke till long after Madame Duvergny's *sabots* had clattered about the brick floor. The window had been open all night, and on the sill lay a small packet, which she caught up eagerly, for outside of it was written, "A love-token from Paul Gilbert." She opened it hastily, her heart beating fast, but the only thing in it was a white ticket, with the number seven hundred and one printed on it in black figures. He might have sent her a rose instead of this paltry remembrance, which only served to remind her that he could have stayed in St. Eustache if he had so chosen. She tossed it into her work-basket, twisted up her bright hair into a glorious crown round the top of her head, and went downstairs to her daily duties.

All day long she thought of Paul, longing to have him back, if only for five minutes. It seemed to her now as if she must have been crazy to let him go without a word of thanks for all his endless kindness, and without a question as to where he was going, as if she had no concern in his doings.

The piece of lace which she had to finish progressed slowly, for tears are a sad impediment to work, and Madame Duvergny took her to task so often that Ninette ran away to the arbour, so as to be out of reach of her shrill voice. There was no friend to drop in and disturb her, so she worked on with unusual diligence, frightened by the failing light. The bobbins flew so fast that they became entangled, and the thread broke.

"Plague on it!" she exclaimed impatiently, when a cheery voice cried:

"Never mind."

And she looked up in amazement to see Raoul Favarger standing before her, his face radiant with joy.

"Never mind a dozen broken threads! Imagine, Ninette, I am no conscript, after all!"

"No conscript?" she echoed, as the pillow rolled down on the path.

"I went over to Mons with a face a yard long, but there I was told, to my satisfaction, that number nine had already appeared, and been enrolled. My name was down in black and white on the list; but I was free—conceive it, I was free!"

"I'm glad—so very glad. But how did it happen?" looking up in bewilderment into his excited countenance.

"I stopped to see them march by, poor fellows, and wish them good-luck, when who should I see in the second line, his head towering above all the rest, but Paul Gilbert!"

Ninette uttered an exclamation.

"Then the truth flashed across me. He is the noblest—the best of men. You asked him, and he did it for your sake."

"What do you mean?" with a gasp.

"You remember I dropped my ticket here. Well, he has taken it, and is serving under my name. It was your tears, dear one, which moved him!" trying to take her hand.

She threw off his hand, as if its touch stung her, and stepped back, her eyes flashing, her small form shaking with passion.

"And you let him go—to save yourself!"

"It was no sacrifice to him; he said so. He was tired of the place—he wanted a change, and nobody would miss him here!"

"Nobody—not even I, for instance?" in bitter scorn. "Oh, you good-for-nothing coward! Go, and never come here again! I hate the sight of you. Paul, Paul!" covering her face with her hands.

"Very well, mademoiselle," said Raoul, drawing himself up stiffly. "You lost one friend this morning. You lose your last to-night. Good-evening."

He went away, and the gate closed behind him with a sullen clang.

Sunk in a heap on the floor, her face bowed down in her lap, she was unconscious of everything else but the one bewildering, agonising fact that Paul had gone away for her sake. She saw it all now that it was too late; now that it was impossible to tell him that she loved him ten thousand times better than the other; that he made the sunshine of her life, and Raoul the shade; that even his scoldings were more welcome to her than the flatteries of the other. Too late to call him back—too late for anything but the gnawing anguish of regret.

Had she but done this or that; had she not trifled with a heart of gold, and amused herself for a day with one of tinsel; had she seemed sorry when he looked displeased; had she poured out one drop of the gratitude with which her heart was brimming; had she put aside all coquettish caprices, and shown herself the true woman she really was, then he might have been standing even now by her side, with her trembling hands clasped tight in his honest grasp, and she would not have had to call for him in vain through the long years to come.

One word too little, or one word too much, may change our life's fruit from sweet to bitter.

#### CHAPTER V.

"But it is absurd," said Raoul Favarger, his colour rising. "You turned the cold shoulder on Gilbert when he was here; you turn it on me as soon as he is gone. What is the meaning of it, Ninette? Do you wish to be left all alone like a hermit in his cell?"

"I am tired of nonsense."

"Then go into a convent at once, and patter your prayers from morning to night," picking a piece of the clematis and chewing it between his teeth.

"No; I'm not good enough for that."

"You can't stay on here for ever. The grandmother won't last many years longer, and you will be quite alone."

"I know," impatiently, "but I can't help it."

"You have the chance, but you won't take it."

"Do you know what would happen if I did?" fixing her sad eyes upon him impressively.

"Yes," with a light laugh; "there would not be a happier couple in St. Eustache."

"If we were always together we should grow tired of each other, so tired that we should hate each other. My temper would grow so bad that you would be thankful to get away from me to The Lion d'Or. And when he came back," her voice sinking, her eyes filling with tears, "wounded, perhaps, and crippled, my heart would go out to him, as it does now, and one day I should crawl down to the river, and stifle my useless longings in death."

"Ninette, you are dreaming!" his own voice growing hoarse, his face pale.

"No, it is a true picture of what our life would be. Marry some cheerful little thing, who would always have a smile ready for you. I should walk by your side, grave as a tragedy queen. Good-bye."

"Good-bye for the present," he said sadly, as he took her hand. "When the snow is on the ground and past footsteps are hidden, I shall try my luck again."

A year rolled by in wearisome monotony, and brought no change but failing health to Madame Duvergny. Ninette, who used to be as idle as any butterfly, had to work hard to make two ends meet, and little time was left for idle chatter. All the work in the garden had to be done by her, when the light was growing too dim to see her lace, and often when she crept upstairs to bed, with aching limbs, she used to sigh for the friend who was always ready to help her in the days gone by. Raoul Favarger dropped off like a rat from a falling house, and transferred his affections to the daughter of a prosperous farmer, who had something besides bright eyes as a dowry.

When he grew tired of his new plaything, he resumed his old habit of strolling into the Duvergny's garden, with his idle hands stuck in his pockets, and a pipe between his teeth. He would stand about watching the bobbins fly, but he never offered to turn a sod or even to fill a pail.

"What do you come for day after day?" said Ninette, angered by his indolence.

"So nice to watch a busy person, when you can be as idle as you like yourself."

"But idleness is a disgrace."

"If so I should have been turned out of the village long ago."

"Perhaps I had better turn you out of my garden?"

"Why, if I do no harm? Now if I took to doing your work,

as Gilbert did, the whole village would talk, and my wife would box my ears."

The girl's face flamed.

"If you followed his example in anything it would be the better for you; but you are too selfish to stir a finger to save a friend from ruin, and the poorest excuse is better than none."

"Here, give me a spade, and I'll see to the potatoes."

"You'll do nothing of the kind. After what you have said, I would rather they rotted in the ground than that you should touch them. The gate is unlatched, and the only thing you can do is to go."

And Raoul went.

Nine years went slowly by, and robbed Ninette of everything belonging to her except her beauty. Her grandmother became very ill, and she had to put by her lace-work, on which her hopes of subsistence depended, in order to nurse her. Tenderly she fulfilled her task, but with a heavy heart. It was pitiful to see the brave-hearted girl struggling against her burden of misfortune. One hard winter succeeded another, the vine was killed, the potatoes were frost-bitten, her silver ear-rings were sold to make up for their loss, and when the spring-time came there were no seeds in the ground, and only withered stalks to show where the wealth of leaves had been.

The old woman died, calling down blessings on the head of her grandchild, and that grandchild's only wish was to be laid by her side under the snowdrops which she placed on her grave. Trials had softened her, and taught her that happiness only finds a lasting home in heaven. But there seemed to be no place left for her on earth, and it was hard to be resigned to a lot of utter desolation. The lace-pillow lay in the cupboard, which was void of everything in the shape of food, except a dry crust of bread. It was needful to work hard if she did not wish to starve, but the motive for exertion seemed to be gone when she had only herself to feed. She had just returned from an interview with Etienne Toupain, and he had willingly agreed to make all the necessary arrangements for the sale of the cottage, and advised that it should be done without delay, as the new comers would naturally like to have the garden before the seed-time had gone by.

"Any news of M. Paul?" she asked timidly.

"None, mademoiselle," said M. Toupain, scratching his head.

"And yet I thought we should have seen him back before this. Nine years is a long spell."

"Very long," she murmured beneath her breath as she turned away.

When she reached home she lingered in the garden in an unusual fit of idleness. The lace-pillow was waiting for her, but what was the good of slaving herself to death now that her poor grandmother was gone? She leant over the gate, her sad thoughts wandering to the past. How should she feel in domestic service after the happy independent life in the little cottage? How would she feel, at the beck and call of strangers?

"Good-evening, madame," said a voice which sent a thrill through her heart, and looking up she saw a soldier in a blue tunic and red trousers, a knapsack on his back, a smile of greeting on his bearded face.

"Paul!" she exclaimed breathlessly.

"Yes, Paul himself, come back to see if his friends have forgotten him. But you," his face changing in quick sympathy, "you have been in trouble. Has the dear grandmother gone to her rest?"

She nodded as she opened the gate to let him in. Speech seemed impossible, for a great lump had come in her throat.

He looked round the garden with a critical eye.

"Humph! the beginning of April, and no potatoes yet in the ground; that is a bad look-out for the summer."

"I sha'n't be here; the cottage is to be sold."

"Tis a pity that it should go to strangers," his glance lingering on the small patch of land where he had spent some of his happiest hours. "But I suppose your husband could not afford to keep up this little place as well as his own?"

"My husband?" raising her sad eyes to his, a small smile hovering round her lips.

"Yes—Raoul Favarger. I went away on purpose that you might have him."

"As if I would!"

"Good Heavens! You mean that it isn't true? You are Ninette Duvergny still!"

The sweat stood out on his forehead, and the bronzed cheek turned pale.

"Ninette Duvergny, without a friend or a home in the world!" she answered out of the bitterness of her heart. "It's a grand position, isn't it?"

"Oh, my child, is it a dream?" His voice grew husky, his rough hand actually trembled as he laid it on her shoulder. "Tell me, weren't you glad to have Raoul instead of me?"

"No, I hated the very sight of him."

"You liked him surely better than me?"

"Better than the best friend that girl ever had? Oh, why do you ask me?" and she hid her face in her hands, sobbing passionately.

Then a light broke over his face as he put his knapsack down, and, stretching out his strong arms, drew her gently to his honest breast.

"Child, I have been a fool for all these years. To think you were wanting me and I could not come!"

As the girl's tired head found its true resting-place at last on Paul Gilbert's heart, a plant of joy took root in the desolate garden, and after the clouds of sorrow "there was light in the evening-time."

## A Fable.

JUST at the edge of the running brook the grey old pollard stood,  
Nor bud nor leaf on the barren branch, nor life in the rotting wood,  
Through winter frost and summer shine, a dreary and useless thing,  
Cold to the laugh of the noonday sun, deaf to the voice of Spring.

For, bitterly thought the pollard, the comrades I knew are gone;  
My acorns grown, my mistletoe dead, what boots it to struggle on?

A chaffinch lit on the pollard, with a feathery seed in his mouth  
He had borne in from the affluent blooms of a creeper that loved the south.

He dropped the seedling in a rift, ere the bright wings spread for flight,  
And it struck and throve in the warm hid dusk—till lo! in the April light,

A tiny leaflet of vivid green peeped from the mouldering bark;  
It was fed by the shower and kissed by the sun—it was hailed by the  
hovering lark.

And fast and fair came bud and bloom; the tendrils twined and grew,  
Till they clothed the grim old pollard in a beauty strange and new.

The half-dead heart within it, woke to its charm and grace,  
As a smile at the touch of a soft young hand brightens an aged face.

Once more it loved the changing skies, once more the world seemed good,  
As to the yearling oak it did, in its prime of hardihood.

A stranger passed the pollard, and looked at the lovely flower,  
And tore it away from its clinging root, to pleasure an idle hour.

Again the old tree stood bare and blank—oh, it was worse to bear,  
Since it lost what woke anew the sense, that Nature is rich and fair!

But because it had learnt the gift of joy, in sunshine and in rain,  
And the gentle fall of the gracious dew, it would not be barren again.

It forced the sap to root and branch, and ere another May  
Looked down where once so grey and lone, it stood in its stern decay.

The bright oak leaves were crowning the sturdy stem once more,  
Where the wild birds sang, and lit, and built, as they did in days of yore.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book IV.

#### CHAPTER I. "CAN ONE HELP ONE'S FATE?"

It was very dreary at the Court. The closed and darkened rooms, the general sense of silence and desolation, all struck on Ivor Grant's own wretchedness as so many additional woes.

His mother was ill and broken, and in their brief interviews he saw, even more clearly than of yore, how heavily her secret sorrow was preying on her mind. When he could, for a time, put aside the crushing sense of his own great trouble, his thoughts always turned to this mystery at his own doors, and its association with the man whose base and ignoble nature he had fathomed to his cost.

Gradually, too, as day by day passed on, and the assurance of his own position and its attendant responsibilities came home to him, a resolve strengthened and took root in his mind, and he determined that now, as master of the Court, he should refuse its hospitality to the Count Savona, unless his mother could give some good and sufficient reason for admitting him there. The time moved slowly along, weighted with lawyers' missives and interviews, and the reading of deeds and settlements, until Ivor hated the very sight of the solemn faces and inevitable bag of documents. Meanwhile Sir Hector slept quietly with his ancestors in the old vaults of the Grants, and the new master was hailed, and congratulated, and called upon with the effusion that such circumstances always occasion. But to him it was only an ordeal to be struggled through—a sacrifice of will and inclination which he would gladly have avoided had it been possible.

"As soon as everything is settled and straight I shall go abroad for a month or two," he said one night to his mother. "I am wearied to death of all this. Why can't people let one alone?"

Mrs. Grant looked at him anxiously. It had made her heart ache many a time to note how changed he was, and she had not yet found courage to ask the cause. So this dull, ever-present sense of trouble brooded over both, and was recognised by both, yet neither dared question the other, as once they would have done.

"Abroad!" she echoed as Ivor gave utterance to that impatient speech. "But, my dear, you have been away from the Court so long! You surely won't rush off again just—just as you are master here?"

"Why not?" said Ivor wearily. "There is nothing for me to do here. Everything is in such perfect order that the veriest innovator ever born could find no reasonable excuse for upsetting existing arrangements. Sometimes I think," he added bitterly, "that I am not in the right groove. I'm tired of idleness. A good spell of hard work is what I need. 'Tis a pity I left the service; I might have exchanged."

"Ivor!"

The pained, sorrowful exclamation cut short his words. He looked at his mother and saw that her eyes were full of tears.

"Forgive me," he said gently; "I did not mean to pain you. I was always a dissatisfied sort of fellow, you know. A little change, a breath of foreign air, will do me good. I promise I'll settle down into a pattern landlord when I return."

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Grant sadly, "why are you so changed? Dissatisfied you never were—most easily contented, I think. Don't wrong yourself by saying so. But of late—"

She paused, noting with pain how the troubled look had deepened on his face, and what lines of care were round the handsome mouth.

"I—I am out of sorts, I think," he said. "Perhaps things have gone too easily with me; I don't know; and you can't expect me to be very cheerful when that dear, brave old fellow has only just left us, to learn his value, as in life we scarcely seemed to learn it. In a few months I shall be all right—just as I used to be."

But a sigh escaped him.

"Just as he used to be!" Ah, is it given to any of us to retrace our steps in life—to go back to what "has been?" To take up the tangled or broken threads and weave on the web of duty and existence, if naught had marred or crossed them? To forget the grief, amend the errors, atone for the wrongs, live down the memories?

We know it is not, though we try and deceive ourselves as Ivor tried now. Hour by hour, day by day, life drifts on as the dropped leaves drift on the current of a river—drifts on to storm, shipwreck, safety, as Heaven wills, but returns to its starting point never, never again.

And, therefore, Ivor Grant sighed even as he said those words, knowing that nothing could make him as he once had been—free-hearted, careless, content; nothing could fill up that aching void in his heart, or stifle the longing for that one sweet woman's presence which had become to him the only synonym for happiness.

"Of course, if you think it will do you good," said Mrs. Grant presently, "it is best to go away. But you are too much alone, my dear. You want society, companionship. Take some friend with you."

Ivor frowned slightly.

"Thanks, no," he said. "My own company suits me best. Besides," he added, "out of the heaps of men I know, and have known, I doubt if there is one whom I really look upon as a friend."

"Colonel Dunbar?" suggested Mrs. Grant.

Ivor flushed suddenly.

"He couldn't leave, and I shouldn't like to ask him. No; I shall go by myself. Don't think me very selfish," he added suddenly, "running away so soon again. I feel it's the best thing for me."

And looking at the pale, haggard face, and the eyes that had lost all their bright, bold beauty, Mrs. Grant knew that he was right, and that something more than his recent grief must have caused the change.

"Before I go," continued Ivor gently, "there is something I wish to speak to you about, mother. I find that my uncle was in the habit of making you a yearly allowance of five hundred pounds. But the lawyers say he has left no directions as to its continuance. I suppose you would like it to go on as before. Have you a banking-account of your own?"

"No—o," said his mother hesitatingly, and growing strangely white. "I—I keep the money myself."

"But is it not inconvenient?" asked Ivor in surprise.

He could not help wondering on what his mother spent so large a sum, seeing that she rarely bought any new dresses, went into no society, and, to his knowledge, gave very little to charity.

"I have not found it so," she said, with so self-evident an embarrassment that Ivor could not but notice it. "Your uncle asked no questions. He was always very generous."

"Do not fear I shall be less so," said Ivor hastily. "My curiosity was surely pardonable, but as I am going away I thought it best to tell you that your money would be safer paid into the bank, and drawn by cheque, than accumulating in your own hands, and a temptation to servants. But, of course, you must do as you please. The usual quarterly sum will be paid by the lawyers. We will say no more on the subject."

"I thought of asking Beryl Marsden to stay here while you are away," said Mrs. Grant timidly. "She is such a comfort to me."

Ivor turned his face aside.

"By all means, if you wish it," he answered. "I thought you would have had her here for Christmas. I never expected to see her at Vaux Abbey."

"I wanted her to come, but she refused," said his mother. "How was she? Did you see much of her?"

"As much as one generally sees of visitors at a country house," answered Ivor constrainedly.

"Does she still feel the loss of the children so terribly?" asked Mrs. Grant, pursuing this subject as if to drive away the memory of that other.

"Yes," said her son curtly. "She isn't one to forget easily—more's the pity."

"I don't think she's a happy woman," pursued Mrs. Grant unwisely. "I've always thought so. It was cruel of her husband to separate her from the boys. If they had been with her, under her own eye, things would have been different."

"Can one alter fate?" asked Ivor bitterly, as he rose from the chair and paced the room with rapid steps. "Some people are bound to be unfortunate and unhappy, to lose whatever they set their hearts on, to long and long, and never obtain."

"Do you think Beryl Marsden is one?"

"How can I tell?" he said with a little tuneless laugh. "You say she is not happy; you ought to know."

"She has never complained to me," said Mrs. Grant, looking at him with troubled eyes. "She is too proud and too brave for that. But sometimes—sometimes, Ivor, I find myself wishing she had never come here."

"Why?" he asked suddenly, pausing, and facing her with so white and stern a face that it struck terror to her heart.

"Because—oh, my dear, forgive me—she has changed you so. I must say it; I can't help saying it. Your friendship for her has cost you dear, I know."

"You are right, mother," he said with a sudden desperate resignation to the fact that his secret was his no longer. "But that's my own fault—not hers. I have been a fool, but I see my danger now, and, thank Heaven, it is not too late."

"Has it come to that?" said his mother sadly. "Oh, my boy, my boy, to think that you must suffer. Why did I ever have her here?"

"As I said before, can one help one's fate?" said Ivor wearily. "Heaven knows I never wanted to—love her, but I simply couldn't help myself. Yet she is so good, and brave, and true, that I don't think a man could be the worse for loving her. I can't pity myself, but I shall never forget her. There, don't let's talk about it," he added abruptly. "I must live it down as best I can. Only for the future I must avoid her, for both our sakes."

"She—she surely does not suspect?" said Mrs. Grant anxiously.

A hot flush crept up to Ivor's brow. Put into words his weakness looked culpable and unmanly. What weakness does not when framed into speech, and placed before our eyes as accusation instead of excuse?

"Don't ask me any more," he said huskily; "you have your secret, let me have mine. The time has gone by, mother, when I could sit at your feet and tell you all that was in my heart. Something has put me away from you, and alienated your sympathy. It seems only one of the ironies of Fate that your—friend—should also threaten to become Beryl Marsden's bitterest enemy, does it not?"

"What do you mean?" gasped Mrs. Grant, growing deadly white.

"I mean that that coward and spy, Savona, has discovered my folly, and threatened to trade on it—that is all," said Ivor bitterly. "As far as I am concerned he might do his worst, but for her sake I have had to buy his silence. You can hardly wonder though that I forbid his presence here. I am master now, and he shall know it. I have never asked the particulars of your mysterious intimacy with this man, mother, but I cannot suffer him any longer."

"Ivor," she cried, trembling visibly, "do you know how dangerous he is—what you provoke?"

"I neither know nor care," he answered with cold contempt. "He can levy blackmail on me as he pleases, but he shall not step under my roof again, or insult me with his presence—that I swear."

Mrs. Grant's face grew ghastly with sudden terror.

"Don't say that," she cried; "you don't know what you are bringing on your own head, or how dangerous he is."



"No, I don't," said Ivor with suppressed passion, "nor do I know the secret of his power over you, or the mystery that has alienated your love and sympathy from me since that ill-fated hour when it brought this man under our roof."

"Oh, hush, hush!" she cried wildly, and covered her face with trembling hands as she shrank back from that stern, accusing face. "Don't say that, Ivor, for you wrong me. If I have erred it has been only for you—only for you. Who else on all the earth have I to love and care for?"

"For me!" he echoed, and gazed at her in wonder. "I can't understand you, mother. There is no deeper humiliation you could offer than to show me that fault or folly of mine had placed you in this man's power. But I know that is not possible. I have no guilty secret on which he could trade, and all my errors have been such as I should not shrink from confessing to you, were it needful. If he is troubling you, threatening you, give me the power to rid you of his tyranny; even to shield the woman I love, I would not have my mother at the mercy of such a villain."

"Oh, hush, hush!" she cried between wild sobs that rent his heart, "you don't know what you say—you don't know what you say!"

"I think I do, and what I mean also," he answered with grave tenderness. "Come, mother, you have had the confession of my weakness to-night, return confidence for confidence. Surely you can trust me, and surely you know that it is more fitting I should fight your battles for you, than leave you to this scoundrel's mercy."

But the terrible sobs were his only answer. He could not still them, and he could not win from her even the very faintest hint of that mystery sapping her life, her happiness, her future.

The weakest woman is strong enough to guard a secret that threatens the peace and welfare of one she loves, and no man's heart ever yet fathomed the idolatry and unselfishness of a mother, any more perhaps than it can frame excuse for what is surely the sublimest folly of our erring human lives.

Grieved and distressed beyond measure Ivor leant against the marble chimney-piece waiting till his mother should have regained her usual composure; but a certain sense of injury and wrath grew stronger in his heart as he traced back his present situation with regard to the count, to that weakness which from first to last had been a puzzle to him.

But for that, Beryl Marsden and Savona would never have met, and the crafty spy would have had no opportunity for making the discovery he had made at Vaux Abbey. His mother had always seemed to him so firm and strong-willed a woman save in anything that appertained to himself, that he could not help recognising some serious and threatened danger in this mystery she guarded so closely. Understand it he could not, and so, when her sobs subsided and she regained her usual composure, he only sought to wean her from the memory of their discussion, afraid of agitating her still more by any recurrence to its painful subject.

She grew calm at last, and even began to speak of his proposed journey, and make suggestions and arrangements for it, but the usual perfect accord between mother and son was broken, something lurked in their hearts of which they could not speak, and, when they parted for the night, it was with the grave regret of misapprehension, and the first chill touch of distrust.

Mrs. Grant, wearied and spent as she was, sat up till long after midnight, writing sheet after sheet, some of which she burnt, or effaced, or tore into fragments after impatient perusal.

The firelight had almost died out, and only threw fitful gleams amidst the dusky shadows of the silent room. The noise of the pen on the paper was the only sound that broke the stillness, and the face bent over that paper was haggard and lined by the touch of some sorrow deeper than its wont, as with no eyes to watch its dreary change, the mask of pride and self-control was lifted from its features.

The night brooded in silence over the great galleries and tenantless rooms, and when her task was ended, the one watcher amidst that silence seemed overcome by sudden terror. The chill, the shadows, the loneliness, were like added horrors to the burden of her own misery. Her hands shook as she gathered the scattered sheets, and placed them in an envelope and sealed it. Then she took the candle and crossed the long, dusky room with feeble steps. Pausing before a rosewood escritoire, she proceeded to open one of its many drawers, and took from thence a paper covered with figures, which she studied intently.

"The sum will soon be made up now," she said in a suppressed whisper, which had in it more of fear than of relief. "A year—but one year more—and then freedom."

As the last word left her lips, a sudden dizziness and dimness seemed to numb both brain and sight. With one supreme effort at self-command she tried to thrust the paper back into its drawer, but strength failed her, for her outstretched hand sank nerveless to

her side, and over the white face there came a change fearful and horrible to see.

A cry that was only a gasp, stifled and suppressed by the failure of life and energy, struggled to her lips, and then, strangled in its birth, died out on the empty air that refused to echo its feeble entreaty. And with that last effort of the mind that had so long ruled the body, she fell like a log across the oaken floor, and all the shadows of the dying firelight seemed to dance around her in fantastic mockery of a helplessness that was henceforth to be all she would know of life.

And there, unlocked, and at the mercy of every prying eye, lay the secret, to guard which that life had been sacrificed.

## CHAPTER II. "WHEN IT DOES——"

THERE is horror and consternation at the Court when the next morning brings with it the discovery of that still and stricken form.

There is life and breath still, but that is all. The local physician pronounces it what all have guessed—"a paralytic seizure," and suggests other advice, and an eminent member of the faculty comes down from London and looks at the drawn, disfigured face and the helplessness of the limbs, and endorses the opinion of his colleague, and states that nothing can be done at present; Nature must work for herself if the constitution of the patient will allow of it. But he looks grave, and Ivor sees plainly enough that he has no hope.

Hours pass by. There is no change. There will be none now, save that last change which overtakes all humanity soon or late. For this Ivor sits watching, hopelessly, stupefiedly, as the dreary hours go on, on, on, to make up the sum of the dreary day.

The strange hoarse breathing is the only sign of life; the clenched fingers still enclose that sheet of paper whose close columns had spoken to her of a freedom which, after all, was to come from another and more powerful source than ever she had dreamt of; and feet tread softly in the darkened room, and voices are hushed as though that strange, still semblance of life could hear or suffer from their sound, and her son sits beside her like a statue of despair until the long dread day is over, and through the uncurtained window the stars look in to join his watch.

Out beyond, in the quiet moonlight, lie the fields and woods at rest. Half-despairingly, half-sadly, he wonders whenever again there will be rest or peace for him.

Again his eyes turn to the stricken figure, the ghastly semblance of the proud, stately woman who had so loved and idolised himself. Remembering the painful, sudden change in her, and dating back that change to the ill-omened visit of the man who had become so hateful, he felt his whole soul rise in wrath and bitterness against the coward who had traded on a woman's weakness for some base purpose of his own.

"As I live I will find it out!" he muttered. "He will have a man to deal with from this hour. Let him look to himself then!"

As the wrathful vow was registered in his mind there came a faint movement in the helpless form beside him. A change like a fluttering shadow stole over the distorted face, the heavy breathing ceased. The pale, cold stars seemed to reflect themselves on that paleness of the features that slowly froze into calm immobility.

No need to watch now—no need for the burdened heart to mourn its fatal secret. The cold, relaxing hand that Ivor clasps opens—not with answering pressure or comprehension, but only to leave in his the mystic numbers that were the last thing her eyes had gazed upon with any sort of consciousness.

"A gentleman in the library to see you, Sir Ivor."

It is the twilight of the next day, and Ivor Grant starts from a train of long and painful thought, and looks stupidly at the man who has delivered this message.

"To see me! What name?"

The footman offers a card.

As Ivor reads it the red blood flushes to his face. He rises with a fierce exclamation, that as suddenly prudence suppresses.

"Say I am coming," he mutters with painful effort. Then as the door closes he sinks slowly back on his chair. "I may as well face it out—it is time I forced him to speak," he says bitterly. "I can't half understand the mystery yet."

Impassive as Count Savona usually is, he can hardly repress a start of horror as he meets that changed face of Ivor Grant's. It is bloodless as marble, aged and haggard as if by years of suffering, yet so fearless in its proud composure that he cannot withhold an involuntary feeling of admiration as he meets the dauntless eyes.

"The sort of man to die game," he thinks, following up the thought by a bow and murmur of sympathy that Ivor involuntarily cuts short.

"You need offer no apology," he says, motioning him to take a

chair. "Sooner or later an interview would have been necessary. As for condolences, I scarcely think they sound well from the lips that have hounded on a suffering woman to her death."

"What do you mean?" cried the count fiercely. "I—I beg your pardon," he added in a more temperate tone; "I should have remembered your recent grief, and excused any outbreak of this sort. Pray explain your strange words."

"To be brief," said Ivor, calming himself by a strong effort, "you have for several years past been trading on some secret of my mother's—a secret of which she gave me no faintest hint, and of which I am still in ignorance. How you became possessed of it rests between you and herself. I only know that your power has gradually undermined her health, broken her spirits, and occasioned her death. From a memorandum of hers, now in my possession, I find she has been in the habit of paying you large sums annually in order to buy your silence. You certainly seem to have a noble and manly method of making an income, Count Savona."

For a second the dark eyes flashed a look not good to see at the pale handsome face confronting them with so cool and cutting a contempt. But the count's plans were not matured sufficiently to allow of his losing his temper. He lowered the lids over that dangerous gleam, and said coolly:

"Your mother was a very foolish woman, and a very proud one. I am a man whose business it is to trade on such follies. She would not have purchased my silence, be very sure, unless it had been worth her while. The shame of the bargain lies with her, not with me!"

Again the hot blood surged to Ivor Grant's face, and beat dizzily against his temples.

"How dare you malign her!" he cried with sudden fury. "You cur, you hound! who make it your business to spy out every error and misfortune of the women you meet. Do you call yourself a man at all?"

"Most assuredly I do," answered the count coolly, "and a man who would make you answer for your words, Sir Ivor, were we in my own land now. You should at least be aware of what your mother's past was, before accusing me of defaming her name."

For a moment Ivor was silent. In the face of all his contempt, his indignation, his passionate anger, he yet remembered that his mother had held this man in terror so great, that her very life had paid its penalty. Remembering that, it seemed of very little use to insult or accuse one so worthless and apparently so invulnerable.

"Will you drop hints and come to facts?" he asked curtly. "Tell me what it is you know."

The count shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"I do not know from what you draw the deduction that I am quite a fool," he said. "The secret is your mother's—was, I should say. With her let it die. It can do you no good to learn it, and I am willing to forego its profit to me for—for sake of the friendship I bear you."

For a moment, as Ivor Grant met that mocking glance and evil smile, he felt as if the very manhood within him forced him to defy the insult of those words. He made a step forward, his hand clenched, his eyes gleaming dangerously. Perhaps the count thought he had gone too far. In any case he raised his own hand as if to warn him back.

"Stop," he said, speaking very low, "you had better not make an enemy of me. You forget Beryl Marsden."

The name was like magic. Ivor stepped back, and threw himself into a chair.

"Are you a man or a devil?" he cried bitterly.

"A little of both, perhaps," said the count with his slow, cruel smile. "I have been playing pitch-and-toss with Fortune for many years. Now is my time to seize the fickle jade. I wish to make you a reasonable proposition. Will you listen?"

Ivor bent his head. He dared not trust himself to speak.

"From what you have gleaned of your mother's affairs," continued Savona, with a rapid and somewhat uneasy glance at the paper in Ivor Grant's hand, "you must see that she deemed it worth her while to pay me a sum of three hundred and fifty pounds yearly. Her decease cuts short our bargain, that this sum was to be continued for ten years, until it reached the price I originally asked. Besides, the secret that was so valuable to her, may not be so to you. I don't say it is not, but I have another matter to settle with you, and can afford to waive bargain number one. As regards Mrs. Marsden, I would only ask if you are prepared to keep your promise made at Vaux. If it is worth your while to buy my silence, or face the natural indignation of an outraged husband."

There was a sharp and painful struggle in Ivor Grant's mind. The bitter humiliation of that moment had never been surpassed by anything he had undergone. His own natural inclination was to strike back the insult of those words on the mocking lips that had uttered them, and bid him do his worst; but Beryl's helplessness,

Beryl's suffering, recurred to him. Why should he add to her misery for any momentary satisfaction of his own?

"Oh, my love, my love!" he groaned in his heart. "Fate could have given me no harder thing to do for you than this."

When he raised his head at last it was bloodless as the dead. His eyes, as he met those of his antagonist, blazed with so fierce an intensity of passion, that for an instant a chill of something like fear touched Count Savona's heart.

"The time may come," said Ivor hoarsely, "when I can answer your insults as they deserve. You know well your power when you compel me to stifle all that is manly and honest in my nature to shield a woman, behind whose helplessness you are coward enough to shelter yourself. I wish I could bid you do your worst, but as yet my turn has not come. When it does——"

The look, the suppressed passion of the tone, spoke all that was needful. Again that cold chill of fear pierced the impervious armour of his foe.

"You may do your worst," he said with an effort to appear unmoved, "when Fortune favours you as she has done me. I hardly think it is a likely contingency."

He rose.

"I need detain you no longer. My terms you will find written here, and also instructions for carrying them out. I am leaving England, but the address there will always find me."

"One moment," said Ivor hoarsely. "Before I agree to this arrangement, I require you to give me your promise in writing, and swear to it, that you keep your part of the compact. It is to shield a suffering and unhappy woman that I bind myself to so ignoble a barter, but I must see that you are bound by something more than words. You may judge for yourself how much I trust them."

"I will swear anything you like," said the count coolly. "You seem to forget, though, that it is my interest to keep your secret now."

Ivor paid no attention; he was writing something hastily at the table, and pushed it over to his antagonist as he concluded. The count glanced over the paper and signed it at once, but all the evil in his nature, and all the hatred of which that nature was capable, shone out in his face as he bound himself by the oath Ivor Grant dictated.

The young man folded up the paper and placed it in his breast, then pointed to the door.

"Now go," he said with a contempt that cut like a lash. "This is the last time you set foot over my threshold, though not—be sure of that—the last time we two meet."

And with that proud menace still ringing in his ears, the spy heard the doors of the Court close behind him. He smiled triumphantly.

"No matter," he said, looking back to the dark gables and pointed roof, and shaking his fist in impotent fury as he so gazed. "It is my day now. Who would have thought Fate would have befriended me so cleverly, or that that woman would have taken her secret with her to the grave? When I came here to-day, I feared the game was played out. But no, I hold some trumps yet. With care and caution I can make my pretty puppets dance to my tune for many a year to come."

And he turned and plunged into the shadows of the winding drive—shadows that fell into weird and fantastic shapes as they flitted among the tossing branches; shadows that had fallen across many a face and form that had trodden the long avenue; but never, never, in all their fantastic passage, had fallen across any face so evil as the one they looked on now.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## A Family Feud.

(A STORY IN FIVE WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER VII.

As Harry Bradwell had prophesied, it had not been difficult to establish arrangements for a protected correspondence between himself and the girl he loved. He took Mr. Keith, to a limited extent, into his confidence, and letters came and went at frequent intervals and with perfect security through the hands of the little Scotchman.

And the epistles Harry received were very pleasant gossip ones; a brave, hopeful affection breathed in every syllable, and went far to sustain Harry's own resolution.

But a change was at hand in the ordering of Agnes Fenton's life. Hitherto her lot had been an easy and a sheltered one, with few cares and much quiet comfort. It was true that, before her meeting with Harry Bradwell, the placid routine of her days, tested by the standards of other girls of her age, might have seemed monotonous

in the extreme. There was little excitement in it, and nothing of the feverish activity of modern fashion-worship. But Agnes had not been lonely. Occasionally a longing had possessed her for the counsel and the caresses of her dead mother, but even this yearning was subdued and sentimental, rather than close, and throbbing with the keen ache of actual bereavement. A man blind from his birth misses the sunlight less than his suddenly-smitten brother, and Agnes felt the loss of the parent she could but faintly recollect less acutely than she was apt to imagine. She had had her aunt to tend and help, pleasant household duties to absorb her attention, and one or two friends of her own sex in the Frome Road to share her recreations.

All this abruptly ended. The first intimation of the catastrophe which Harry received was a telegram running thus :

"Aunt is dead. She was only ill a few hours. The doctor says it was heart-disease. A great trouble."

"A great trouble!" Harry repeated. "I know it must be that, my darling girl. May a merciful Providence comfort and keep you!"

The young man determined to go to town at once and afford what assistance might lie in his power. He knew that by taking this step he might probably be brought into close connection with his estranged relative of Croyle Farm. It was very possible that Mr. or Mrs. Francis Bradwell might be already summoned to the darkened house, if not actually there. But it was not a time to stand on ceremony, or to weigh too carefully the perils and inconveniences of such a meeting. Agnes had a direct and imperative claim upon his sympathy and aid. If an awkward disclosure at Hunstone Manor came to be the result, he would solace himself with the thought that he had simply obeyed the call of duty; and he had personally no such respect for the traditions of the family feud as to object to shake hands with his uncle and discuss with him Agnes's future. So Harry hastily made the necessary preparations, and informed Sir Raymond that he had an errand in the metropolis that might perhaps detain him there for several days. Greatly to his relief, his father exhibited no special curiosity as to the nature of that errand. The baronet's mind was concentrated upon his own swiftly-increasing anxieties, and he had little interest to spare for what else might be passing around him. Indeed, had he confessed the truth, he was pleased at the idea of Harry's proposed absence again. He had begun to resent the watch which he was conscious his son was now keeping on the relations between Captain Middleford and himself.

"Very good, Harry," he said. "I hope it's no mischief that you are bent on brewing yonder, that's all—young men are not to be trusted."

"Nor old ones either," Harry mentally retorted, thinking of the captain. But he was, of course, too filially respectful to translate this sentiment into audible speech.

Arrived in the dusk of the early evening at No. 90, Frome Road, Harry hesitated a moment. He experienced a strange repugnance at the idea of ringing the familiar bell and sending the clanging unmusical echoes into every chamber of the house of death; but at last he mustered up his courage and brought the servant to the door by a quick peal. She was an impulsive, kindly-hearted girl, and she recognised the visitor at once.

"I am glad you've come, Mr. Bradwell," she said, addressing him with inoffensive freedom; "Miss Agnes is just wearying to see you, I am sure, though she wouldn't own it. Your coming will do her good. She frets as though Mrs. Holby had been her mother."

"Her aunt has stood in a mother's stead to Miss Fenton for many years; I do not wonder at Agnes's grief," Harry answered. "Where shall I find her?"

"In the parlour, sir; shall I announce——"

"No, no," Harry interrupted; "I will go in person, please," and, sans ceremony, he crossed the little hall and entered the designated apartment.

Agnes was quite alone, and the lines of her weary vigil were across her fair young brow and around her tear-dimmed eyes. With a start at the intruder's presumption she rose. Then "Harry!" she cried, and a moment later she was nestling like a forlorn, storm-driven bird, at his heart.

When the first paroxysm of emotion had died away she began her melancholy narrative.

"We could do nothing for aunt, that was the pity of it," she said; "and—and—the end came so rapidly."

"It must have shocked you terribly, dearest, I know."

"It did—it did! I shall never, never forget it."

"But you are not quite desolate after all, Agnes," the young man dared to whisper; "and she could leave you peacefully, knowing that." He longed to console her, if in ever so faint a degree, and it was with no egotism that he turned to the assurance of his own presence and love as the most sovereign balm, that he had to offer. She understood him, and was grateful for his tenderness.

Suddenly Agnes seemed to recollect a fresh cause for anxiety.

"I have sent to my uncle—your uncle, too," she said, "and I am

expecting him, and perhaps aunt also, every hour. If they should meet you here!"

"That is precisely what I was looking forward to," Harry answered; "it will probably be more of a surprise to them than to me."

"Then you will not object?"

"Certainly not. I am willing to be friendly, and, as far I can,"—he was momentarily thinking of Captain Middleford—"to live in amity with everybody. If strife there is, Mr. Francis Bradwell will have to begin it; and even then, according to the old saw, it takes two to make a quarrel."

Agnes was reassured, and for the first time in the interview a smile flitted across her features.

"I am glad you are so good and generous, Harry," she said.

In due course this embarrassing interview took place, and it proved less formidable than in his secret heart Harry had expected. It was inevitable that a certain measure of constraint should figure in the early civilities and conversation on both sides. But this quickly wore away, and, almost before either was aware of it, uncle and nephew were chatting as pleasantly as if they had intimately known each other for years, and as if no family feud in the ranks of the Bradwells had ever existed.

The problem which occasioned of necessity the gravest discussion was that of Agnes Fenton's future. If Harry could have seen his way to an immediate marriage he would eagerly have proposed that solution. But with the fear of his father before his eyes, and the conviction—in spite of his sanguine youth—upon his heart that it might be years yet before the recompense of his devotion to law would justify him in taking a wife, he was compelled to refrain.

"I'll tell you what Agnes must do," said Mr. Francis Bradwell at last; "she must just come home with me to Croyle Farm. We've room enough for two such dainty lasses. We'll see then if we can't put some healthier country tints upon her cheeks. Why, I should grow thin and yellow myself, I know, if I were stifled up amongst these city chimneys for six months. Agnes will be very welcome to such hospitality as we can offer, and she'll not be many leagues removed from the manor, nephew."

As the farmer uttered the last sentence, by way of recommendation to his project, a queer gleam of humour was twinkling about his mouth and in the depths of his honest grey eyes. He looked Harry hard in the face. He could guess that to his listener there was a perplexity as well as a pleasure involved in the fact referred to, and Harry understood both the words and the glance. He shifted uneasily in his seat, comprehending somewhat of the perils of the new situation. But even had he wished to do so, it was not for him to raise objection against so reasonable and generous a scheme. Except in his own selfish cowardice he had no possible ground for any opposition. He remembered the old proverb that "Beggars cannot be choosers." If Agnes would be happy at Croyle Farm—of which he had small doubt—it would be advantageous as well as fitting for her to accept the kindly offer.

"I shall be able to see her when I am at home, of course," Harry answered valiantly, though with a perceptible drop in his tone, which was not lost upon his uncle; "and—and—I trust I may by-and-by—very shortly, indeed—be in a position to suggest what to me personally would be a still more agreeable settlement."

"A more permanent one—eh?" said Mr. Francis Bradwell, subduing a tendency to a laugh by the timely recollection of the place and the circumstances. "I hope so, too, for your sake, I am sure."

There was real warmth of feeling in the farmer's speech. Being a man of much native shrewdness, he had taken the measure of his young relative's character with tolerable accuracy, and had been very well pleased with the result.

Within a fortnight Agnes Fenton was domesticated at Croyle Farm.

## CHAPTER VIII.

AMIDST the countless differences betwixt town and country life, there is one that frequently escapes the notice of the enterprising house-agent bent on successfully advertising his own particular locality. In the town a man or woman's business is usually individual and self-centred. Their affairs (unless they happen to be public folk, such as cabinet ministers or burglars) are of moment to themselves alone. In the country everybody's business is understood to be largely his neighbour's likewise; and it is the occasion of grave offence to object to the satisfying of a very painstaking and elaborate curiosity. Your true nineteenth-century hermit must needs reside in a great city. There he can meditate at leisure in his tub, and so long as he obstructs no thoroughfare, and does not fail to buy his peace punctually of the tax-gatherer, will be passed and repassed without so much as a thought being cast in his direction by other units—busier, but perhaps scarcely less lonely units. The

great tide of human existence will ebb and flow about him day by day, year in, year out; and he can stand unmoved, and hear its roar, and watch its eddying currents, and scowl at its vanities, and scoff at its sorrows. He is isolated—undisturbed.

In the country the case is altered. Villagers believe in community of information, if not of goods, and the sayings and doings of a would-be recluse are discussed and investigated like any other puzzling phenomena. He must run the gauntlet of perpetual criticism, and be always armed against surprise. In a large town the advent of an extra stranger or two calls for neither comment nor enquiry. In a rural district the arrival of even a chance visitor sets tongues a-going and kindles a novel interest and excitement. It was so at Hunstone. Agnes Fenton had not been domiciled under her uncle's roof four-and-twenty hours before the rumour of her presence had travelled into the farthest confines of the hamlet; and in some inscrutable way her name came to be linked with that of Harry Bradwell.

Captain Middleford heard it, and first doubted and then rejoiced. The captain was not above the petty meanness of employing spies when he had any end to serve. In congenial company he had sometimes boasted of a silver key that would unlock most doors, howsoever guarded, and in this instance he bribed more than one servant at both the Manor and the farm. He discovered that beyond any question there was at least a modicum of truth in the village tales, that Harry paid surreptitious visits to his uncle's home, and that Agnes was repeatedly alone in his company.

"Hurrah!" cried the delighted intriguer in a burst of triumphant soliloquy. "I have you on the hip now, my fine young fellow, cunning as you think yourself. You dare to threaten me, indeed! You'll find that that is a game which a couple can play at."

He lost very little time in acquainting Harry with the extent of his knowledge. He stopped the young man in one of the Manor corridors, and made him a mock bow, with malicious and unfathomable hatred beneath its veil of irony.

"So, Mr. Bradwell, I hear you are engaged to be married, and to one who is almost a kinswoman. Let me congratulate you," he said; "but—but," sinking his voice to a satirical stage-whisper, "shall I venture to offer my felicitations to your father also?"

The colour first vanished from Harry's face, and then came back in a fast and furious tide. He had not looked for this exposure so soon, though fully conscious that he walked amongst pitfalls. He hesitated a little, and his fingers involuntarily clenched themselves. He would have liked to have taken this smirking, supercilious enemy by the throat.

The captain observed his discomfiture and revelled in it.

"But perhaps you would prefer that this were delayed for a space, until the preliminaries are more fully developed and the arrangements completed for the—ahem!—joyous surprise?" he continued.

Harry's anger burst through the restraints of prudence. Let the worst come to the worst, he would yet defy his antagonist. The indomitable Bradwell pride was in his nature as well as in his parent's, and it forbade him even to attempt to purchase the silence of such a villain.

"That must be at your own discretion, Captain Middleford," he replied. "I decline to discuss the subject with you in any shape. In fact, I decline to discuss any topic whatever with an individual I so thoroughly despise. I must ask you to let me pass."

"Fool!" muttered the captain under his breath as Harry strode away. "Fool! stiff-necked, obstinate, conceited idiot! But I'll humble your haughtiness yet, my fine laddie; I've a splendid weapon here, all ready forged, to my hand."

It is possible that Captain Middleford might have gone direct to his host with his budget of disagreeable intelligence, but for other and kindred concerns which at this instant were engrossing his attention. The adventurer had played his cards well, and had already a tighter grip upon the Hunstone Manor estate than anyone, except his dupe—and even he preferred to ignore the ugly truth, and as far as possible to live in a dreamer's paradise—suspected. The village postmaster's contempt for Sir Raymond's acumen and sagacity would have been intensified fourfold if he had guessed the complete extent of the baronet's embarrassments.

But Captain Middleford was not satisfied. His conscience had long ago been seared as with a red-hot iron, and no twinge of compunction visited him as he planned the final and irremediable ruin of his victim. He had on foot a crowning scheme which, if he could only induce Sir Raymond to embark the remnant of his fortunes therein, would achieve this end with speed and certainty. Then, with his pockets amply lined, the victorious scoundrel would betake himself to pastures new.

The prospectus of the Drincorra Mining Company certainly read well, and its promises had just that alluring mixture of fact and fiction which limes in moments of sudden impulse the incautious and unsophisticated speculator. Sir Raymond Bradwell would none

knew better than Captain Middleford how surely he was to be identified with the first-mentioned unfortunate.

There were sundry important details, however, still to settle before submitting the trap for the formal examination of the prearranged dupe. One or two influential names were required to fill up vacant lines on the front page of the proof-sheet, and in case of an awkward extension of investigation it was advisable that the company's offices—very temporary ones—should exhibit all the signs of a large and bustling activity. For these reasons a visit of the Drincorra's chief projector to the metropolis was necessary. The captain left Hunstone for town within a couple of hours of his conversation with his host's son.

He was in an exceedingly jubilant mood. The broad smile upon his face appearing unexpectedly on 'Change would assuredly have sent up any shares in which he was understood to have an interest. He entertained no doubts of his success, and at a grand *coup* he would be wealthy again. Insensibly the coming triumph gleamed in his eyes, and cast a shadow of arrogance beforehand over his whole mien.

"I suppose I ought to bring Huke in so as to obtain some trifling share of the spoil," he murmured in the obscurity of his cab. "The fellow deserves that much by way of recompense; his money has pulled me through many a tight door, and—and—it'll help, probably, to put that other ridiculous notion out of his head."

Quickly the captain attracted the attention of his Jehu. "Drive to No. 15, Sussex Row, East," he said.

Sussex Row was a dingy, low-browed street in that *terra incognita* to fashionable folk, the East End of London; and No. 15 was as dingy and low-browed an edifice as even Sussex Row could exhibit. Captain Middleford alighted, paid his cabman, and walked into the half-open pawnbroker's door. An under-sized, ill-fed lad, in clothes plainly descended from an elder brother, appeared from the rear.

"Want Mr. Huke, sir?" he asked, and without waiting for a reply he gave a tug at a shrill little bell. A heavily-built, flashily-attired personage, with a decidedly Jewish cast of countenance, descended a side stair.

"Oh, oh, Captain Middleford! How do? This is quite an unusual pleasure. Come in, come in," he said, and with effusive politeness he seized his visitor's hand and well-nigh dragged him into the region of semi-twilight behind the store. Here a girl's form was visible to the accustomed eyes of the guest.

"You are as well and as blooming as ever, I hope, Miriam," said he; "but I can easily observe that there is no doubt about the latter fact." A flush and a quick upward glance showed that the compliment was properly appreciated; but Miriam volunteered no other answer.

"You have come on business, of course?" enquired the usurer.

"I have, and on business of importance, Mr. Huke."

Miriam interpreted this enquiry and reply, according to long wont, as a signal for her departure. She took her homely appliances of needlework and withdrew to an upper apartment. Her father watched her retreating figure with a look of peculiar fondness and admiration upon his swarthy features.

"That girl, though she is my daughter, is worth her weight in gold," he said in a strangely significant whisper.

"I can well believe it, Mr. Huke—maybe in two senses," answered the captain, with a forced attempt at a jest, which did not quite hide the annoyance and anxiety vibrating in his tones. "I have to be away in something considerably under the hour to catch an early train," he continued, as if desirous without delay to change the subject. "Do you mind looking at these papers?"

The money-lender took the proffered sheets, and for a minute or two there was silence in the room.

"You will reap a golden harvest again here, Captain Middleford, by a little strategy."

"I think so; and you, too, if you can supply capital for our start on pretty easy terms."

"Say, rather, on pretty risky terms."

"The risk is inevitable. But it will not alarm you. If you object I can apply elsewhere. Your silence is secure anyhow, for I've too many of your own secrets at my command to make treachery a paying game."

A black cloud stole over Huke's brow.

"Oh, I see, you have succeeded so well that you can afford to despise and toss aside now your old tools, captain. That is true British ingratitude. Well, well; fulfil your other promise, and you shall make what bargains you please."

"What promise do you refer to?"

"Marry my daughter, Captain Middleford, and make a lady of her. She will never disgrace you, and I'll never ask to come to dinner with my son-in-law. The contract was clear enough—keep it."

"This is absurd, and past all patience, Huke; I thought all along you were—joking." The quiver in the captain's voice proved that he lied.

"I! Joking! You know better. Didn't I find you loan after loan on those very terms? Haven't I lost the money?—and you pleaded for delay after delay. Do you dare to deny this, and refuse to marry Miriam?"

The captain feigned a passion in his turn. "I do," he said.

CHAPTER IX.

HARRY BRADWELL hurried away to his own room in no very enviable frame of mind. It was evident now that the catastrophe—if such it should prove—of open disclosure was very close at hand. It would not be possible to stave off an explicit avowal of his acts and his intentions for many more days, if even hours. He must prepare himself as best he could to meet the inevitable storm of his father's fierce upbraidings. He must be ready to take his departure, if so commanded, from the ancestral home. This had been the punishment of better men than he for an imagined *mesalliance*, and he entertained but a faint and wavering hope that by some chance he might escape. Luckily, the existence of the entail would prevent any permanent alienation of the Manor estate from the rightful heir. Whatever happened at the present juncture of affairs, he could still expect some day to bring his chosen bride home in triumph to the familiar mansion. But in the interval how heavily this might be encumbered! Again his thoughts busied themselves with Captain Middleford, his father's enemy (if only Sir Raymond could be brought to believe it) and his own. With difficulty he repressed a curse upon the man who had wrought so much evil already, and who was not yet content. To the captain's machinations he owed the immediate presence of this awkward dilemma. He readily guessed that, personally or by deputy, the captain had maintained a guard upon his every movement, and watched with deliberate desire to take him at a disadvantage. He had succeeded only too well.

But Harry did not stay long to mope between walls. He philosophically assured himself that it was useless to cry over spilt milk. He had the future to face, and if the captain were minded to play his game of personal revenge out to the bitter end, it struck Harry that it might yet be possible to discover some useful and effective counter-move. The idea occurred to him to anew consult Mr. Keith. The shrewd little bookseller might have gained access by this time to fresh sources of information, and in any case was a safe and valuable ally. The notion was no sooner conceived than Harry proceeded to carry it into effect.

On his way through the courtyard he encountered his father. Sir Raymond was dressed for a journey, and his favourite dog-cart stood waiting.

"You won't care for a ride to Sellworth with me, Harry, I suppose?" the baronet perfunctorily asked. "You young fellows like to hold the reins yourselves if you go into strange neighbourhoods. I dare say you imagine it's derogatory to masculine dignity to sit quiescent beside an elder."

"I have never said so, sir; nor, so far as I know, thought so," Harry answered.

"Ah well, it's natural; it's natural! I see you don't accept my invitation. By-the-bye, I'll thank you to tell Roberts that I shall not be back, probably, till late."

"I will tell him, sir."

The next minute the gate opened, and the baronet, his equipage, and his groom, vanished around the corner.

A spasm of relief spread itself from Harry's heart. Clearly his father had not yet been made acquainted with the enormity of the son's offence. Youth is sanguine, and eager to accept the lull in any storm as the harbinger of possible peace. But common-sense soon showed him that the delay was but a slender foundation for the hope of an avoided quarrel. Half-a-dozen words would doubtless have sufficed to have changed Sir Raymond's smile into a scowl, and his good-humoured words into the utterance of bitterest anger. Those words might soon be spoken.

Mr. Keith was in his shop, an establishment too important a factor in the village economy to be long neglected by any proprietor. He could see at once that Harry was greatly preoccupied, and putting this fact side by side with the tales which had recently reached his ears respecting the doings at Croyle Farm, he drew his own conclusions. Like those of the canny Scotchman generally, they were exceedingly close to the mark of actual circumstances. Harry discussed the weather and the state of trade in as matter-of-fact tones as he could muster until a waiting telegraph-messenger had gone off to the vicarage with a bulletin from Switzerland. Then he warily approached the business of his errand.

"Have you discovered anything else concerning Captain Middleford and my father, Mr. Keith?" he asked.

"Very little—nothing to the captain's credit."

"Probably you are of what is now strongly my own opinion—that that would be almost impossible."

"Decidedly I think so."

"I want to get up a case against him if I can, and any fresh help you can give will be most gratefully received. I shall do my best to awaken my father to the captain's true character."

"You will have a hard task. Sir Raymond is obstinate, and will resent such a questioning of his judgment. But maybe you've little or no choice."

It was a bold bid for confidence, and it succeeded. Harry smiled wearily.

"I see you have a clue already to the situation," he said. "Let me show you more clearly how it stands. I can trust you, I know." And he ran rapidly over the outline of his two quarrels with the adventurer, revealing just so much of the tender romance of his love-story as was necessary to afford coherence to his narrative.

"The fellow is a villain," said his listener; "everything I hear of him from every quarter tends to prove it. He will play you the worst trick that lies in his power, and it seems to me he has a very awkward opportunity, if he has found out as much as you fear."

"I am sure that he has."

"Whew!"

"That is what makes me so anxious to win the move, if I can only manage it," Harry cried hoarsely, his excitement rising to a painful pitch and contrasting curiously and dramatically with the unruffled outward serenity of his listener. "I have even harboured thoughts of violence occasionally," he added.

"That mauna be resorted to," said the postmaster firmly, using once more the idiom which was almost his only sign of strong inward emotion: "that'll cure no evil."

"The temptation is great."

"Maybe, maybe. Just say it nay. Weel, weel, I'll think the matter over, and to-morrow I'll gie ye my advice, and on a bit paper all I've learnt of the captain's doings and am prepared—if required, ye ken—to swear to."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Keith."

Fate made that promise of no avail.

Harry wandered away into the Hunstone woods, and wrestled with his problem amidst the singing of birds and the gunt of silvery sunshine. But to-day no voice of Nature seemed to offer help, or had the least power to bring consolation. The question arose whether he should go across to Croyle Farm and consult Agnes Fenton on this new phase of the old difficulty. This he decided in the negative. It would vex and worry the girl to no good purpose. Harry held the simple old-fashioned creed that it is the man's duty to bear the burdens of life unflinchingly, and where in anyway possible, uncomplainingly. He would endeavour to practise that which under other circumstances he would have preached. Harry Bradwell had a vein of chivalry, as well as much valour, in his nature. He would spare Agnes any trouble that was not absolutely unavoidable. Here, as he considered, was a test of his regard; and he stood it triumphantly. It was possible that Agnes might have viewed the case from a different standpoint.

The young man ultimately went back to the Manor, and, after a late and lonely luncheon, shut himself away from interruption in the seclusion of a private upper apartment. The characteristic caution of the aged Scotchman in selecting the "bit paper," whereon every word could be weighed and suitably adjusted, as the medium of his volunteered evidence, had fired Harry with the spirit of emulation. He would marshal his facts and his deductions in black and white likewise. He found ink and a writing-desk, and set sternly to work to fashion a formidable and telling indictment. Whatever might be Harry's own fate, if the captain escaped a fall in his own turn it should not be the fault of either of his accusers.

Night fell, and the wan young moon riding overhead looked down on Sir Raymond Bradwell driving homewards with little thought of the tragedy even then being enacted beneath his ancestral roof. The baronet had gone to Sellworth on some pressing county business, and, by reason of this interposition of other cares, had gained a brief respite from his private anxieties and fears. This was over now, and the Hunstone magnate sat moody and silent beside his servant for mile after mile. Once or twice the man ventured a remark, but the answers were curt and impatient, and not of a character to induce further conversation. Sir Raymond towered aloft on his box-seat like a veritable statue of resentful despair.

And there was occasion for his gloom. Of late every speculation in which he had embarked had turned out badly. "These Drin-corra Mines seem to promise grandly; if they should after all go amiss I shall be ruined," he murmured once, in far too low a tone for his groom to hear. "But Middleford knows, and he says they are a capital investment. I mean to try them."

The house looked strangely dark as its master came in sight of its noble front.

"I expected Captain Middleford would have returned before me," he said; "but I suppose he has been delayed in town, else



there would be a light in the drawing-room or library; and I dare say Harry, too, is out."

Sir Raymond hurried across the hall, and noted with surprise, and a presentiment of some disaster, that the library door stood ajar at the end of the long passage, and that papers lay on the floor within. He traversed the corridor, and then a cry of horror and amaze escaped him. There, at the foot of an oaken armchair, lay Captain Middleford's unconscious body. An awful crime had been committed.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 140.)

## Love.

My love is steadfast as its source is pure;  
My love is glorious as its source is bright;  
My love, as seeking not its own delight,  
But rather her sweet safety to ensure,  
Her gladness in life's turmoils to secure  
Is fitted so, to meet the angels' sight,  
Who hover round her fair head day and night.  
Strong as the Heaven that guards her to endure,  
Darling, my stream of fate may ebb and flow,  
May flash in sunshine, or go down in gloom;  
So nothing touch thy soft unruffled bloom,  
Or mar the sweet serene I worship so.  
Only give this, my one sufficient need,  
Saying "such love as his was love indeed."

## "When the Gorse is Out of Blossom."

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

EASTER had gone by rainy and cold, and the birth-time of the year had been a wretched time. Now the spring that poets love to talk about was over all the land; the season when even the pulses have a trick of leaping as if to join hands with their bygone youth was in supreme reign. The long light days were in; the sweet white evenings, when the declining sun leaves a pale, ethereal, high radiance in the air, lingered on and on, as if night were but a misty phantom to be easily exorcised out of ken by a steady front.

On such a pure white evening some girls and youths had been singing to the accompaniment of an old piano in a north-country farmhouse. The piano was, to put it mildly, the worse for wear, seeing that it had served the house-mother when she was a girl, and, besides that, its present home was in a windy lane and near by a tempestuous shore. Stern Atlantic gales swept up from a sandy coast, over rising fields of corn and cabbages; trees were few, and the strong stone farmhouse might have been a thing of lath and plaster, so fiercely did the sea-born winds tear and rush through its crevices.

No matter how it came about; in the course of the singing and the chattering, one girl, a southerner, cried:

"You should see the gorse at home!"

"Eh! should we? D'ye think we've no good gorse down here?"

The speaker was of the country, with speech to the point and with decision marking her altogether. Nevertheless, her sharp words were uttered in a strangely soft voice; one does now and again hear these soft musical voices. Most of the Sefton women had them, but the Sefton men either never were so gifted by Nature or else the daily shouting across the windy fields had rasped away all gentleness of tone from their throats.

"I don't say that, but you should see our Kentish gorse; all the year round we have it in a way."

This girl, Patty McEwen, was a cousin of the Seftons; her mother was a Sefton. She was in the north on a visit.

Jim Sefton answered her. "Do ye now, Patty, think we have any one good thing up here? Eh, but I know what rain is in February down your way! Slush, and sludge, and mist, and misery. How does your gorse look then?"

"Well," the girl ruminated. She had some love of teasing, and to drive Jim on to some cutting remarks in the vernacular was a dear sport of hers. "Well," she repeated, "damp, rather; such of it as may be so foolish as to have come out. Come it must, though, or the song makes nonsense."

"Eh! what's that? A song about gorse?" put in Phillis.

"Ye know as well's Patty. Just th' old rhyme, I take it, she'll be after." Jim was very broad, though to speak well and to be educated was a point with Farmer Sefton and his wife.

"I never took much to heeding rhymes," said Phillis, in her soft tones, but her strong way.

"And I always catch them up," cried Patty. "You know this, surely?" Her brown eyes laughed, and she looked at Phillis and

past Jim to another young man, who was also a farmer's son, but no relation. "You've heard it."

"When the gorse is out of blossom,  
Then is kissing out of fashion."

"That? Eh, I'll know that, of course. It'll just be the sing-song way of stating an observation upon human nature." The soft voice went steadily on, but the girl's fair face took a heightened colour.

"Queer," said Jim. "Then, I'm thinking we ought t' have precious little of that amusement oop here; we've little enough of t' gorse. Ha, ha!" This jolly laugh rang through the open window, and was heard as "Jim Sefton's laugh" right down the lane.

"The gorse," and Patty demurely nodded her gay head at her cousin. "You are coming back with me, and mind you don't say 't' gorse,'" mimicking him, "down in Kent, or the folks will be asking me for an interpreter."

"It's little of me Kent 'll be seeing!" retorted Jim. He was angry—with himself most of all, for having done the very thing he was fighting against. Patty to him was a delicate rare creature, a being of most sweet refinement; in fact, something which, to his harsh self-judgment, was as far above him as a lady is above a serf. She was his cousin, though, and there had been moments when his humility had been forgotten, and when he had seen himself as a sort of guardian over her. Such a hit as she had just given him annihilated that vision. Ass that he was!—that broad accent of his was simple carelessness, boorishness—he was in a rage with himself. He went on, however: "The ways o' Kent won't suit me—leastways I'll not be suitin' the foalks there! Ha, ha!" and he pushed his hands into his trousers-pockets, having in his anger passed the bounds of common civility.

Patty had flushed red for a second, then she drew up her small, slight figure. How dignified these little women can be when once it pleases them to assume dignity! She would vouchsafe no word of retort to this cousin of hers, though it was on the tip of her tongue to cry, "How rude you are!" She made a circle outside the offending Jim, and walked coolly round him to the far side of the piano.

"My property is all over the place," she said carelessly; "let us get it together a bit, Phillis; there will be no time to-morrow for hunting it all up. Dear! to think I am going home the day after! It is to be hoped the entertainment to-morrow will be extra good, as I am honouring it by staying for it!"

The entertainment was no more than a penny reading, which, being the last of the winter series, was intended to be a better thing than usual.

The strong west wind was blowing in from the sea when these same four started to walk over the fields to the village school-house on the following evening. Spluttering April showers, and flashing golden sunshine, had given the last day of the fitful month a kind of dashing bravery for its exit, but the bright white light laughed at rain and sunshine alike and held its own fair supremacy as they walked over the vast level fields. Grey night stole up from the east, but the clear spring light and the windy, scarlet clouds of sunset seemed to laugh the dimness to scorn.

Offence between Jim and Patty was over, of course, but my lady tossed her gay head—metaphorically, we mean—and seeing they soon fell in with friends, gave the benefit of her society to them rather than to her cousins. She was not a heroine at all, this Patty McEwen, but just a girl who had a glad life, and so far had never had any stern gravity forced upon her. Perhaps she was a bit superficial—certainly she had not the strength and repose about her which Phillis had—never mind! she had a true and tender heart, and if she was foolish sometimes now, that was no reason why in the future she should not be wise.

At the moment she showed her folly by leaving Jim—Phillis had a companion—and going to the friends. With them she laughed, and being a pretty, bright girl, was made much of by them.

Meanwhile Jim Sefton strode on by himself; like the people of the north he could hold an iron control over himself. Not that the moment in question held any point which needs so tragic an expression in reality, yet, as Jim during the last twenty-four hours had opened his eyes to a painful fact, he did vaguely feel himself the hero of a tragic fate. So strong and so big was he physically, so simple of heart at the same time, that last night, when Patty had talked so carelessly about going home, the giant Jim had fallen speechless, and had felt a big lump rise in his throat.

"Wae's me," he thought, "that I should have ever seen the lass!"

And here he was striding along almost by her side, so to speak, and he dared not speak to her! He watched her gay vagaries, and he heard her wild rattle, and—well, he would have given his very soul for her to laugh at him, or to lecture him, or to order him.

He would have loved to fight all those other fellows too—they whom she laughed with. What was their liking to him—his love? Poor Jim! Love was a hard tyrant to him that night.

He had to walk over, and to behave like a—“like a nonentity,” he said to himself, for he had to sing. Yes, Jim Sefton had a fine tenor voice. Nay, for a village concert to get Jim’s name down as performer meant glory, success—everything that a village concert wants.

Well, he did his best, and his best was very good indeed; but, as regarded Patty, his cousin, he never, as one might say, came to the front at all until the last moment before getting home. The friends had dropped off by twos and threes, and the Sefton party was left alone.

That means still the same four, because, though young Jack Thomson was no Sefton, he always did walk up to the farm-gate with them if Phillis made up one of the party. It gave him a mile walk back, but what is a mile or two to a young fellow when such as Phillis Sefton is by his side for the half of the distance?

These two were behind; Jim and Patty walked on more quickly in front. The wind had risen again and came sweeping like a giant over the fields of young crops as if it would tear every green blade out of the earth.

“It’ll be a rough night—that will it,” said Jim.

“Will be?” accented Patty. “Is, I should say.”

“This is naught?”

“Naught is a very rough customer, then.”

Whereat Jim felt as if he would like to shield her by putting his arm round her, while she hugged herself in her thick ulster and tripped on front of him.

“There is a gale on its way. Eh, but I’d like just the measure of learning to know the winds and their courses like those Yankee chaps! Yes, they’re mostly right, and this time they’ll be right again. This’ll be the beginning o’ the gale. My! won’t it touch us up by the morning.”

“Have you changed your mind, Jim, and are you coming?” Patty had to shout her question, the wind was so loud and gave such puffs and snorts. “You’re bound to come one day.”

“Eh! I’ll be coming one daay.” Jim fell into broad Lancashire, being taken aback by her graciousness.

“To-morrow?”

“No.” He jerked his head. “No, not just that. Kent will see me when—when—”

“When?” called Patty from the front.

“Can’t say,” he answered doubtfully.

“When?” And the girl, her love of teasing him excited by his manner, turned and faced him. Her hands were in the side-pockets of her ulster; her close cloth cap that matched it was well down on her small head, but the wind tossed her hair about. Loose brown locks flew around brow, and ears, and throat; still, her trim, alert, mischievous young self stood firm, and her merry eyes dashed railery at the unfortunate Jim.

Yes, “unfortunate.” In her facing him he lost courage. He actually trembled before the girl; he lost speech, and his fair weather-tanned face turned crimson.

“When?” she repeated.

“Eh, laass!” he sighed, dropping helplessly into the broadest provincialism, “that I’ll no—not,” he corrected himself, “be able to answer ye! There! the likes o’ me’ll not be of your sort. No; I’m best out of Kent.”

“Oh, very well!” flung she, and ran on.

No such storm as that which raged over the Lancashire coast that night had been known in the memory of man. The destruction was measureless. Lives were lost, trees were uprooted, roofs were flung bodily to a distance, sheaves and ricks had the thatch torn off them, gardens were swept bare.

Farm-hands were up all night. At the Haigh Farm, Sefton’s place, old Sefton and his sons worked like slaves to save things. No such mighty stacks of hay were in all the country round as theirs.

They saved all.

But the price—!

Ah! Jim Sefton was reaching up from the topmost rung of a ladder bracing the end of a stack, when a sweep of wind bore down upon him. There was no time for anyone to call to him, no time for thought; he was flung like a wisp of straw to the ground.

They took him up groaning.

No legs were broken, no arms were broken, but he moaned in anguish and lay like a log.

Another spring came.

For nearly a year had Jim Sefton lain on his back in the old farmhouse. Death was not coming to him, but a life that to his vigorous spirit was a living death seemed to be his portion for the term of his natural existence.

Then some one said: “Go to London.”

Well, the London surgeons cured him; and, then, being so far south, why should he not go on into Kent?

Jim had never lost his glorified dreams of his wild cousin.

But Patty, though he did not know it, was scarcely by that time to be called the “wild young cousin.” Jim’s accident had struck a terror into her heart. Things had been so arranged that her going home was not delayed by that terrible event; she was not wanted to nurse, and her father would have her home. So it was that she only once saw Jim, and that was when she went into his room to say “Good-bye” to him. He did not know her, and her aunt hurried her off. The good aunt was the soul of kindness, but she was in dire grief, and she was of the stern north.

Patty went sobbing.

And Patty had never forgotten.

How should she meet Jim?

He was in the house. She heard his voice, and all at once this foolish thought struck her—how should she meet him?

Common-sense said: “Meet him naturally—he will expect nothing new from you.”

She dallied about her room, then she ran into the garden for a rose; from there she saw the lifting of the hillocky common, gold with its masses of gorse.

From a gorse-bush in the old-fashioned garden she hastily pulled a bit of the yellow bloom, pricking her fingers, but—remembering.

Would Jim remember too?

She did not see Jim until her mother called to her to come to tea, and during that meal she astonished them all by being the Patty she had been a year ago. She laughed, and she teased, and she talked nonsense. Was that the girl who during the past year had grow quiet and staid? Ay—the very same.

Presently they were in the garden.

“Eh, and that’s your Kentish gorse!” exclaimed Jim Sefton. Months of lying on his back with nothing to do but read had changed Jim a good deal; for one thing his shyness had gone, and had carried off much of his provincialism.

“Eh, that is it!” Patty mischievously copied the north-country lilt.

“It is what I have come specially to see,” said Jim quietly.

“Will ye put on your hat and walk out with me—to show it me?”

“To-night?” doubted the girl. Her wildness fled suddenly. She looked towards the others; they were all sauntering about the garden in the sweet May evening. “You will not be tired?”

“Tired? No, lass, no! I’m right again now. As tough as ever. And I’d like to get a walk with ye. You’re willing?”

“All right.” Patty ran in for a hat.

After that night Jim Sefton used to say there was no such grand sight as a Kentish common when the gorse is well out. When he came in he had a bit stuck in his button-hole, and Patty’s spray had gone.

Patty was rosy, and her clear brown eyes shone with tears as she sat down to supper. She had such joy in her glad young heart as she had never deemed possible.

That year’s gorse had Patty’s story glorifying it for ever, and yet in the years to come she very likely would see little of the grand old common where she had taken Jim Sefton.

Her tears were not for that—they were tears of joy. What else but joy could she feel when she knew she was going back one day with Jim. Dear! would she not keep him well indoors on windy nights?

At which piece of promised tyranny big Jim laughed.

## The Editor’s Note Book.

THE outrage at Victoria Station was one of at least four cowardly attempts of a like nature, and it is proved beyond the possibility of a doubt that the explosive material was brought from America by ruffians in the pay of the Fenian organisation in that country.

INVITATIONS to subscribe to the fund which is thus devoted to the purposes of destruction and murder are published daily in the American newspapers, and appear to meet with no reprobation, official or otherwise. We hear a great deal about our Transatlantic brethren, about blood being thicker than water, and all the rest of it, but it becomes rather a serious question whether the American Government, and by consequence the American people, are not directly responsible for all the damage which is done by the dynamiters.

OUR rulers seem to have lost the old English faculty of plain speaking and our press seems to be very little better. It is time that this should be changed, and that the plain truth should be told. These things reflect discredit and even disgrace on the people of America,

and how, under the circumstances, any citizen of the United States can venture to come to this country and ask to be received as a friend without a feeling of shame, seems to me to be absolutely inconceivable.

WE were made to pay through the nose for contributory negligence in the "Alabama" case. Why should not the American people pay because their politicians dare not risk offending the Irish voters? That is what it comes to, plainly stated.

It always happens when a bye-election takes place that the defeated party, who have probably before the polling informed the electors that the eyes of Europe are upon them, turn round when the result is known, and affect to pooh-pooh it as a matter of little or no significance or importance.

UNDOUBTEDLY in most cases too much is made of these casual elections, which rarely depend upon the issues which are concerned at a general election, but I think it will require a very obstinate Radical indeed to profess indifference to what happened at Brighton. Mr. Marriott's challenge was directly addressed to Mr. Chamberlain and his friends, and the verdict of the Brighton constituency has been simply overwhelming.

To any observer gifted with the slightest impartiality there is something very funny in the severe things which have been said by Liberal speakers and writers, about Mr. Marriott having become a turncoat. From the members of a party which numbers amongst its leaders so distinguished a convert as the Earl of Derby, this angry accusation comes oddly. And, by-the-bye, surely Mr. Gladstone himself used to sit in the House of Commons as a Conservative.

MR. LABOUCHERE, in *Truth*, thinks that it would serve Brighton right if Mr. Gladstone were to take away a portion of its representation, and give it to some more deserving town in the north—one, I presume, which might be trusted to return a Radical. The *Echo* with its usual chivalry, now that the fight is over, sneers at Mr. Romer as a lawyer who has never done any service to the Liberal party. Certainly Mr. Marriott has succeeded in making a good many people very angry.

MR. BALFOUR raised a debate in the House of Commons, last week, on the now fashionable question of the housing of the working-classes; but, with the exception of Sir Charles Dilke, no one who took part in it had much to say that was within measurable distance of common-sense. It is greatly to be feared that the question may become nothing but a battle-ground for impracticable theorists, rabid political economists, and amiable persons with hopelessly impossible views. The first and the hardest task which the recently-appointed Royal Commission will have, will be to sweep out of the way all amiable, but obstructive, persons of this kind.

MEANWHILE the Vestry of St. Pancras is waking-up. It is true that I have not heard that much is being done in the slums of the parish, but I, in common with the other inhabitants of perfectly irreproachable streets in the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park, are being worried—without legal warrant as I am advised—by inspectors who, after much poking about and solemn shaking of heads, order the cleansing of cisterns which regularly undergo that operation as it is. At least, that is what the inspector did in my case, and I could not help thinking that his time would have been very much more usefully employed elsewhere.

THE accounts of General Graham's complete victory at El Teb make it clear that the steadiness and discipline of first-class European troops, properly armed and equipped, make them more than a match for almost any odds which a savage enemy, however courageous and devoted, can bring against them. It also proves to demonstration that if Mr. Gladstone had made up his mind a little sooner, all the lives which were sacrificed at Sinkat and in Baker Pasha's battle would have been saved. The reflective observer may remark that we have not heard much of that comfortable word "blood-guiltiness" of late.

Is the importation of foreign cattle a good thing or is it not? And if it ought not to be permitted under certain restrictions, what ought those restrictions to be? These would seem to be the questions which it ought not to be difficult for people who profess to be statesmen to settle. But, somehow or another, the matter has come to be one of purely party politics, and the simple issue which waits for settlement is lost to sight in the dust of confused and wholly unnecessary battle.

THE House of Lords has refused to sanction the Bill for a new direct railway from London to Brighton, and for a time the existing company may rest in peace. The opposition, however, is sure to revive sooner or later, to the pleasure and profit of lawyers if of nobody else. The service has greatly improved of late, but there are still many details which would well deserve careful attention from the

general manager. Of one thing the Board of the Brighton and South Coast Railway may be sure—the only way to prevent these constant threats of competition, and to preserve their monopoly, is to do their work to the satisfaction of the public.

NOBODY likes to be told that he is a rogue, and it is not therefore surprising that the shipowners of this country should have met together to protest energetically against Mr. Chamberlain's Shipping Bill. It seems more than probable that Mr. Chamberlain, in his desire to reform some admitted evils, has gone rather too far in his interference with one of the most important interests in the country. All that the shipowners ask is that the Bill shall be referred to a Select Committee, and as there can be no reason for any feverish haste in the matter, this seems fair enough.

ONCE more the Habitual Criminal. Three thieves, who were convicted at the Surrey Sessions last week, were described in the evidence of the detectives as being "well-known thieves," and as belonging to "a band of depredators, known as the Black Gang of the Borough." The very existence of such an institution as the Black Gang of the Borough is a disgrace to our system of law and police, to say nothing of our civilisation.

So long as the French Chamber contains gentlemen like M. Barodet the old jokes about French ignorance of English titles are not likely to be forgotten. M. Barodet quoted the other day a passage from a speech from that illustrious statesman, "Lord Gladstone." That this was not a slip was proved by the fact that the speaker repeated the words in reply to a malicious question from M. Paul de Cassagnac.

No doubt the barriers on the Bedford Estate are a serious nuisance, but it is hardly fair to sould the Duke of Bedford—"these aristocrats," as a gentleman called him at a recent meeting of the St. Pancras Vestry. The bars cannot be removed without the consent of the lessees of the Duke's houses in the neighbourhood, unless Parliament can be induced to pass a Bill for their abolition. It is always a pity to hit the wrong man, and it is probable that the Metropolitan Board of Works is the authority which ought to be stirred up.

LADY JOHN MANNERS, in a magazine article, has been extremely severe on the appetites of the upper classes, and catalogues an array of meals which is perfectly gargantuan. As everybody knows, there is a certain amount of exaggeration in the article, but there is no doubt that most people—and not exclusively those who make up the upper ten—do really eat a great deal more than is good for them. But the discovery is not a new one, and the same complaint has frequently been made by moralists and social reformers in other countries.

BUT this is an age and a country of superlatives and hysterics, and the modern Briton likes to be told that he is infinitely better or infinitely worse than his predecessors—it does not very much matter which—and has an exasperating way, either of vaingloriously despising all foreigners, or of abasing himself in the dust while he compares their virtues with his own manifold imperfections.

No doubt Mr. Belt and Mr. Lawes are perfectly right in appealing against the judgment of the Divisional Court, if it fails to satisfy them. No doubt, also, Mr. Charles Russell and the other counsel engaged are only doing their duty to their clients in setting forth the old familiar facts and inferences, in the old familiar way, and with the old familiar prolixity. But I wonder when it will occur to the editors of our newspapers that all this has been printed at great length several times before, and that its republication is simply a waste of space.

I WONDER what a Balloon Society is. It might have been supposed that such an association would confine its attention to the science of aerostatics, but the gentlemen who meet under this name at the Royal Aquarium appear to occupy themselves mostly with the discussion of political questions. Their speeches may be excellent, but their title is certainly misleading.

THE Middlesex District Lodge of Good Templars has been drawing Lord Kimberley's attention to the "increase of intemperance in Her Majesty's Empire of India." It would be interesting to know where the Middlesex Good Templars got the facts on which they founded their memorial.

PEOPLE are sometimes very eccentric in their choice of heroes. Twenty years ago George Hall was sentenced to death for the murder of his wife—there was no doubt whatever about the case—the sentence being subsequently commuted to one of penal servitude for life. The authorities seem to have considered twenty years enough, and the man was released last week, to be received on his arrival in Birmingham "with remarkable demonstrations of welcome" from "thousands of people, amongst whom intense excitement prevailed," and who greeted him with "vociferous cheers." Perhaps twenty years was enough for Hall's crime, but it seems hardly a good precedent to make a popular idol out of a wife-murderer.

C. D.

## One-Eyed Dick.

THE desperate struggle with an Australian bushranger, of which the following is a true account, occurred during the early period of the history of New South Wales, at a time when, almost without exception, all the servants in the colony were convicts, and when many of them had fled into the bush to become bushrangers, either because they were too lazy to work, or, what was unfortunately but too frequently the case, to avoid the harshness, ill-treatment, and repeated floggings of the cruel and tyrannical masters to whom they had been assigned.

"I was going down to Sydney, after two years in the bush, only varied by an overland journey to South Australia. My man had gone on before, and my intended companion had disappointed me, being suddenly prevented from travel. I set out accordingly alone; with a carbine at my back, two of my best kangaroo dogs for my escort, and riding such a horse as no man ever can own twice in his life. I had bought him as a two-year-old, at a very long price, and had spent a great deal more time in training him than we can generally afford in the bush to devote to horseflesh. I set out, as usual, at a foot pace, to do thirty-mile stages, which would bring me to Maitland in five or six days. On the very first day I was tempted foolishly to chase a stray emu, because I had promised a few feathers to some Sydney friends. The emu was caught; but Moonlight, my horse, putting his foot into a wombat-hole, gave me a fall over his head, by which the stock of my carbine was snapped asunder. So, for the rest of the journey, I was unarmed.

"Before reaching the Liverpool Plains, at a bush inn, where I passed the night, there was a great talk about a certain One-Eyed Dick, a bushranger, whom the mounted police had been seeking for the last three weeks. In chasing him, a few days before, they had shot his horse, but he had, nevertheless, contrived to get away into the scrub, and to find a hiding-place among the rocks. It was supposed by that time he had been driven to extremities, as no one would dare to help him, even if there had been anyone so inclined; and he could not venture so much as to light a fire to cook his food, lest the smoke or flame might betray his whereabouts to his pursuers. He was a murderous fellow, for whom no one had a good word; and it seemed to be agreed on all sides that, if he did not find means to get another horse to carry him out of the district, his life could not be worth many weeks' purchase. Being tired, and knowing full well that bush-travellers were given to adorn their tales, I paid but little attention to the gossip, and went drowsily to bed.

"Crossing the range on the following day, I had to follow a narrow track along the steep side of a hill which went down by spurs into the valley. Before I reached the open forest, as I was winding round a long peninsula of rocks, my dogs dashed after a kangaroo. In another minute I was hailed by a voice immediately overhead, shouting, with terrible oaths: 'Bail up, or I'll blow out your brains!'

"I looked up, and caught a glimpse of an extremely ugly face, and of the muzzle of a rusty musket. There was no time for consideration. The gentleman above evidently required my horse, and I regarded that horse as my choicest treasure. Therefore I pressed his sides, threw myself flat on his back, and away we went tumbling, rather than galloping, along the narrow pathway of uneven stones. The musket of course was discharged, and the slugs whistled round me, raking up the skin of my neck and shoulders; but I was unhurt, and we soon turned the jut of the peninsula from which the bushranger had fired. The narrow defile into the open forest being partly blocked up by a small tree that had fallen across it, enabled the gentleman of the bush, by taking a short cut, to meet me at this point, which he did, holding his musket clubbed, ready to deal a desperate blow as soon as he could get at me. He had certainly set his mind upon bestriding Moonlight.

"We got to the fallen tree nearly at the same time. Moonlight went at it and cleared it like a deer, but as he alighted on the other side he tripped and fell upon his head among the branches. I rolled over him, still holding firmly by the rein. It was, indeed, well for me that the bushranger, being out of breath, missed the blow he aimed at my devoted head. It was parried for me by the strong arm of an overhanging tree, which caused the musket to recoil with so much force as to fly out of the ruffian's hand, and to tumble down the hillside. My horse rose, and the man rushed to seize him, shouting threats and imprecations which I do not think it needful to repeat. I still maintained my hold upon reins and stirrup; my blood was up; and with all my force I cut my assailant across the face with my doubled stock-whip. Then he grappled with me, and we both fell. He was a bigger, broader man than I, but starvation had weakened him, and I was in better condition for a struggle. We rolled over and over, each trying to keep the other under. I had his left wrist grasped in my right hand; my left hand, missing his throat, tugged at his chin and beard. He clenched my neckerchief in his fist, and dug his knuckles into my throat, and would most certainly have strangled me had not the neckerchief, which was thin, given away. Then he attempted to get out his knife; but at the moment when he put down his right hand—being the undermost—I threw back my own hand and struck him a severe blow on his only eye. I do not know how long the struggle lasted after this, but I felt my strength beginning to fail. His knees were once or twice upon my chest, and although I threw him off, my hands were losing power rapidly.

"Until I felt that his endurance surpassed mine—until I began

to despair—I had been silent, while my antagonist swore vehemently, but I summoned up at last my failing strength for one loud shout. In a little while the ruffian's cursing took the form of wild howls of rage and pain, his grasp relaxed, and I saw him desperately fighting at the jaws of my two fierce and faithful dogs. Supporting myself on my hands and knees, I, like a savage, urged them on in feeble whispers—they were my last hope and my strong hope. One dog had the robber by the throat, and the other had plunged his sharp muzzle into his side. Shrieking horribly, he writhed and fought with them. As soon as I could gather strength I arose, and with faltering steps reached my horse, who waited, trembling, for his master. I mounted, and without looking back, pushed over fifteen miles, until I arrived at a cattle-station. My dogs had not followed me, and it was an hour before they came in. Refusing the food that was offered to them they went to sleep before the fire.

"As long as I was in the colony I never mentioned the matter to any man, except the head of the police. One-Eyed Dick was never heard of more. The dingoes (native dogs) and eagle hawks soon provide decent burial for any dead body of man or beast left in the bush."

## Spring Cleaning.

### PART I. TO REMOVE STAINS FROM CLOTHES.

THERE is no more trying period of the year to the mother of a large family than the next month or six weeks. The spring cleaning looms in the distance, that annual disturbance which, while it lasts, makes life burdensome to people of limited incomes. "Small means" implies having small houses, with few sitting-rooms, and merely a sufficient number of bedrooms for constant occupation, so there are no spare rooms to which to retreat until the domestic deluge is over, and dry land reappears.

THE interval between that time and the present should be utilised for looking over wardrobes, having a review of frocks, jackets, pinafores, summer stockings, etc., etc. As a rule, last year's clothes, either for adults or juveniles, are certain to prove disappointments, as, dragged into the light of day, they look so much worse than they were expected to do; and it is always found that the children have grown inconveniently; that is to say, not enough to wear reversions from elder branches without alterations, yet too much to begin the new season with the frocks with which the old one concluded. Then the soils upon the old frocks are trying to deal with. The cost of the French cleaner is increasing every year, and will soon be prohibitive. The mother who could make two frocks out of one of her own dresses only for the soiled parts, which leave but enough of it clean for one, hesitates to send the breadths to the cleaner from dread of the bill.

THERE is no reason why people should not learn to clean their own dresses, curtains, ribbons, table-covers, etc. At first it is well to practise on materials of little value, but very soon experience will tide an intelligent woman over the worst of the difficulties.

THE first consideration is whether the entire article is to be cleaned—scoured as it used to be called—or whether merely some disfiguring stains are to be removed. If the former it is well first to attack the spots, and give them such special attention as they require. It is difficult to know, in the case of a dress, for instance, what has caused the stain. It may be grease, fruit, tar, ink, paint, tea, coffee, wine, or jam, or some mixture like sauces, or creams.

GREASE-SPOTS may generally be removed from even delicate material by the employment of benzine, or oil of turpentine, care being taken not to leave a mark, a boundary line round where the solvent spreads. Oxgall is particularly useful in extracting grease-stains from woollen goods. If the stain be very thickly crusted and old, it may be advantageous to soften the grease, previous to the application of benzine, by means of a warm iron laid on a piece of blotting-paper, which has been placed over the spot. In the removal of grease from clothing with benzine or turpentine, people generally go to work by wetting the cloth with the turpentine, and then rubbing it with a sponge or piece of cloth. In this way the fat is dissolved, but it is spread over a greater surface and is not removed; the benzine or turpentine evaporates, and the fat covers a greater surface than before. Place blotting-paper beneath the spot, and moisten with the benzine. Lay another piece on the top, and at once press with a heavy weight. The fat is then absorbed and entirely removed from the material. When the grease-spot is on cotton, or any washing material produced by machine-oil, nothing is more effectual than brown soap rubbed in, and the article left to soak in cold water for twelve hours, then washed out in cold spring water.

CARBONATE of magnesia will sometimes remove a greasy stain from a slight material, such as foulard, satin, etc. Calcined magnesia is dried in an oven and mixed with sufficient benzine to form a smooth paste. It can then be bottled, well stoppered, and kept ready for use. Spread it thickly over the stains, and rub well to and fro with the tip of the finger. The small rolls of earthy matter so formed are brushed off, and more magnesia is laid on and left until the benzine has evaporated entirely. Materials that will bear washing must then be

cleaned with water; on silks, alcohol or benzine should be used instead. Textile materials in which wool has part are unsuitable for magnesia application, as it adheres to the threads and cannot be dislodged.

THESE remedies are applicable to spots only. Where grease-stains are on a large scale, and require to be dealt with by a professional, boiling in bleaching liquor and bleaching alternately are resorted to, each textile requiring different and more skilful treatment than it is possible for amateurs working at home to bestow.

FRUIT-JUICES, wines, jams, etc., leave stains which are difficult to deal with, and troublesome. First it is well to wash with water to remove sugary matter, then use diluted ammonia to neutralise the acid, after which exposure to the fumes of burning sulphur. The difficulty of the last application is its injury to colours, as it bleaches vegetable dyes, so it must only be resorted to as the last extremity. The agonies of mind suffered by hostesses who see their best table-cloths and serviettes stained with wine are not always altogether concealed from guests, nor postponed until opportunity serves for giving full vent to indignation. There is a tradition that depositing a spoonful of salt upon a port wine stain immediately after it has been given will neutralise the injury. This is altogether a delusion. Anything to keep the spot moist until remedies are applied would do as well. It is simpler and more effective to dip the part in boiling milk as soon as possible afterwards, and keep the milk boiling until the spot disappears. Fruit may or may not yield to the last remedy. As an alternative, first rub the spot on each side with hard soap, and then lay on a thick mixture of starch and cold water. Rub this mixture of starch well into the spot, and afterwards expose it to sun and air. If the stain prove obstinate repeat the process a few days afterwards. Ripe fruit makes the most troublesome stain; sometimes unripe fruit of the same kind acts as a remover.

TAR and pitch produce stains which are obstinate under soap, but yield readily to spirits of turpentine, coal-tar, naphtha, and benzine. If they are very old and hard it is as well to soften them by lightly rubbing them with a pledget of wool dipped in good olive-oil. The softened mass will then easily yield to the action of the other solvents.

INK-STAINS may be either writing-ink, marking-ink, or printers'-ink. The second is the most difficult to take out, if the ink used be of a good character. The chances are that the material gives way, and a hole is the result. Dissolve one ounce of cyanide of potassium in four ounces of water, moisten the stained part of the garment with this solution by rubbing in with a feather or small brush, but avoid letting the fingers be touched. As this is a poisonous mixture it should never be brought into a house where there are children. For printers'-ink put the stained part of the fabric into a quantity of benzine, dry, and rub bright with warm water and curd soap. Writing-ink is removed by salt of lemons, which is a mixture of tartar and citric acid, powdered fine and rubbed together. Fill a vessel with boiling water, a basin, or something which will hold sufficient water to retain the heat. Moisten the ink-spot, and stretch the material over the hot water so that the steam will pass through. Lay sufficient salt of lemons on to cover the spot, rub it in, and leave it until the water cools. Then wash out the powder in cold water. If the stain has not then quite disappeared, at the first washing afterwards it will probably be rubbed quite away.

PAINT, if of long standing, is difficult to move. Under the same head comes also varnish. For cotton goods, either white or coloured, oil of turpentine or benzine, applied with blotting-paper above and below, as for grease-spots. Wash afterwards with soap. For silk, benzine or ether, instead of oil of turpentine, and finish with soap. Silk must be rubbed as little as possible. Chloroform is an excellent remover of paint or other bad stains, but the restrictions upon its indiscriminate sale put it out of ordinary people's reach. If the paint-stains be of very long standing it is desirable to soften with olive-oil or fresh butter before applying the benzine. But care must be taken to confine the butter to the spot affected, not to allow it to spread.

COFFEE and milk stains are very difficult to remove from delicate fabrics, especially if of long standing. From woollen and mixed textiles, which are stout, and bear vigorous treatment, coffee can be taken with greater safety. Mix one part of glycerine, nine of water, and half a part of aqua ammonia. Rub it into the spot with a brush, leave it moist, and keep it so by renewal for twelve hours. Lay the stained part between two clean cloths, and press to take out the moisture, then rub with a very clean rag. If the stain still remains, steam it over a basin of boiling water. For silk, more glycerine and less ammonia; five parts of glycerine, five parts of water, one fourth part of ammonia. The last is the critical component, as it may extract the colour, so should be tried first on some immaterial part, and, if necessary, the ammonia left out. Apply it like the mixture for wool, but, instead of steaming, rub with breadcrumbs. If it be a silk with much dressing a little thin gum is required afterwards to give surface; or for a very dark colour, some beer, and pressure of a hot iron on the wrong side.

STAINS of street-mud on cloaks or on skirts are generally caused by some properties in the soil, as the mud of one town is quite harmless,

while that of another is almost ineradicable. Rub gently with a soft sponge dipped in cold water, to which a little alcohol has been added, and then dry with a soft silk cloth. Waterproof cloth is difficult to clean without injuring the texture. Woollen materials should have the wrong side washed with a mixture of alum and sugar-of-lead dissolved in water, to restore the impervious condition which the cleaning may have disturbed.

## Privileges of the French Nobility.

IT must be confessed that in days gone by the privileges of the great nobles of France were, according to all reasonable notions of liberty, tyrannically excessive both in number and degree. Happening to fall in with a document, copied a good many years ago from the "Archives du Royaume," bearing upon the subject of "privileged nobility," we thought we might as well add this mite of information to the general stock.

It was not simply in the affairs of this world that privilege was claimed and conceded to those of royal or noble lineage; their "great greatness," as Jonathan Wild would have called it, could only be satisfied by spiritual as well as by temporal advantages. An amusing instance of the liberal view which the higher classes in France were in the habit of taking of the excesses of their royal masters, is given in the following anecdote, related in the "Mémoires de Dangeau."

On the 27th of September, 1693, Prince Philip, one of the "hopes" of France, suddenly departed this life, after having diversified his career by every vice that could deform it. A knot of courtiers were moralising on the event in one of the ante-chambers of Versailles, and expressing their doubts of His Royal Highness's fitness for the celestial sphere, when they were interrupted by Madame la Maréchale de la Maileraye, who observed with an air of profound conviction, and with no wilful intention of uttering blasphemy: "I assure you God thinks twice before he condemns persons of the prince's quality."

These royal personages were also prepared for heaven after a fashion of their own. In taking the Sacrament the princes and princesses of the blood did not communicate with the common wafer such as the people swallowed, but had a kind manufactured for themselves; and the memoirs above cited tell us that the Dauphine was once "put to much inconvenience by having to wait, the priest who officiated having forgotten to prepare an exclusive wafer (*hostie choisie*) for her use."

It seemed, indeed, as if these "exclusives" fancied they condescended in allowing themselves to be redeemed at all; and the Chanoine-Comptes of the Chapter of St. John of Lyons were so impressed with their own dignity, that they actually refused to kneel during the celebration of mass and elevation of the host; and what was more extraordinary were confirmed in this "privilege" (which, however, Louis XIV. abrogated) by an ecclesiastical decree. The Canonesses of Verdun also enjoyed the same immunity from genuflexion, and had their heads covered at the religious processions.

The Abbé de Pompadour, who, although a clergyman, was of the secular order, was of opinion that it would be as serviceable to his soul, as probably it was, if he said his prayers by deputy; he accordingly gave his valet extra wages to read his breviary for him in the ante-chamber, while he, most likely, was playing cards in the *salon*. This pious abbé died in 1710.

We could multiply anecdotes like the above, but our document awaits us. It is intitled, "Petition of the Dukes and Duchesses (*M. Mgrs. les Ducs et M. Mesmes. Duchesses*) to His Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans, Regent," and commences in the following (humble) strain:

"Monseigneur,—So little respect is paid to us in public (*dans le monde*) that it is necessary we should have an express law enacted to replace us in our rights and privileges, with regard to the people, the inferior nobility, and the clergy. Who can be ignorant that the clergy are only allowed to be anything in the State, but because a certain number of peers have not disclaimed the titles of Bishop and Archbishop? It is necessary that a bishop, at the least, should be the person to administer the sacrament to us. We alone have the right to carry cushions (to kneel upon, *carreaux*) to church. It is our privilege to receive the sacred bread before any one else, no matter who. If we go to a conventual church, we must be waited for at least half an hour, whenever we should happen to be detained. In the streets all the other nobility must give the right-hand side (*le haut du pavé*) to a peer, whether that peer be in a carriage or on horseback; and as to the coaches of people of the commonalty (*gens de la roture*), they must be obliged to draw up as we pass, however inconvenient it may happen to be.

"A peer and peeress occupy, as a matter of course, the back seat of the carriage; indeed, it is necessary that the law should restrain them from giving up their places, if moved to it by politeness or natural modesty. At table their healths should be drunk before those of the master and mistress of the house. At the theatre they are to occupy the best boxes, and if these are filled on their arrival, those who are sitting there must immediately withdraw; any other arrangement, Monseigneur, would neither be just or endurable. A peer has no occasion for fighting a duel with a private nobleman, even if it should happen that he has been well beaten by him."



"No one can pretend to hold any place until it has been refused by the peers, the peers being so completely above the people, that they really are not called upon to recognise their existence. No workman or mechanic should be allowed to compel them by process of law to pay their debts. This sort of persons ought only to give them a polite intimation of the fact of their indebtedness, and the peers will satisfy them, if they think proper to do so.

"Finally, Monseigneur, on the same principle that a nobleman has not the right to draw his sword upon a duke, so the servants of noblemen cannot force those of dukes to make use of their fists in self-defence; and the latter should rather allow themselves to be thoroughly thrashed (*se laisserent plutôt rouer de coups*) than compromise the honour which they enjoy, of being in the service of their masters."

One would think that this "document" was the production of a joker who wished to raise a laugh against the pretensions of the "Ducs et Pairs"; but no such thing; it is a veritable State paper, taken from Box K of the Archives of France, in Paris, and was so extracted in the last year of the reign of Louis Philippe.

## One of an Editor's Difficulties.

MR. KENINGALE COOK, in a letter to the *Athenæum*, tells the following story. The difficulty is one of which most editors have had some experience.

An editor accepted from a little known correspondent what seemed a publishable tale. When it appeared, letters were received from different parts of the country proclaiming it as one of Nathaniel Hawthorne's. The editor was severely blamed for not detecting the imposition at once. Certainly in the case of a native classic like Hawthorne, an American editor would, under such circumstances, have been deserving of the stigma of being an ill-informed man, but it must be something little short of omniscience that could make an editor acquainted, however superficially, with each one of the tens of thousands of short stories which have been written in English during the last fifty years. When Hawthorne's story and the newly-published plagiarism were examined side by side, it was discovered that they were identical in all but the diction. The one was a poor paraphrase of the other. The contributor was communicated with and taxed with fraud. He protested his entire innocence; the story, it was true, was not original; he had translated it from a German tale which he thought deserving of an appearance in English. In this way poor Hawthorne, who had been done the honour of being conveyed into Germany, was forced to come back to his own country in a borrowed suit and incognito.

## An American Cat.

MR. WILLIS, who lives in Oldham county, Kentucky, had a cat which daily remained away from the house several hours at a time. One day Mr. Willis was walking through a small wood about a mile from his house when he saw his cat a few yards ahead of him, sitting in a kind of recess under a rock. It would sit still for a long time, then walk over to some object near it in the hole and rub its head against it, purring most contentedly. What was his astonishment when he came up to the edge of the rock, and saw that the object of the cat's attention was nothing more or less than a large snake. The snake was curled up in a ring, and when the cat would approach it the snake would thrust up its head to receive the cat's caresses. This continued for about half an hour, when the cat evidently grew weary, and after turning around several times to ensure a comfortable position, lay down beside the snake and was soon fast asleep. The next day Mr. Willis took a couple of friends with him to witness this strange spectacle. The manoeuvres were repeated. At length they resolved to kill the snake, and did so. This seemed to completely overwhelm the cat with grief, and it used to visit the rock daily, as usual, for several days, without, however, finding out what had become of its companion.

## Some More Pianoforte Studies.\*

WHEN the student has gone through the more elementary studies, there still lies before him an immense tract of undiscovered country. He may be likened to a traveller who, after a long and weary journey spent in overcoming difficult obstacles, suddenly comes to a place from whence he sees fresh mountains rise before his view. True, he has mastered the works of Bertini, and Cramer, and Moscheles; but of what avail does it seem when the giant forms of Liszt and Chopin are seen looming through the mist? He may have conquered the arpeggios written by Moscheles—they were mostly confined to the different positions of the chord within the space of an octave; but these are as nothing to Chopin's arpeggios, which rarely embrace a

less extent than that of a tenth. The student should do under these circumstances very much what the traveller would under the same conditions—he should rest a little before bracing himself up to take the more difficult journey. It is well to take some studies, such as Stephen Heller's, which are more remarkable for grace of expression than difficulty of execution, and learn them as a kind of relief between more difficult works. From the very first it will be found an excellent plan to "sandwich" these studies of Heller's between books of dryer studies. Especially should they be learnt by those who are deficient in that art of phrasing which is the great crown and beauty of pianoforte-playing.

SOME of these exercises are so pretty that they have been published, under various fantastic names, as pianoforte pieces. "The Mermaid," from Book VIII., is the best known of these. The sixth book is one of the most useful as far as practice is concerned. The first and last of the studies in it are the most improving for execution, but all are good. The one in A minor is written very much in the style of a gondola song, and calls up visions of a quiet moonlight night, with the cry of the gondolier coming across the water. All of these studies are written in a very poetical style, and to play them without care and delicacy is to vulgarise them.

CHOPIN's studies are very difficult, not only to play but to read. Theorists have disputed over the origin of some of the chords, so it is natural that an ordinary person should find them troublesome. The difficulties are also very great, but once they are in any degree overcome they give the player the most delightful sense of mastery over the instrument. If you could play those studies as they ought to be played, you could play anything. They are particularly good for any player who is inclined to stiffness, as they produce great freedom of style. The student has many opportunities of hearing these studies performed, as they are frequently played at the best pianoforte recitals. It is only the other day that M. Vladimir de Pachmann made a wonderful success with the fifth study in Book I. So beautifully did he play it, so light and fairy-like and charming did he make it, that he had hardly finished before an immense shower of applause came from every part of the house—it almost seemed as if the roof was coming down. The audience would not be contented till the study had been played over again. The ovation was as general as it was spontaneous, but of all the listeners in that hall, you may depend the people who appreciated the performance most were those pianists who had learnt the study themselves and who knew how wonderful it was to make it sound nice. When it is played indifferently there is nothing pretty in it. It sounds like a carpenter sawing wood!

HENSELT's studies are extremely idealistic; they all embody some particular thought, but without plenty of study the idea escapes one. Many of them are played at concerts and make charming pianoforte pieces. It was something wonderful to hear Rubinstein play "*Si l'Oiseau j'étais*." The dazzling arpeggios flew up the piano; the longing, and struggling, and fluttering of wings were apparent, and the idea flashed into the listener's mind at once: "I would fly!" The "*Prière d'Amour*," in the same series, is a very charming little piece, full of expression and feeling. It is also an excellent study for playing a melody with the thumb of the right hand whilst carrying on the accompaniment with the fingers. "*Repos d'Amour*" is another piece somewhat in the same style, not so taking at first sight as the other, but full of interest to the person who studies it. It is an excellent study for part-playing, and also for bringing out a melody on the left hand. It commences with a melody in the bass, and then, after a time, another voice comes in, and a kind of duet is carried on up to the end.

It is difficult to say, without knowing the exact condition of the student, at what point in his studies he should commence the preludes and fugues of Bach. He should learn them when they are a pleasure to him, and not a drag; he should be able to take an intellectual delight in them, and be sufficiently advanced in his reading for the mere mastering of the notes not to fill him with discouragement. He can prepare the way by first learning the shorter "diversions" and "suites," so as to get a little into the master's style. All the preludes are delightful and interesting, particularly the one to which Gounod has set a melody, but there is no disputing the fact that the fugues are very tough work. Yet must the student brace himself up and attack them with a good courage, for the love of Bach is one of the tastes which grow with feeding, and the player who begins with thinking the work dry will often end by willingly spending hour after hour in polishing up some little turn or passage. Moreover, the study of Bach is a most important factor in the student's progress. No playing can be good without it, and the hard hours of work spent over its study leave a lifelong trace on the style of the player. Cleanness of touch and clearness of execution, vigour and precision, good fingering and proficiency in part-playing—all these things are the characteristics of the student who has played plenty of Bach. Even the very position of the hand and the "clever" look of the fingers will betray at once to the experienced eye that the pianist is well acquainted with the works of that "old man who is always young."

To leave for a while the consideration of particular studies to lay down general principles that apply to all of them, every book of

\* HOUSEHOLD WORDS, Vol. VI., p. 257, "Pianoforte Studies."

studies should be gone through twice. That is the way to get all the good out of them. First, they must be gone through tolerably quickly for the sake of the reading—a two-page one occupying about the space of a week—and then the book must be gone through again, and this time it is the mechanical difficulties that must be mastered. Pay especial attention to the fingering, for the difficulty of many studies lies mainly in that. Whenever a choice of two modes of fingering is given you, study very carefully which one is best suited to the peculiarities of your hand. Get Bach's fugues unfingered, and try to put in the fingering for yourself. This in itself is an excellent study, as it teaches you to think.

It is needless to remark that every study is formed with a view to overcoming some special difficulty, and that this one characteristic is carried throughout, whether it be an arpeggio, or scale passage, or a succession of dotted notes. It is therefore easy to make for yourself a little exercise upon the exercise, so to speak, which you can play in the time usually allotted to scales and technical studies. If a passage seems troublesome, play it a hundred times, play it in every key, play it all up the piano. Grudge neither time nor trouble, nor exertion, for it is by these means alone that proficiency is attained.

## Household Gardening.

THE month of March, weather being favourable, is one of the busiest in the gardening year. If work has been neglected, be it of whatever nature it may—digging, pruning, lawn-making, or shrub-planting—it should be entered on in earnest now, and completed as speedily as possible, as from this time onward almost every day will bring fresh duties, arrears becoming a burthen and a great impediment to free and satisfactory progress. Not only do seeds of flowers and vegetables require to be sown now, but garden enemies have to be combated, such as weeds and slugs; and those strike the most effectively against them who strike in good time. Insects, too, increase rapidly now, if nothing is done to prevent them.

### CHECKS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS.

When two good objects can be attained by one operation, that surely is worth carrying out. Not only two but three advantages are gained at once by forking the ground over carefully at this season of the year, but never except the surface is dry. In the first place, slugs that are near the surface are buried, which materially checks their power of doing injury; in the second place, weeds innumerable that are just vegetating are arrested in growth; and, thirdly, lightening up the soil and admitting the air increases its fertility, besides bringing it into a better condition for the germination of seeds. Therefore, fork over all vacant ground at this season of the year, when the surface is dry, and then only; when the soil is very wet, let it alone.

### RAISING SEEDLINGS.

Much seed is wasted every year by sowing it too soon, when there is not the proper conveniences for raising the plants. For instance, it is printed on seed packets that Stocks, Asters, Zinnias, and Vegetable Marrows should be sown in March under glass. This is correct advice, provided the full significance of the conditional term, "under glass," is appreciated.

A person may have a shaded or crowded greenhouse, and if he sows such seeds as those named in pots and boxes, and places them in the house, they will be "under glass;" yet, in all probability, the attempt to raise strong healthy seedlings would end in failure, owing to the want of sufficient light.

Another individual may have a glazed frame, but no means of heating it. In this the seeds of tender plants might be sown now, and they would be "under glass;" yet the chances of success following must be exceedingly remote, as the seedlings, if produced, would quickly succumb to the effects of cold.

A third class of flower lovers and plant raisers have neither a greenhouse nor frame, but have a warm room in which they grow window-plants; but it does not follow that where established plants exist and even remain healthy, that tender young seedlings can be reared. The seed may germinate and the surface of the soil in the pots be covered with a multitude of tiny plants; but unless these have abundance of direct light, nothing intervening between them and the sun, they will become drawn, get weaker daily, and eventually collapse.

This is no fancy picture, but a clear statement of facts, the direct outcome of much experience. It is not encouraging, some reader may perhaps soliloquise. It is not intended to encourage persons to court failure. It is intended to warn them not to incur it, nor to waste time, space, and seed. Those who have neither light, warm frames, nor greenhouses will act the most wisely by adopting a waiting policy; as in the course of a month the sun will make the present cold frames warm, and the dark greenhouses light; then, and not till then, will it be safe to attempt to raise tender plants from seed.

### TEMPERATURE FOR SEEDLINGS.

When such plants as those above enumerated are advised to be sown "under glass" in March, it is assumed that there are frames or

greenhouses with shelves fixed near the glass, having a steady temperature of from 45 to 55 degrees. Under such conditions there is no difficulty in raising seedlings, provided the requisite attention is given to the work.

The best of all places for rearing a number of plants from seed is a gentle hotbed on which a frame is placed. The bed may be formed of fermenting manure from horse-stables, mixed with tree-leaves where these are procurable. Beds also may be made of spent hops or tan, supported with boards. At this period of the year the bed should be nearly four feet high, and should be eighteen inches wider than the frame all round, as then, after the frame is placed on the bed, additional material can be packed round the woodwork, and the requisite temperature will be maintained inside the frame.

The surface of the bed under the glass should be covered a few inches deep with cocoanut-fibre refuse or sawdust for plunging the pots in, as the soil then will not only be kept warm but moist, thus lessening the necessity for watering, which is always a delicate operation in the work in question.

### SOWING SEEDS IN POTS AND BOXES.

In sowing small seeds of Lobelias, Golden Feather, Petunias, Musk, Begonias, Mignonette, or, in fact, seeds of any kind of plants, it is important that the soil be quite moist to begin with. If so dry as to need frequent waterings after sowing, the probability is that the seed will not germinate, or at least the plants will not grow at all freely.

In preparing for the work in question, first place a good layer of crocks in the receptacles to be used, over these a few leaves, then fill in with soil, the top half-inch of loam and leaf-soil to be finely sifted and mixed with a little sand.

Then with a fine-rosed garden-pot water the soil thoroughly with hot water. This will destroy any grubs that may be in the soil, every particle of which must be made decidedly moist, a light surface sprinkling being worse than useless.

An hour or two afterwards sprinkle on the seed, thinly rather than otherwise, press it down very lightly, and then scatter over it with great care and regularity a very little of the finest soil, or even fine sand, just covering it and nothing more; burying small seed too deeply being the cause of many failures.

The pots or boxes must never be quite filled with soil, and squares of glass should be laid over them, with a space under the glass of about an inch, for the seedlings to grow. Over the glass, in bright weather, spread sheets of paper to prevent the sun drying the surface of the soil. The glass arrests the evaporation of moisture, the consequence being that water is seldom needed until the seedlings appear. That is the point to aim at, and those who accomplish it will succeed in the interesting occupation of raising plants from very small seed.

### THE VEGETABLE GARDEN—PEAS.

Those who have space, and desire a few dishes of the most popular of all vegetables—Peas—should sow at once in good soil, in drills four inches wide and two deep, scattering the peas half an inch apart over the shallow trenches.

The finest of all Peas, growing about four feet high, is Carters' Telephone. The pods are grand in size, and the produce delicious. This Pea wins many prizes at exhibitions, is fit for the table of the Queen—on which it, in fact, appears; also on the tables of thousands of her subjects of every rank, over the length and breadth of the land. The rows should be five or six feet apart.

A dwarfier Pea, growing about two feet high, is Carters' Stratagem, which, of its class, is quite unequalled, being sturdy, vigorous, and laden with dark green pods of immense size. Persons who judge of the quality of Peas by the ordinary kinds, as sold in the markets, have no idea of what Peas really are, as represented by such splendid varieties as those recommended. The rows of the last-mentioned should be three feet asunder, and the plants are the more productive if supported with sticks.

### THE FRUIT GARDEN.

Any young fruit-trees that were planted in the autumn should be pruned at once. This is a very simple operation, that can be performed by any thoughtful person who can use a knife; but this must have a keen edge, or it will tear the bark, which is always undesirable.

All that is needed with such trees is to cut out very weak branches entirely, and shorten the others to about half their original length. If left uncut the trees will make little, if any, growth; but, by shortening them, they will push strong healthy shoots.

Strawberry-beds should have attention now, by running the hoe through them on a fine day, to destroy incipient weeds, then covering the surface with rich manure. If household slops, with soap-suds, be poured copiously over the roots, the effect will be highly beneficial in encouraging the production of strong trusses, and eventually large, fine, highly-coloured fruit.

Manure or soil should be spread over the roots of Raspberries now. Many persons dig amongst them at this season of the year, and thereby make a very great mistake. It would be decidedly more profitable to pay a man for resting than for disturbing the roots of either Strawberries or Raspberries at the present time.

It is a very good plan to syringe fruit-trees with a solution of soft soap and tobacco-water as the buds are bursting. Pour half a gallon of water on two ounces of tobacco, and dissolve two ounces of soft-soap in a gallon of water; mix and apply, and the attacks of insects will be prevented.

## Odds and Ends.

### SEVERAL KINDS OF GIRLS.

A good girl to have—Sal Vation.  
A disagreeable girl—Annie Mosity.  
A fighting girl—Hittie Maginn.  
Not a Christian girl—Hettie Rodoxy.  
A sweet girl—Carrie Mel.  
A pleasant girl—Jennie Rosity.  
A smooth girl—Amelia Ration.  
A seedy girl—Cora Ander.  
One of the best girls—Ella Gant.  
A clear case of girl—E. Lucy Date.  
A geometrical girl—Rhoda Dendron.  
A musical girl—Sarah Nade.  
A profound girl—Mettie Physics.  
A star girl—Meta Oric.  
A clinging girl—Jessie Mine.  
A nervous girl—Hester Ical.  
A muscular girl—Callie Sthenics.  
A lively girl—Annie Mation.  
An uncertain girl—Eva Nescent.  
A sad girl—Ella G.  
A serene girl—Mollie Fy.  
A great big girl—Ella Phant.  
A warlike girl—Millie Tary.  
The best girl of all—Your Own.

PROFESSOR SMYTHE tells an absurd anecdote of Sheridan's fidgety nature. One evening, during a hard frost, he called on the tutor to beg that his pupil might not be allowed to venture on the ice, then hard enough to bear a waggon. Smythe expostulated against the restriction, said that he always accompanied his charge, and had a man with a ladder and ropes stationed on the bank in case of an accident. Consent to the skating was at last extorted. Sheridan returned to his carriage, having to drive nine miles off, and the Smythe household retired to bed. Some hours afterwards they were alarmed by a furious pealing at the bell, which proved to announce the return of the author to say "he could not rest, nor think of anything but this skating, and he must have a promise that there should be no more of it." "Have a glass case made for your son," cried the justly indignant tutor, whose slumbers had been thus disturbed.

A HAT-FINISHER in one of the American hat factories applied for a pension, and in his application stated that on account of disease contracted in the army he could not do more than half work. One day there appeared in his shop a long, lank individual in a long, lank ulster, who took quite an interest in hat-making. He was especially pleased with the finishing. He came round to where our friend was at work, and after watching his motions a moment, said: "Are you new at the business?" "New! What makes you think I'm new?" hastily asked our friend. "Nothing," said the long, lank man pleasantly, "only I thought you didn't work as fast as the others." "Fast as the others!" gasped our friend. "I'll bet five dollars," he added with spirit, "that I can finish more hats than any other man in this shop!" A few days later the rapid hat finisher received word that his petition for a pension was refused. The long, lank man in the long, lank ulster was a detective in the employ of the pension bureau.

A NEWSPAPER proprietor advertised for an advertisement canvasser, and his test of their fitness, as they applied, was to tell them to get out of the office that instant, or he would kick them out. Several timid young men turned tail and left him with great disgust; but one, more brazen-faced than the rest, nothing daunted by the threat, coolly sat himself down and said he would not go until his testimonials had been read. So he locked the door, put the key in his pocket, and handed in his papers. "Ah!" said the advertiser, "you'll do, I can see. I don't want testimonials; your style is enough for me. No one will ever succeed as an advertisement canvasser who will be influenced by a threat to be kicked out of any office."

ALMOST everybody is trying to get a living without work, or, at any rate, any work of physical character. The cry for industrial schools is a plea for an education conducive to material production, as it is a confession that to a degree our public school system is a failure in this regard. Nothing but experience will convince the people that in the long run wealth is created only, or mainly, by such labour as tends to develop or to utilise the natural resources of the country. It is gained by ploughing, by making cloth, by the legitimate exchange of goods, by cheapening cost through invention. But these imply an education adapted to a life of work, and not a life of indolence or show.

TAKE a grain of falsehood, a handful of runabout, the same quantity of nimble-tongue, a sprig of the herb backbite, a tea-spoonful of don't-you-tell-it, six drops of malice, and a few drachms of envy. Add a little discontent and jealousy, and strain through a bag of misconstruction, cork it up in a bottle of malevolence, and hang it up on a skein of street yarn; keep in a hot atmosphere; shake it occasionally for a few days, and it will be fit for use. Let a few drops be taken before walking out, and the desired result will follow.

REVENGE is a momentary triumph, which is almost immediately succeeded by remorse, while forgiveness, which is the noblest of all revenges, entails a perpetual pleasure. It was well said by a Roman emperor that he wished to put an end to all his enemies by converting them into friends.

At times, into some hours of life is crowded so much of anguish that we seem to live years; yes, to become aged in a brief space.

A LOVING heart and a pleasant countenance are commodities which a man should never fail to take home with him.

EVERY one does, or ought to, feel unhappy till he finds out what to do.

How much have we all suffered from evils that have never occurred.

CAN there be any thing in this world more useful than happiness?

A CERTAIN cobbler's sign bore the announcement: "Shoes half sold." A passing drummer observing the omission of the *e* in *sole*, stepped in and thus addressed the artisan: "You advertise shoes half sold here?" "Yes, sir." "Well, I would like to understand what you mean, whether you sell half of a shoe or half of a pair, or whether you have a lot half of which you want to sell. It's the most ambiguous advertisement I ever saw." The cobbler scratched his head and looked up over his spectacles in surprise at the drummer. After a pause he asked: "Can't you understand by the sign that I put half soles on shoes?" "No, sir," replied the drummer; "I can't understand any such thing from your sign. You have left an *e* out of the word 'sold,' and as it stands now it means to sell, or already sold." The cobbler smote his hand upon his knee and said: "By jinks! I thought that the word 'sold' didn't look just right. I thought it wanted an *e*. Thank you, sir, for calling attention to it." After the drummer's departure the cobbler went outside with a brush and added an *e* to the word, making it "solde."

A GOOD story of the Viennese carnival is current in the Austrian capital. At a ball given by the Viennese Choral Society, which is always sure to be so thronged that it is the work of hours to reach the entrance, a member of a well-known financial house hit on an original but successful mode of conveyance. He arranged with four bearers to carry him through the crowd on a hospital stretcher. Of course the crowd made way; and great was their amazement when he threw off the covering, and jumped out alive and hearty.

THERE is a set of men who are continually boring people for autographs; few have the talent of refusing them with politeness. Talleyrand being once asked a similar favour by an English nobleman, promised to send him one in a few days, and thus kept his word. He sent him an invitation to dinner: "Will you oblige me with your company to dinner on Wednesday next, at eight o'clock? I have invited a number of exceedingly clever persons, and do not like to be the only fool among them."

In a contest over a will a certain witness was giving his evidence as to the disposition of the testator. "Was he a good-natured man?" asked the attorney. "Not altogether." "Was he cross, then?" "Well, yes, rather, in places." "Was he very cross?" "Considerably." "How cross was he? Give us an example of his disposition." "Well, sir, he was that cross that when he called up the cows at milking-time it made the milk sour." "That's enough; stand down."

MISS MITFORD, the authoress, had a pleasant and good-humoured face, but of the art of dress she knew nothing. On her way to an evening party she purchased a most unbecoming yellow turban, which caused her to be for some time an object of merriment to the whole room, owing to the fact of the shopkeeper from whom she had bought it having forgotten to remove from behind it a large ticket bearing the printed inscription, "Very chaste, only 5s. 6d."

"WELL," said an old general at his club, "what do you think of Mr. B., whom I introduced to you?" "An excellent man, but without memory. I have already described the same battle to him twenty times without his having noticed it." The same man finding Mr. B. in the smoking-room, said: "Well, what do you think of the general?" "A very brave man; but he has no memory. He keeps telling me the same story. In short, he is an old bore."

In a suit of separation the counsel for the wife pleaded, among other motives, the incompatibility of temper, and began to trace a portrait of the husband: "Brutal, violent anger—" The lawyer for the husband, in his turn, painted the wife: "Wicked, violent, peevish—" "Excuse me," said the judge, interrupting the advocate; "gentlemen, where do you find incompatibility of temper?"

THE canvasser for a new paper wrote to the publisher of the *Morning Oracle*: "We note your advertisement in the *Evening Swell*. We will insert it at twenty-five per cent. less than that paper charges." The publisher of the *Morning Oracle* replied: "We get the advertisement for nothing. We accept your terms; please send cheque for difference."

THIS story is told of a reviewer who paid an author back in his own coin. The author, Mr. John Morley, had insisted on printing "God" as "god" throughout one of his books. The reviewer was equally careful in the frequent mention of Mr. Morley's name, to have it appear as "mr. john morley."

THE Duke of Wellington, as is well known, stood as godfather to the Duke of Connaught. On the prince's birth the warrior received an odd rebuff from the nurse. He asked, simply enough: "Is it a boy or a girl?" and received the crushing reply: "It is a prince, your grace."

"FATHER, what is poetic licence?" "Well, my boy, as nearly as I can learn, poetic licence is something which enables a man to say things in verse which would incarcerate him in a lunatic asylum if worked off at a political meeting."

It must make a clergyman feel complimented, after delivering a sermon an hour long, to see a three-inch report of it in the paper next day, preceded by the words: "The substance of Rev. Mr. Textual's sermon is given below."

THE Burmans believe that when a man is critically sick, the best thing to do is to give the patient a mixture of everything in the medicine-chest. A good many doctors in this country seem to have the same idea.

THE celebrated "orator" Henley once attracted to his oratory an audience of shoemakers by announcing that he would teach a new and short way of making shoes, his way being to cut off the tops of boots.

A VISITOR in Dublin was asked by a car-driver if he wanted a car. "No," said he; "I am able to walk." "May yer honour long be able but seldom willing!" was the witty rejoinder.

"MY best thoughts are always the hardest to write," said a literary man. "Yes," replied an acquaintance, "and they are always the hardest to read."

THE boy who was discovered in the act of concealing a piece of mincepie in his mother's clock, explained that he was only trying to kill time.

PRACTICE makes perfect. True; but a man can contrive to drop a hot plate as readily the first time trying as the second.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### ANSWERS.

**AMATEUR DRESSMAKER.**—The proper kind of Confirmation cap is merely a square of white muslin drawn in at the back. If you like to send an addressed envelope and three penny stamps we will forward you a pattern. The dresses can be made in any simple fashion, and it should be borne in mind that for this occasion the dress cannot be too plain. All kinds of white woollen materials are worn for Confirmation dresses, as they clean or dye well afterwards. Cashmere, merino, serge, and nun's veiling. The last is cheap, but not profitable, as it cleans badly. Send to Pryce Jones, Newtown, Montgomeryshire, for some patterns. White shoes are unsuitable at a Confirmation. Black are preferable.

**BOMBAY.**—A correspondent kindly sends the following advice for your benefit and that of "Perplexed Housekeeper," to whom we replied on this matter in *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 145: "Make a few small 'squibs' of Keating's Powder and Sulphur in equal proportions. Take a room or two at a time, close every aperture which might admit air, place three or four squibs in each, suspended over a saucer, light them, and go away. Return in an hour or two, and throw open windows. No fleas can stand this."

**E. BROWN.**—We readily answer enquiries relative to the culture of plants, but could do so much more effectually if the age, size, and condition of the plants were made known to us, with the means at the command of the cultivator for growing them. Notes on the culture of the Arum Lily will shortly appear, and they will be of greater service to you than anything we could briefly insert in this column.

**IMPECUNIOUS.**—We do not know of any other institution than the Dental Hospital of London at all likely to help you. No doubt you could there get advice how to have your want supplied as cheaply as possible.

**JESSIE CARELESS.**—Moisten the spot with water: rub in a weak solution of citric acid, and keep it wet for a few days. Strong applications will make a hole in the fabric.

**MISS E.**—"Dame Durden" is published in three volumes by Messrs. Tinsley, 31s. 6d. You can get it at any circulating library.

**MOTHER'S HELP.**—All the information you seek of the first principles of cookery is to be found in the articles which have been given from time to time in this Journal. It is a common mistake to suppose that a knowledge of cookery comes by intuition, or that it can be picked up anyhow without expense or without trouble. A great deal of experience is required to enable anyone to cook with certainty, and to produce invariably good results, and you must not be surprised or disheartened at failures. Always try and discover what was the cause that the dish was spoiled, and you will then find that in cookery, as in other matters, "failure is the high road to success."

**PARLIAMENT.**—The Chiltern Hundreds are Burnham, Desborough, and Stoke, an estate of the Crown on the chain of chalk hills that pass from east to west through the middle of Buckinghamshire, the stewardship whereof is a nominal office, with a salary of 20s., conferred on Members of Parliament when they wish to vacate their seats, as, by accepting an office under the Crown, a member becomes disqualified, unless he be again returned by his constituents. The strict legality of the practice is questioned.

**PHILIPPA.**—If you do not wish to have shoes and stockings the same colour as your dress, try bronze shoes and flesh-pink silk stockings, or dark red shoes and pink stockings.

**PICTORIAL.**—1. You will find full information about all the picture exhibitions in "Dickens's Dictionary of London." The dates at which pictures are received and the exhibitions opened will be found under the different headings. 2. We have successfully washed fine raised old point-lace as follows: Make a lather of Hudson's Extract of Soap, a table-spoonful to a quart of hot water: let the lace lie in this until the lather is cold, moving it about now and then. Gently squeeze it with the hand, dipping it in and out of the lather until it seems clean. Mix a ten-spoonful of powdered borax in a pint of water and rinse the lace in it. Have ready several folds of soft linen cloth, on which spread the lace, covering it with more folds, pressing it with the hands, after which leave it for a day, when, if not dry, put it in fresh cloths. With an ivory crochet-needle work the patterns into shape, and the lace will then be ready for use. Old lace, being very tender, will not bear pulling out, and it is better not to iron it, or use any starch. The borax gives a slight stiffening.

**ROSA LE B.**—The poem, "My Kate," is by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. It is too long for us to print in its entirety, and we can only give the first and three last verses:

She was as pretty as women I know,  
And yet all your best made of sunshine and snow  
Drop to shade, melt to nought in the long-trodden ways,  
While she's still remembered on warm and cold days—  
My Kate.

None knelt at her feet confessed lovers in thrall;  
They knelt more to God than they used—that was all;  
If you praised her as charming, some asked what you meant,  
But the charm of her presence was felt when she went—  
My Kate.

The weak and the gentle, the ribald and rude,  
She took as she found them, and did them all good;  
It always was so with her—see what you have!  
She has made the grass greener even here—with her grave—  
My Kate.

My dear one! when thou wast alive with the rest,  
I held thee the sweetest and loved thee the best;  
And now thou art dead! shall I not take thy part,  
As thy smiles used to do for thyself, my sweetheart—  
My Kate.

**SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE.**—1. Escallops can either be stewed or scalloped, and are now in full season. Having carefully freed them from sand, put them in a stewpan with sufficient water to cover them, and a small bit of butter. Stew very gently for twenty minutes, or until perfectly tender. Thicken the liquor with flour mixed smoothly in a little milk; season with cayenne pepper; add a small quantity of lemon juice and serve very hot. If to be scalloped, stew the escallops, and finish exactly as for oysters. 2. For full particulars of the National Debt, see "Whitaker's Almanack."

**STALL-HOLDER.**—We know of nothing by which you can make so much money, or furnish your charity bazaar stall more effectively, than by articles made with the "Patent Silk Ornaments." The "Art Needlework Crevell Appliques" of this company are beautiful, and not to be distinguished from hand embroidery. The Ecclesiastical designs, comprising crosses and sacred monograms in gold-coloured silk, are equal in merit to the floral designs, and many articles of church use can be quickly and satisfactorily made with them. The "Art Needlework Feather Appliques" are very handsome and wonderfully cheap. Send three penny stamps for a catalogue to "The Patent Silk Ornament Company," Finsbury House, Finsbury Square, E.C.

**UNCOMMERCIAL.**—1. The carriage of parcels to Switzerland can be prepaid, and can be sent through Pitt and Scott's Foreign Express, 44, St. Paul's Churchyard. The rate, which does not include custom charges, is, not exceeding 2lb., 2s.; 5lb., 2s. 4d.; 9lb., 2s. 4d. There is a duty on tea which must be paid at the other end. 2. It is necessary to endorse a cheque if made payable to order, whether crossed or not.

**W.**—Mealworms can be readily propagated by putting a handful of the larvæ into a stone jar (well glazed in the inside), three parts full of bran, barley, or oatmeal, and some pieces of sugar-paper, cloth, and shoe-leather. The jar should be covered over with a piece of board, fitting closely, or a piece of cloth, and left undisturbed for three or four months, when a numerous colony will have been formed, for the larvæ soon change into beetles, which lay an enormous number of eggs, and, if kept warm, a plentiful supply will always be at hand of an insect highly relished by every kind of bird. The flour, etc., must, of course, be renewed from time to time. See "The Amateur's Aviary" (3s. 6d.), by W. T. Greene, M.D. (L. Upcott Gill).

**WHITE MOUSE.**—You should certainly get medical advice, either privately or at some hospital. There are several medicines which would no doubt benefit you, and these will be prescribed by a doctor on seeing you. You will do well to get into the open air as much as possible.

**WIDOWED MOTHER.**—1. The schoolmaster will be your best adviser: only a person who knows what progress your son has made can tell if he requires special preparation for the examination. 2. It depends on what department of the service he enters. 3. We should say that, failing to pass the examination, your son should turn to the business or profession for which he has the most aptitude, and for which your means enable him to qualify himself.

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 152.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 1884.

[Vol. VI.]

## The Second Mrs. Glyn.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I. THERESA'S TROUBLES AND JOYS.

MR. GLYN had married again, just two years after his first wife's death; many of his friends were surprised, and some of his connections went so far as to be angry about it. Was not his daughter all that a girl should be, and the adored of the old, never-changed servants who gave a particular stamp to his house?

And now—he had married again! Had married a young woman, positively penniless, the orphan daughter of some scampish artist, a young woman who seemed to have no relation in the world but a needy brother, worse than herself, who had nothing to recommend her but a fine figure, a pair of sparkling black eyes, and very rosy cheeks—a young woman with loud voice and audacious manners. Most of Mr. Glyn's friends were content to condemn her unseen, and to lament the day when he found her, living as a companion in the house of some superannuated lady of his acquaintance. She called this lady "a sort of cousin," and she was too feeble, so said Mr. Glyn's connections, to contradict her. The wedding took place at the old lady's church, the breakfast was given at her house. And now what was poor Constance Glyn to do with such a stepmother?

It must be confessed that Constance herself rather ruefully echoed this question. Ever true to the traditions of her life, this good girl had held that her father could do no wrong; it had always seemed to her quite right that he should do what he liked, while his wife and daughter stopped at home and did what they ought. It was quite improper for women to criticise men, because women did not understand "business." Such was the girl's simple social creed. Of course she did not criticise her father when he married again; but was it in human nature not to pass judgment on his second wife?

I am afraid Constance judged her almost as severely as cook did, or Jane, the excellent old housemaid, or even Martha, once Constance's nurse, now her attendant and speechlessly indignant champion.

It was the first morning after the bride's coming home; Constance rose at her usual early hour, let Martha give her a preliminary breakfast, and read "history and literature" as usual till eleven o'clock.

Presently she heard a loud contralto voice singing on the stairs, a door opened and shut rather noisily, then the singing ceased, and the voice called out:

"Where shall I find breakfast? Will anyone show me the way?"

Constance opened the door, and Theresa ran down to her, handsome, blooming, but, thought the girl, decidedly odd. She wore a loose pink morning-robe, with white fringes and bows, tied round the waist with cord and tassels; pink high-heeled slippers tapped the ground as she walked, and her hair was gathered up picturesquely and put away under a little concoction of lace and pink ribbon, meant for a cap. Her wide smile showed the long gleam of her white teeth as she met Constance; she was perfectly at home, and happy, and made no apology for her late appearance.

She pulled up the blind, and stood by the window talking gaily and noisily; excited by the light and sound, the canary began to sing shrilly; the sunshine made all the plate and silver on the table glitter again. Somehow the whole room seemed suddenly filled with sound and glare, and a fear came over Constance that wherever Theresa was, noise and glare would certainly be.

"Cook came up for orders," remarked the young lady presently, as a suggestion of duty. "Would you like to see her now?"

"Not at all. Tell her to give us something fit to eat—not such soup as yesterday. Your father could not touch it. We can't keep her if she sends up such horrible things."

"Not keep her!"

Constance echoed the words. She was the only cook the girl remembered, except a dimly-recalled vision of a "Sarah" of her babyhood. Not keep her! What a horrible idea!

"Oh, you don't know how nice cook is," she pleaded.

"What is the good of the cook being nice, if her soups are nasty?" said Theresa, leaning back in her armchair. She had put her clasped hands behind her head, and stuck out her slipped feet in an attitude that certainly would have tempted Dr. Johnson to "kick them in again," but which was not without a certain audacious gracefulness.

"However, my dear," she went on, noticing her companion's

dismay, "if the cook is a pet of yours, we must manage to get on with her somehow."

"Breakfast, please," as the maid appeared at the door.

Jane withdrew very hastily in some displeasure.

"Nice time for breakfast," she said to herself; "and when, pray, was luncheon to come—or dinner?"

And there arose a sense of wrong in her breast as she thought of the misplaced meals.

Constance saw how much virtuous indignation Jane was suppressing, and feared Theresa might find out too; but that lady was too full of contentment, it appeared, to see clouds anywhere. She chattered of her past life in Continental studios and cheap schools, to the wonder of Constance; she dwelt on the charms of her brother Harry; she breakfasted remarkably well, and finally carried off Constance upstairs to inspect her new treasures.

Always merry, reckless, kindly, a gaudy picture without any shade, Theresa seemed to Constance a tiring creature to contemplate. But Mr. Glyn was full of admiration, and forsook his club for her; he escorted her to "sights," for which she had an insatiable appetite, and went with her to the theatre with the most wonderful docility.

Then Sunday came and all the traditions of the house were upset by the announcement that Harry Lane, Mrs. Glyn's brother, was coming to dinner. Sunday visitors! It was high treason to the servants, and they went about with that look of martyrdom so effectively used in "quiet families."

Constance shared the dismay, gave leave for Jane to go to church in the morning, as she would be kept in that evening, and went off herself before Theresa came down. Somehow there was to her a sense of wickedness in going out and leaving those closed rooms and drawn blinds behind, as if it were the very essence of Sunday that was being shut out.

It was a new experience, for Mr. Glyn was one of those who do make sacrifices to their good opinion of themselves, and one of his sacrifices was going to church on Sunday morning. It was quite dreadful to his daughter that he should stay away.

When she came home the door was opened to her by the excellent Martha with a countenance of mingled mystery, consternation, and triumph, as who should say: "We are very uncomfortable indeed, though we must not own it, and I always knew we should be."

"Oh, Miss Constance, my dear," she whispered (it was one of her protests to whisper, it implied that she had too many enemies about to speak aloud), "your pa was so vexed at Jane's going to church! She ought to have brought up Mrs. Glyn's breakfast, it seems, and he didn't like my doing it, but don't you say I said so."

Mystery was unladylike in Constance's eyes. She walked sedately into the dining-room, where Theresa, in her pink robe, was playing with her coffee-cup, and Mr. Glyn was looking at his newspaper, sitting at ease, with slippers on. Constance came in as a contrast in Sunday attire, prayer-book in hand, but she softened the stern virtue of her appearance with an apology for the absence of Jane.

Mr. Glyn looked a little annoyed; having stopped at home himself, of course it was incumbent upon him to show that this was the most virtuous thing to be done.

"Yes, my dear, yes," he said. "Every duty has its time, and it strikes me Jane would have done better to stay at home and look after her mistress."

The imperturbable Theresa interrupted with a loud laugh and hope that Jane would do all the sermons for her mistress, who would willingly spare her on that condition.

A speech this which happily averted a discussion, but shocked poor Constance. By-and-by her feelings were more keenly tried by the appearance of Harry Lane, a reckless young man, idle, and given to too much smoking and billiard-playing. His characteristics were so strongly marked that even Constance understood them at first sight, and Mr. Glyn began to feel that his wife's love for her brother charmed him less than any other point in her character.

Very incongruous elements certainly poor Mr. Glyn had brought into his house, and dimly he felt his indiscretion already—he who so valued everything irreproachable in his household, who felt so indubitably that if any small faults were committed there they could only be excusable in himself. But Theresa's high spirits and fuller nature overpowered him, and matters went on submissively enough till one morning an unexpected bill of Theresa's—a milliner's bill contracted before her marriage—brought on an alarming storm.

Mr. Glyn was particularly sensitive about money-matters, he was consistently economical even to parsimony, where his own pleasures were not concerned. And the bill was really extravagant.

No wonder the storm raged fiercely—no wonder Theresa felt suddenly that her power over her husband was swept from her hand.

Constance, from whom she kept no secret, looked on with dilated eyes, aghast, and honestly pitying her father. Why, if things went on like this the man would actually have to yield and be self-denying for the woman's sake—a reversal of all propriety in her eyes. Cer-



tainly it would have been equally shocking to her father, but Theresa's charms had still a great effect upon him. After the first shock she used her invincible good-humour and brightness so effectively that peace once more prevailed. Only Mr. Glyn was understood to have purchased a certain emancipation when he paid the bill; her theatres and sight-seeings were henceforth to be reduced in number. No matter, she made herself happy without them.

Constance, rejoicing that the tempest had spent itself, did not notice signs of more gathering clouds. Mysterious signs and hints from Martha about the grocer's remarks, or the novelty of the baker's-book being "left to run," passed by her unheeded, till she was roused to a sense of danger and dismay, the more terrible from its suddenness.

It was a wet and chilly day, the rain beat against the windows, and the mist was creeping up dismally outside. But they had lighted the fire, and it shone with a pleasant unexpectedness, as summer fires are wont to do. Theresa was chattering and laughing as usual, whilst Constance was in an absent mood, and had no idea what she was saying, when the door opened hastily, and Mr. Glyn came in. He had been with them till after luncheon, lingering over the fire, and they fancied that he had gone out for the evening; but there he was again, with an unusual look of anger on his face. He was not a man who was often capable of more than pettish vexation, but on occasion he could give vent to some poor passion, suited to the poverty of his nature. Now he came in, evidently on the verge of such agitation, holding a crumpled note in his hand.

"Theresa," he exclaimed in a tone that startled her, "I have just received this. Have the goodness to explain it."

He put the paper into her hand, and stood facing her while she read it.

"What does it mean?" he repeated.

Theresa looked up with a heightened colour, but with a smile.

"Unluckily," she said, "the meaning is only too plain. Your baker wishes to be paid for the bread he has sent you. These people are so selfish; they'll do nothing without money."

"And is it true that he has not been paid since the beginning of March?"

"I dare say it's true if he says so, for he keeps account more correctly than I do—bad luck to him!"

"Then I desire to know what you have done with the money with which I supposed you discharged these debts."

His weak voice was strained with his violence, and Constance, in great alarm, hurried from the room.

"Do you suppose," he went on, "that I am a rich man, able to pay anything your extravagance requires?"

"I hope you are able to pay that bill, as he seems rather bent on getting the money."

"Is that the way you answer me?"

"Is that the way you speak to me?" she said in the same unmoved tone. "Sit down and speak civilly if you want me to listen."

"Have the goodness to leave off that tone of levity, and tell me at once what you have done with the money I gave you."

"Different things—paid other bills with it. There's always plenty to do with money, you know."

"Is this baker's bill the only one left unpaid?"

"No."

"What else?"

She did not answer.

"I insist on knowing the truth," he said.

"Don't agitate yourself unnecessarily. The fact is, the grocer has not had any money lately, I'm afraid, nor that useful individual, the butcher."

"You have paid nobody, then? It is intolerable!"

If there had been a little more power in his wrath, she would have been subdued; but he was weak, and she smiled provokingly as she answered:

"Now, Wilfred, don't bully, and I'll make a confession to you. I owed some more money before I married besides that dress bill. Some tradespeople have such confiding dispositions."

"Theresa," he almost shrieked, "talk like that, and you'll drive me mad! I won't stand it—I tell you I won't stand it." He got up in fury. "Why don't you tell the truth at once? Why don't you say you gave the money to your scoundrel of a brother?"

"You are going too far," she returned with a sudden change in her face, and her lips growing white.

"Am I? Now listen to me, madam, and see how far I'll go. This is my house—do you hear?—and as long as I live that fellow shall never enter my doors again. I swear it!"

"Wilfred!"

"Never again—so now you know. A rascal! a scoundrel! I should like to give him in charge."

It was at this auspicious moment that the servant announced "Mr. Lane."

"Show him into the dining-room," shouted the master. "And sit down," he pursued to his wife as she sprang up hastily.

She remained standing, however, eyeing him rather scornfully as he went to the door; then he returned, drew a chair to the table, and wrote a note hastily with trembling hand.

"To tell him to keep out of my way for the future," he said.

"Why don't you tell him so to his face?" she asked.

There was no reply. The note was presently sent down, and Mr. Glyn listened a little anxiously, till the front door had banged again, and a message was brought up that Mr. Lane would see Mr. Glyn at his club.

Theresa stood transfixed; the loss of her husband's confidence, the discovery that she had given his money away, did not pain as it ought to have done; she had not been taught to feel shame for such things. But for Harry she could feel—Harry, coming to her perhaps cold and hungry, wanting a dinner perhaps, and thus cruelly sent away. She had little sense of dignity, and though a moment before she had been disposed to despise her husband for his weakness, she now became his humble suppliant.

"Oh, Wilfred, pray—pray think better of it. I will do anything you like, only be good to Harry. It was all my fault, I lent him the money—he did not know how it was."

But there was no spark of generosity in him to answer her.

"You can spare yourself the trouble of remonstrance," he said. "You have received Mr. Lane here for the last time. I shall be nearly enough ruined as it is."

He felt it so, indeed, at the moment; it was too exasperating, too maddening, to be treated thus. Theresa did not answer him; she sat gazing drearily into the coals, following Harry in her thoughts, till a pause in Mr. Glyn's speech gave her an opportunity of rising, and making her escape from the room.

Wretched hours followed meals of evident warfare, when Theresa talked and laughed, and Mr. Glyn ostentatiously abstained from attending to her, times when everyone knew that the servants were judging the merits of the quarrel, and condemning their mistress. Mr. Glyn stopped at home, looked over bills, and seriously confided his distress to Constance; for he was grieved and hurt indeed when he perceived that he could not make up for Theresa's recklessness simply by stinting his family, as he naturally wished, but that a crisis might arise in which he would really have to stint himself.

Constance truly sympathised as she listened; she wished the fortune she inherited from her mother were her own to help her father with. But she was only eighteen, and had nothing to dispose of but a yearly allowance from her trustees.

As these dull days went on, the burden grew heavier than the culprit knew how to bear. Her nature was rather heedless than strong; she could love after her fashion, and had some ineffectual gratitude towards her husband. She had known very little kindness before she had married him, and for his daughter she had a dawning awe, a sense that there was goodness in her, beyond anything she had ever fancied before. And she had lost the regard of father and daughter too. It took her some time to realise this, for there was little sensitiveness in her slowly awakening nature. But when she did find it out, the knowledge was very bitter to her.

Tears gathered in her eyes and dropped into her lap as she sat in the twilight, thinking. Constance was too good for her; she had never known the sordid things that had burdened Theresa's life.

"But I would have been nice to her, and perhaps got her to like me in time; and I would have got the bills straight when Harry was better off, and could pay me, and then perhaps they would all have been friends with me. But that will never be now."

She had been alone almost all the afternoon, and as the evening drew near the dreariness seemed more than she could bear. It was positive relief when her husband marched solemnly into the room, sat down opposite to her with his utmost attempt at majesty, cleared his throat, and tried to be very impressive.

He had a painful subject to speak about, he said. He wished to show her, what she must doubtless already see for herself, how very badly she had treated him.

He then presented the whole list of his domestic grievances, plainly showing her how impeccable he was, and how wicked she, after the fashion of setters-forth of grievances in general. He did not spare to dwell upon her extravagances, her carelessness of his interests, her deceit; and, happily for herself, she was just then too far gone for any attempt at mockery or justification.

She listened in silence, with more and more sinking of the heart, as she told herself that Constance had heard all that top. The thought deepened and deepened like a black cloud, till at last she could bear it no longer.

"Oh, Wilfred!" she cried out, "stop!" and with one of her sudden movements she threw herself on her knees beside him, and laid her head in his lap. She forgot everything in an impulsive longing for peace and forgiveness at any cost.

He was so very much astonished that he stopped in his speech, and stared at her drooping head awkwardly.

"Oh, Wilfred, I know I've done wrong! I know I'm a plague to you. I dare say you're sorry you ever married me; but don't scold me any more just now. I feel stupid to-night, as if I couldn't bear it."

She clasped her hands before her face, and sobbed and cried in the curiously-unrestrained manner in which she usually laughed.

Mr. Glyn felt embarrassed. He had never seen her cry before, and he did not know what to make of it now. Besides, he was touched. He thought this pathetic effect was produced by his own eloquence, and such a thought is always touching.

He was not an unfeeling man either, exactly; only he always felt for himself first, and he did not like to see this bright, handsome creature shaking with sobs, though she had behaved badly. He looked at her now for the first time, as when he was scolding he kept his eyes on the fire, and he became more softened every moment.

He was not to be baffled though, or to lose sight of his chief object of solicitude, namely, himself, in this momentary agitation.

On the contrary he felt sure it was best to bring out all his plans during this surrender of the enemy; now was the time for getting some definite submission out of her.

"Theresa," he said, putting his arm round her, "you must know I do not complain without cause."

"Plenty of cause, but if you only wouldn't just now!"

"And I think you will see that I must make some change in our style of living."

"Yes, do."

"I was willing to make a greater effort," he continued, "than I was perhaps justified in making to satisfy your wishes; but, after all, your imprudence has made it impossible to go on as I have begun."

"Oh yes; change anything you like, only be friends with me."

"The changes must be decided and immediate, you know. We must begin at once, live very quietly, keep only two servants, hire no carriage." He was hurrying out his conditions all in a breath, anxious to get the articles of the treaty ratified while the best of the combat was his.

"Anything, anything if you'll only be kind again and not so hard on poor Harry."

"Haven't I good reason to complain of your brother's behaviour? Was it not regard for him that made you treat me so ill?"

"Oh, Wilfred, you are very hard!" and she put down her head again and sobbed violently.

"My dear Theresa, don't do that," he said, anxious to pacify her now that his intentions were known and undisputed. "Don't make me feel myself cruel when I am only saying what I could not help."

Then he raised her head and kissed her, and made her sit beside him, while he put his arm round her and explained how good he was to her, and how much consideration was due to him. She cried herself quiet, and began to be happy again; he was friends with her, he would perhaps get Constance to be nice to her too, and the rest would blow over in time. She did not feel the painfulness of being forgiven, as some natures do; she did feel that her eyes were sore, and her cheeks hot, and her head aching, she did feel subdued and speechless when she went down to dinner. And when the two ladies were alone after dinner, she horrified Constance by exclaiming that she had been morally beaten, and she felt black and blue.

"I never used to mind," she went on rather pleadingly, "I have been knocked about a good deal, and I got used to it, you know. But if you happen to be fond of the person who's beating you, so much the worse for you and for him too."

"Don't talk so," exclaimed the girl, shrinking from her words. She could not realise that she was called upon to hear such things from her father's wife.

## CHAPTER II. AN EXPLOSION.

MONTHS glided away so peacefully that Constance had almost forgotten all about the storms. The household was certainly far more quiet and frugal in its ways than it had been, and Harry Lane appeared among them no more. But this was all as it should be, and did not trouble her. As to Theresa, she seemed happy and contented as ever, and Mr. Glyn enjoyed much of his old liberty.

It was therefore a surprise to the girl to be met by her stepmother one day with a very troubled face.

"Look here, Constance," she exclaimed, "I'm in such a state of bother and fuss, really I don't know what to do."

Constance's expression became troubled, and a dread of new domestic storms came over her. Sweet as she was in most ways, she was still very far from giving her stepmother any sympathy. She did not think at all of pitying Theresa, but only was troubled at the idea of fresh disturbances.

She looked at a letter in Theresa's hand, suspecting the document of being a bill; but it was not a bill, as it happened.

"You know, dear," Mrs. Glyn went on, "that your father was so vexed about poor Harry, he said he mustn't come here any more. Now it's an age since I saw him, and he's sent me this note."

"DEAREST T,"

"I'm in a deuce of a scrape. Must see you at once. Write to me at Hawkins's, in the City, and say when and where."

"Yours,"

"H. LANE."

Constance read in silence, put the note down, and looked at Mrs. Glyn without speaking.

"Now, you see, Constance, I must go to him. I must find out what's the matter, or I don't know what will be the end of it. But I don't quite see how to manage it."

Constance still did not speak.

"I don't know how to manage it," repeated Theresa, looking at her, "I don't know where his rooms are now, and he don't mean me to go there, as he has only given his City address. But I can't go and see him in the City, and it's not comfortable meeting out of doors this kind of weather. I should like to have him here, only I don't know what the servants might say."

"But papa—" Constance began, and then she stopped short.

"He forbade Harry's coming here, you mean? Constance, I dare say I'm bad enough, but I do hate humbug, and I tell you plainly there are some things in which I shall always disobey my husband, if I get a chance."

"Then you had better not talk to me about it," said the girl with rising colour, for she felt the disrespect to her father.

"I may as well tell you the fact," pursued Theresa. "Of course I'd rather obey him, putting it at the lowest, that saves the trouble of thinking, at any rate, but there are some things in which I never shall obey him, I am very sure. The question with me, in this particular case, is how I can disobey him most conveniently."

"I cannot say," said Constance stiffly.

"I like you for being huffy about it," said Mrs. Glyn, "and I don't know why I spoke to you at all, only I must have somebody to talk to. I think I shall tell him to meet me in the waiting-room at the Great Western. That's convenient; I should not have far to go. We could have a good talk there, and nobody be the wiser."

Constance kept silence, resolved not to be more of an accomplice than she could help. It was a relief to her when a message presently arrived from her father that he would not return home till late, and still more a relief when Theresa came home through the falling twilight and hurried up the stairs. But surely something strange had happened to her? She was so strange and silent, crouching over the fire, and trembling, with face hidden in her hands. The mystery grew unbearable at last, and Constance knelt down by her stepmother with a new tenderness, and, with arms enfolding her, begged to be told the worst.

"It's Harry, my brother," Theresa cried at last. "He is ruined, and I am not to see him and help him. How can I turn my back upon him, and forget how we used to be alone in the world together? If he's not good, he never had a chance, and I'm not good either; we have both been too much knocked about in the world to be good. I dare say people who can sit at home, and wear what's bought for them, and eat what's cooked for them, can take care of their goodness. I believe you are good; but you never had to scheme for a bit of food, or something to wear, and we have had to do it often enough—there's the difference."

"Don't," cried Constance, in tears; "I won't be told I'm good—I'm not. But do tell me what is the matter. Let us see what we can plan."

"Harry's utterly ruined if I can't get him a hundred pounds before three days are over, and I haven't a hundred shillings, and don't know where to get any. That's what's the matter. I can't explain any more."

She came back again to her crouching over the fire, while Constance thought what she could possibly do. It seemed out of her power to find any suggestion but an appeal to her father, and this Theresa would not hear of. So the weary evening passed away.

Next day Theresa appeared strangely flushed and excited. When Constance would have said something about her trouble, she laughed an unnatural laugh, and declared she meant to think no more of Harry's scrapes; with her husband she was specially gay, only irritated when he observed that she looked ill and had no appetite.

When he left them alone again for the evening, she heaved a deep sigh of relief, confessed to a terrible headache, and suddenly suggested that Constance should amuse her by showing her the family jewels she had inherited, but would never take courage to wear. Constance tried to make a cheerful show of her diamond ear-rings and ancient bracelets and brooches, but there was something too strange and feverish in the gaze Theresa fixed upon them, and in the laugh with which she made them flash in the firelight. When at last she was persuaded to go to bed, she exclaimed in a constrained, high

tone: "Let me take those diamonds with me to try on at my glass," and the colour deepened in her already fevered cheeks.

"Not to-night, pray," replied Constance; "some other time. You really ought to go to bed at once."

A look of intense disappointment and anxiety overspread Theresa's face, but her companion did not particularly observe it; she was busy collecting her jewel-cases.

"Let me carry some for you," and they went upstairs dividing the precious freight.

When they reached Mrs. Glyn's door, Constance paused for her to go in, but she kept possession of the cases, and passed on to her stepdaughter's room, saying:

"You must come with me to-night."

"Certainly," replied Constance. "But you should not stay here in the cold."

"Oh, you won't be a minute," observed Theresa, eagerly watching the girl's movements.

Constance unlocked a drawer, and put the jewels into it. As she did so Theresa shivered.

"Oh, pray go to the fire; let us make haste," she said, hastily re-locking the drawer, and throwing down the keys on her dressing-table. Then Theresa suffered herself to be taken to bed at last.

"Let me sit by you for a little while," said Constance.

"No, no, thank you. Go. I can ring if I want anything."

"Well, at all events I shall not go to bed just yet," the girl said as she left the room.

Theresa raised herself upon her elbow and listened intently for the direction of the retreating footsteps. She heard them descending the stairs, and fell back with an expression of relief.

Constance sat in the drawing-room, and waited and listened, but heard nothing. Yet there was a stealthy movement above—a foot-fall that could be soft enough upon occasion. Theresa, with shaded light, passed noiselessly from her own room to her stepdaughter's, and in two or three minutes as softly returned.

Constance sat up till her father came in, very late, and went to his room without seeing her. Then she, too, retired, sighing, and rather dreading what to-morrow might bring. But she was by no means prepared for Theresa's first observation when she went to visit her next morning.

"I shall get up and I shall go out."

"Nonsense! that would be a mad thing to do."

"Mad! that would just suit me. I am a little bit mad, I believe."

Constance perceived that argument would be worse than useless, it would be better to treat the proposition as a joke, so she laughed slightly, which is generally a safe reply, and proceeded to make arrangements for her patient's breakfast.

Theresa was very eager in persuading Mr. Glyn to go out as usual, and would not hear of his putting off an engagement on her account.

"Good-bye, then," he said affectionately, "till this evening."

"Ah, till this evening! What will have happened by the evening, I wonder?"

He looked a little startled, but she only gave an odd sort of laugh and said he must bring her all the news; wherewith he went out, not very well satisfied.

All the morning Theresa seemed quiet enough, inclined to be amenable, but about one o'clock she got up and dressed herself in spite of remonstrance.

"Now, you really must sit close by the fire, and keep very quiet," said Constance.

"No, I am going out." Her voice was hoarser, her face more flushed than ever, and the girl looked at her incredulously.

"Nonsense! you will try and take the broth that Martha has got ready for your lunch; you know you had no breakfast."

"I will have some before I go out."

Constance administered the broth, but very little was swallowed, and then Theresa rose silently and went upstairs. She was there a few minutes, and then Constance heard the steps coming down again; they passed the drawing-room door, and went on towards the hall. Constance ran out to see, and there was Mrs. Glyn with her bonnet on going towards the front door.

Constance darted after her downstairs, but before she could reach her Mrs. Glyn was gone, and the girl was left to new anxiety as she paced the room, looking first from one window, then from another. It was a cold afternoon, threatening snow; as the gusts of icy wind swept by she trembled to think of that poor fevered creature exposed to such weather.

The light faded, and the street was quite dim; she watched the lamps starting into brightness one after the other, her heart sinking more and more. Where could her stepmother have gone? Why was she so long? Had some illness come upon her out of doors? Was she unable to return?

Again and again she asked herself what she might have done.

Might she not have held Theresa by force, have called for assistance, have prevented this mad act? More and more the minutes dragged; more and more sickening grew the delay; but all at once her heart almost stood still. There was her father coming towards the door, she saw him plainly under the lamp opposite, now he crossed the road, and now she heard his latch-key rattle in the lock.

What would he say? How could she tell him?

She turned round, but did not advance as he opened the door, but stood near the window trembling.

"What! all in the dark here?" he said in a cheerful tone, then looking round he perceived Constance, and asked, "Where's Theresa?"

"Oh, papa!" Constance's voice faltered, and she stopped short.

"What! is she worse? Is anything the matter? Is it anything catching?" he asked, hurrying out the questions that most haunted his fears.

"No, no, papa; she is—gone out."

"What?"

"Gone out."

"Good Heavens! Gone out! Where?"

"I don't know. Oh, papa! don't be frightened, she will be back again soon, I am sure."

Then he questioned about this astonishing proceeding, and Constance told him the time and manner of the departure, not venturing to explain more. He was full of ghastly conjectures on his part, and they watched together till their figures were indistinct in the dimness, and he began to move about, pushing against the furniture, pausing at the window, opening and shutting the door, and declaring every five minutes that if she did not return at once he must go and do something.

Many a time they stopped in their talk at the sound of wheels, and looked out to see if anything were coming to them.

At last Constance said:

"There's a cab; is it coming here?"

It drove up and stopped at the door; Mr. Glyn went downstairs, and his daughter stood clasping her hands, fearing she knew not what.

In a few moments her father came in again with his wife leaning on his arm. Constance stirred up the fire with an instinct of welcome; the flame showed her the two coming in. Neither spoke, until Mr. Glyn said:

"Theresa, what can you have been doing?"

She made no reply.

"It was the maddest thing to go out like that. You have frightened us terribly. I really cannot understand it. What have you been doing?"

She stood opposite to him, making no answer, and in the firelight her eyes shone fixed upon his face.

"Theresa! what is—why don't you speak?"

"Not now, not now," she returned in a whisper.

"You must—you must give me some explanation. What is the matter? What have you been doing?"

"Oh, Wilfred! I would not have come back—I would not have come back, only there was nowhere else to go, and it was cold, and I was ill. But I know I ought not to have come back."

He retreated a step or two in a sort of horror.

"Tell me what you mean," he said.

"You thought I was ill," she went on in a monotonous kind of voice, "and I was; but it was partly fright and trouble. Harry sent for me to go and see him, and then he told me he was in great distress. He had taken away a hundred pounds of his master's money, and if he could not replace it by to-morrow, all would be discovered and he would be ruined. I had no money. I dared not ask you, you were angry with Harry. I did not know what to do. I could not help it. I took away Constance's diamonds and pawned them to-day for a hundred pounds, and took the money to Harry. Wilfred, I would not have come back, only—what could I do?"

Constance stood frozen with horror. Mr. Glyn gave a little gasping sound.

"Oh, Wilfred!" Theresa went on in a beseeching tone, "I know you must hate me, and Constance will hate me; but I could not help it, and Harry is so—" Suddenly she reeled, her voice failed her, and she fell fainting at her husband's feet.

Mr. Glyn did not speak. He raised his wife quietly from the ground and placed her on the sofa, then stood looking at her in a bewildered fashion. It was Constance who called for help, helped Martha to bring restoratives, and dispatched a message for the doctor.

Theresa was many days before she knew them again; she lay raving of jewels and of her brother, while Constance stood looking pitifully at her, as Martha ministered to her wants. Mr. Glyn never spoke to his daughter of Theresa's terrible words; but she found the diamonds in her room, placed there by him without any explanation, and he mentioned to her incidentally that he had assisted Harry Lane to leave England for Australia. No one said anything of the

cause of Theresa's illness, except Martha, who seemed rather to revel in so fine an example of the results of exposure after "a chill."

Yet, somehow it was generally known among Mr. Glyn's connection that something had happened in his household beside an illness, and many were the conjectures indulged in on this matter. But Mr. Glyn did not hear them, and if any were conveyed to Constance's ears, she calmly refused to heed.

That was a long and weary winter in the Glyn household, and when the spring was coming they fled from London to brighter places in the South of France. Theresa seemed thankful for the change, though she spoke little now, and was always seeking their forgiveness by her submission and gratitude. Health returned to her, and many assurances of affection from her husband and his daughter, but she continued still a woman "sadder and wiser."

As the years went by, Theresa lived a gentle, womanly life, till all but herself forgot the past, and people were moved to acknowledge that there was something not displeasing in the second Mrs. Glyn.

## Missed.

Low breathes the wind, and quiet shines the moon,  
The leafless boughs away softly in her light;  
Yet still a restless wail is in the night,  
And all the pulse of time is out of tune.

The measured chime the fevered senses jars;  
The falling coal sends thrilling to the heart  
The nameless terror in the foolish start,  
And the owl's hoot speaks omen to the stars.

And round my head, like ghosts, sick fancies call  
Of change and doubt; and last, with bated breath,  
One creeps on close and closer, muttering Death;  
For, I have missed his greeting—that is all.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DANE DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book V.

#### CHAPTER III.

When troubles come they come not single spies,  
But in battalions.

"Dust, to dust, ashes to ashes." . . .

Bare-headed, Sir Ivor stood beside the grave, and listened to those words. The sound of the earth falling on the coffin-lid seemed to fall like a dull blow on his own heart.

It echoed there, and lived there as he went back to the old desolate house—always to be desolate now, so he told himself, since for him no love of wife, or voice of child, was to gladden, or to cheer it.

The empty years stretched before him dark and hopeless enough, brightened only with memories that had turned him into a sad and lonely man.

"I can't live here—I can't stay here," he says that night, pacing to and fro his mother's room. "I must go away at once—I—"

A timid knock at the door cuts short his words. He turns, and his enquiry almost startles himself, so strangely does his voice fall on the silence of the dark and quiet room.

The door opens, and in the entrance stands Tom—a changed Tom now—a hungry, ragged, dreary-looking Tom no longer—but a tall, well-built, neatly-clad youth, with only the timidity and shrinking of that miserable past to identify him with the prosperity of the present.

"Your pardon, sir," he says respectfully, "I made so bold as to look in, knowing as how you was in great trouble. I—I hope you're not angry, sir."

"Angry, no," says Ivor gently. "Come in, if you wish. You've something to tell me, Tom, I know."

The lad's face flushes, he twists his cap nervously in his hands. But he enters the room and closes the door behind him.

"Yes, sir," he says, "I have. They've all been talking in the servants'-hall, sir, about—about your going away, and shutting up the Court for a year, or more."

"Well," asks Ivor, as he pauses, "what of that? You won't lose your place, Tom, if that's what you fear."

"Oh no, sir, it's not that, indeed," cries the lad eagerly. "It's—"

"Don't be afraid to tell me," says Ivor, pitying his confusion. "Do you want more wages?"

"Wages!" burst out Tom indignantly, "there'll never be no question of wages, sir, 'twixt you and me. I'd serve you till I died, only just for a kind word or look from you, and that's gospel truth, I swear. Oh, sir, you'll think me very bold, I know, but if you go away from here I—I want to go with you, sir. I can't bear to stay on here and never get sight of you. I know I'm a rough fellow, but I'll do my best, and I'm quick to learn; and I'll do anything—anything in the world, sir, only don't ask me to stay here without you!"

He stopped, breathless and hoarse with intense emotion, and there was something in his earnestness that touched Ivor deeply.

"My good lad," he said gently, "I really don't know what to say to you. I—I don't know what I could do with you abroad."

"I'll learn to valit you, sir, indeed I will!" burst out Tom.

"And I'll be that faithful and careful you won't repent it. I heard your man say as he detested furrin ways, and he warn't a going to trapeze all over the Contingong any longer, 'twas so discomfordin'; but I don't mind anything, sir, I assure you; and you might not feel so lonesome like if you had some one with you as know'd you and loved you faithful, and was always willin' to do all that a mortal man could do for your sake, sir, and for sake of the little dead gentleman that was good to him."

Ivor's heart was touched by such fidelity. The lad's white face spoke out the intense earnestness of his prayer, and such devotion coming in this time of sorrow, and grief, and loneliness, moved him more than he cared to say. Not one of all the pampered menials of that great household cared for his sorrow or felt his loss, though to them, these two who had died had been kind and generous protectors. But this lad, this miserable offshoot of poverty and degradation, who had been unnoticed, and almost forgotten, he alone carried warm and grateful remembrance in his heart. For a moment or two Ivor was silent, his eyes searching the pale, eager face where love and honesty spoke out in every line.

"Very well, Tom; have your way," he said at last. "After all, one can't buy service like yours. Get my fine gentleman to give you some hints, if he will. You've not much time, for I leave here in a couple of days. No, you needn't thank me," he added, stopping the rapturous flood of words. "It's something to know there's such a thing as loyalty and fidelity left. See, I give you credit for that, not for desire to step into Burke's shoes or—salary. If you come with me you're to rough it as I do, and get no more than you do now."

"Sir!" cried the boy, his eyes filling with tears. "You don't mean—you can't mean that you think so bad of me. I—I wish I could show you different."

"No, no," said Ivor kindly, "I don't misjudge you, Tom; I'm sure you meant every word you said."

"That I did, and do, sir," said the lad with simple earnestness.

"Perhaps some day I'll be able to prove my words, and then you'll know."

There was a moment's silence. Then the lad touched his forehead and turned to leave the room.

"I can't thank you enough, sir," he said. "I've cause to care for you and think of you, though you ain't never had no sort of reason to be so good to me. God bless you, sir!"

The door closed. Ivor was once more alone.

He moved over to the window and stood there for long, wrapped in anxious thought.

Another task still lay before him—an unwelcome one, and one from which he shrank with an unaccountable dread—the task of looking over his mother's papers, kept in the rosewood escritoire, which he never remembered to have seen unlocked until that day when she had been found stretched beside it.

Even now as he stood there and held the keys in his hands a shiver of nervous fear ran through his frame. He felt more than half inclined to leave this duty alone until his return from abroad. But another thought cut short his indecision.

"If anything happened to me," he said to himself, "if I were to die, this would be at the mercy of strangers. Surely it is best to learn what is to be learnt at once. Perhaps, after all, I am only alarming myself needlessly."

Mastering his weakness by a great effort, he drew a chair up to the cabinet and proceeded to unlock the drawers in succession. He went through a great many, finding only bundles of letters, tied and docketed, papers, bills, memorandum-books, but nothing of any special importance. In the last drawer he opened, lay a sealed packet, unaddressed. It was the letter his mother had been writing on the night of her illness.

He turned it over and over, marvelling for whom it was intended. At last he broke the seal, meaning only to read the first line as a clue to whom it was written.

But it commenced without any form or preamble, and instinctively he read on.

"Something warns me that my time on earth is drawing to an end. You have broken my heart, and you know it. I might have expected no mercy, for has not my past shown me what mercy your race are alone capable of showing? And yet, as you know what I suffered at other hands, you at least might have spared me now. I am glad that death is approaching, it will be kinder than you have been, and as my secret dies with me, so also dies your power. Do not attempt to threaten my son as you have threatened me—do not for one instant flatter yourself that he will buy your silence, or preserve the secret of your power as I, his weak and most unhappy mother, have done. You have sown distrust and coldness between me and the only earthly thing I loved. I cannot find it in my heart to forgive you, but I do say, Heaven deal with you as no human law or human justice can. Sometimes I think I have been wrong to believe you—that I should have fought you on your own ground, or confessed the truth to one better able to deal with your cunning and your power. But it is too late now. I was weak enough to yield once, and that once was all you needed. If death releases me from my bargain, it will be kinder than any human friend can be. One thing more I must say. Ivor has forbidden your presence here. Do not, therefore, force yourself upon me. Remember that flesh and blood cannot always stand such tyranny as yours, and one day I—even I—might be weak enough to repent and confess all. You best know how far such confession would serve your ends. Do not try my strength too severely. The cheque is enclosed as usual, and, as usual, I must request the form of a receipt. The total is nearly reached now—at what cost you know as well as I myself."

That was all. As Ivor Grant reached the last line, his face turned ashy pale; yet even now he was as far as ever from solving the mystery that had placed his mother in the power of this man. He dropped the paper on the table, and his hand, as it rested on the margin of the drawer, involuntarily grasped the wood with a fierce, nervous pressure. As he did so, a faint "click" caught his ear. The wooden panel at the back of the drawer fell open suddenly, revealing an aperture containing some papers. He started to his feet; a cold sweat bathed his brow. Swift as thought, his hands seized the documents and dragged them from their hiding-place.

One by one he opened and read them. One by one they brought to him at last the revelation of that secret to which he would have given any history, any name, save this. This—What was it that flamed and burnt before his eyes—a truth too plain, too terrible for doubt—a truth that framed itself into one bitter word, and so faced him there in very mockery of that dead woman's love, and weakness, and—

What was it? Dishonour? Aye, and worse than dishonour—beggary, ruin, a lasting shame, a lost inheritance—a very earthquake of desolation that in one second of time blasted and laid low his whole life.

The papers fell from his nerveless hand—fell one by one like the hopes they had slain, the memories they had poisoned.

One great, tearless sob heaved his chest; he sank slowly down, and his head fell forward on his arms.

There was a great silence in the room—a silence as of death.

For it was worse than any death-blow that had struck Ivor Grant down now to the very dust of agony and shame; and he met it without a moan, without a word of reproach against the woman whose hand had dealt it—blindly, ignorantly, perchance, but only too surely and fatally for all that.

#### CHAPTER IV. TREACHERY.

DUSK and sombre fall the shadows in the little churchyard beyond the rectory.

A woman is standing beside a mound of newly-turned earth, gazing down on it with white and sorrowful face. Her eyes turn from thence to the gables and towers of the Court, where they catch the dying glow of the reddened sky.

"How lonely he must be!" she says to herself. "How lonely!"

Great tears gather in her eyes as still with that intent gaze they watch the distant building—watch it as though they sought to pierce through stone walls and closed doors, and rest again in their remorseful tenderness on one face, hidden from her sight, but present in her memory as when last she read its sorrowful farewell.

The tears are on her lashes still, as a footstep echoes on the gravel-walk behind. They are there as she turns round and confronts the intruder on her solitude.

"Why—Tom!" she says, surprised.

A hand goes up to touch a cap, ragged no longer. A bright, honest face looks up to hers in undisguised delight.

"Thank you, ma'am—yes, ma'am, it's me," he answers, as if she might be in doubt on the subject. "I've just bin to speak to the

sexton, ma'am, as Sir Ivor ordered. Your pardon, ma'am, are you a goin' up to the Court to see my master?"

A flood of scarlet rushes over the white face.

"I—oh no!" she answers hurriedly.

"I thought as how you might," the lad says, sinking his voice to lower tones as a troubled look comes over his face. "I wish someone would see him—someone as could do him good or cheer him. He's so changed, ma'am."

"He is in great grief," she remarks faintly, longing—oh, how wildly and vainly—that it were not so wrong and so impossible to follow the lad's simple wish, that only for one moment she might touch the hand and look on the face of this man who is so dear to her.

"Changed!" echoes Tom. "Aye, he is changed; but it ain't that I mean. Somethin's come to him worse than any grief, though he did grieve sorely for his mother, poor lady. But 'tis two days ago that the new trouble came. Oh, ma'am," he cries, coming a step nearer and speaking yet more earnestly in his great dread, "you and he was good friends, I know. Can't you do nothing for him? I don't know what to make of it. 'Tain't only a couple of days he said he was a going on the Continent, and I was to go with him. We was to travel about—rough it, so Sir Ivor said, and oh, ma'am, I was that pleased and honoured, and now—now he sends for me, and he says, 'Tom,' he says, 'my plans is all changed. I am a poor man, not a rich one. I'm going away all by myself. This place ain't mine at all, Tom,' he says. 'There's been a great deception and a great wrong. I'm not your master any longer, and I'm just as poor, Tom, as you was yourself when first I knew you.' There, ma'am, them's just his words, and I leave you to think if I wasn't knocked all of a heap when I heard them. Now, what does it all mean, that's what I wants to know?"

"Mean! I can't imagine!" exclaims Beryl Marsden. "He must be dreaming. Not master of the Court! Why, who is?"

"That's just what I ses," cries Tom triumphantly; "and all those lawyer chaps have been down a worriting and a puzzling their heads about it, and one of them ses, 'You stay here, Sir Ivor, until it's proved. It's a most mysterious affair.' But he says he won't stay, and oh, ma'am, if you were to see him, so white and so changed, and such an awful look upon his face, it would make your heart ache. I know it makes mine."

"But this is very mysterious!" she cries in agitation. "What can have happened? Mrs. Grant had no other son. Of course Sir Ivor is the rightful owner of the Court. Perhaps grief has affected his mind."

"I don't know," says Tom dismally; "he promised as how I was to go with him and now he ses I ain't, but all the same I means to follow wherever he goes," he adds, dropping his voice and glancing around. "'Tain't wages I wants. I'd serve him till I died; he was so good to me, he was, and I ain't a going to forget it."

"You're a good lad," says Beryl hastily. "Yes, don't leave him. He may want a true heart to serve him one day, and be very sure, Tom, your fidelity won't go unrewarded. Oh, I wish—I wish I knew what his trouble was," she cries passionately; "I wish I could help him."

"Why don't you go and ask him, ma'am?" suggests Tom. "He's lonely enough up there, only the lawyer chaps come, and they worrit him more than enough, I bet. Why don't you go, ma'am?"

"I—I can't," stammers Beryl hurriedly, as again that hot, shamed flush stains her white face. "I'm very, very sorry, Tom; you may tell him that—tell him it from me; but I can't say more, and I can't do anything. I wish to Heaven I could!"

"He was so good to the little gentleman," says Tom wistfully; "I seed him myself a nursin' and a watchin' him night after night. Seems queer to me that you, as is his mother, can't help my poor master even by a word. All his friends seems a turning their backs on him now. That's just what he said."

"Oh, hush—hush!" cries Beryl passionately; "you don't know what you're talking about. He—he will understand what I mean if you give him my message."

"I'll give it safe enough," says Tom, looking more and more puzzled; "seems to me, though, the quality has a mighty strange way of showin' friendship. If one of my sort's in trouble, neither man nor woman makes any sort of fuss 'bout going to them, if 'tis only to say they're sorry for 'em. I'm sure Sir Ivor would take it much kinder if you went to see him, 'stead of sending a message."

"Be silent!" she cries almost fiercely. "You forget yourself; you don't know what you say."

Tom shrinks back alarmed and abashed.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," he says. "No offence meant, I'm sure. If you'd seen my master as I've seen him, you'd feel sorry too. I didn't think you'd be angry if I told you."

"I'm not angry," she says, with a sound as of tears in her voice, and a look of passionate yearning in her eyes as they rest on the old Court's gabled roof. "You're a good boy—a faithful boy. You mean



well, I know. But don't speak to me any more. I want to be alone. I—I came here to be alone." Then trying slowly and won-

Tom stares at her bewildered. Then trying slowly and wonderingly to take in the meaning of her words, he turns and goes away down the gravelled path, and the drooping branches of the trees fall over him, and hide him from her sight.

She makes no sound or movement till that solitary figure is visible no longer. Then her arms go up with a wild gesture, and she throws herself down on the cold clay of the new-made grave, sobbing as if her heart would break.

How long has she lain there—an hour?—two, three? Half a lifetime it seems to her, for sorrow comes with slow tread; 'tis only joy that passes by so quickly that the flying feet are gone ere we have felt quite sure of their presence. Be the time long or short, however, she is awakened to some consciousness of its existence at last by the touch of a hand on her shoulder, and springing to her feet she sees in the light of the cold wintry moon the face of the man for whose sake that hour of bitter grief has been passed.

Changed ! Oh, God, how changed ! she wildly thinks, reading its sorrowful lines, its anguish and pain, as only a woman's eyes can read the face of one she loves.

“Beryl!” he says hoarsely. “You here?”  
Her pale face grows paler still. The hand she has raised to greet him falls listlessly by her side.

"Did I not love her also?" she says. "Was it wrong that I should come to her last resting-place?"

"Wrong!" So great a flood of joy lights his face and sweeps over his heart that it needs no words to say how little she need fear one word of accusation. "It was kind of you—very kind of you."

Then his voice breaks, and for a moment's fear-filled silence they stand and gaze into each other's eyes, as never had they thought to gaze again.

Quite suddenly the woman's pity bursts asunder the barrier of her self-control. It is not in her power to gaze on such a changed face unmoved.

"You have had great trouble. I—I heard it. If I say to you, I am sorry—"

But then her strength gives way. A burst of sobs escapes her breast.

"Oh, Ivor—Ivor!" she cries, "what is it? Can't you tell me?"  
His face grows white as death, and his strong frame trembles like a leaf.

"I can tell you, if you wish," he says hoarsely; "you will hear it soon enough. It is only that I am a nameless beggar, instead of being what—I have always thought myself."

"I can't understand," she says brokenly. "It isn't true. You—  
of all men."

"Even I—of all men," he echoes. "Times are changed since I was the idle fool whom you honoured with the title of 'My Lord Conceit.'" *His words came sharp and shrill across the*

"Don't!" she cries, her words cutting sharp and shrill across the still night air. "For Heaven's sake spare me such memories. What do you mean? What is this mystery? I—I can't understand it."

do you mean? What is this mystery? I—I can't understand it."

"It is very simple," he said. "My mother told me nothing of her early life, but at her death I discovered that my father was not her first husband. As a girl, she had been at a school in France. There, at the age of sixteen, she fell in love, or imagined herself in love, with a man who appealed to her romantic youth with a story of banishment, chivalry, adverse fortune—Heaven knows what. He really was an Italian who taught singing at the school. She fled with him, and they were married. She was most unhappy. Two years later he deserted her. The story was hushed up by her parents. No one knew of it. Soon after, came news of this man's death. He had been wrecked while crossing in a schooner from Naples. The news was in all the Italian journals, and her father took all possible precautions to have it verified. Am I wearying you? I will make the story as brief as possible. About that time she met my father, Sir Hector's younger brother. He fell madly in love with her, and her parents were eager for her acceptance of him. This time all was prosperous, clear, satisfactory. They were married at the English embassy in Rome. A year after I was born. We came over to England and lived at the Court. My father died when I was still a child, and our home was here, as you know."

She looked up at the weariness and suffering in his

He paused. She looked up at the weariness and suffering in his face, and marvelled what had yet to come.

"How or when she discovered that she had been deceived I cannot tell," he went on. "But she did discover it, and determined to keep her secret, and bring me up in ignorance of the fact that I was a usurper here. Someone—a spy, who makes it his business to trade on family misfortunes, found out that, instead of dying when it was supposed, her first husband escaped from the wreck, took arms under Victor Emmanuel, and was shot at the battle of Solferino

two years later. Consequently her marriage with my father was illegal, and— You don't need me to say more, Beryl, do you?"

His voice sounded choked. So bitter it was to him to put his shame into words for her—for the woman in whose sight he would have stood in honour.

Her hands went out to clasp his own. In this moment she remembered nothing save that he was in trouble, and she so longed to comfort him.

"The shame cannot touch you," she cried. "Do not take it to heart like this. After all, the proofs may be wrong. Who brought them? Who knows the story?"

"Count Savona."

She recoiled suddenly. Her eyes grew dark with wrath.

"He! That coward—that traitor! Oh, Ivor, don't believe him! He's a liar, a liar, a liar! I am sure it is he!"

"He! That coward—that traitor! Oh, Ivor, don't believe him! Don't accept this wrong at his hands. It is all a lie—I am sure it is!"

He shook his head sadly. "My dear, it is the bitter truth. The papers I discovered prove that."

She was silent. What could she say? What could she do? Knowing how proud, and true, and honourable he was, she could read only too plainly the suffering and agony this news had brought; but comfort—what comfort lay in any words to bring him even brief relief from the shame that filled his whole life?

"It was a dreadful blow," he said at last. "I think it almost stunned me. I—I am glad my poor uncle died in ignorance of it. He was so fond of me always, and he used to tell me all his plans, and all he would wish me to do here; and, after all, I have no more right to the Court and its surroundings than the veriest beggar in the streets."

"How can you bear it?" she almost sobbed.

"I have had almost as hard a thing to bear before," he said simply. "I suppose I am getting used to trouble now. Heaven knows I've had some hard strokes lately."

"And what are you going to do?" she asked.

"I leave here to-morrow. I have told the lawyers the facts of the case, and they don't see any loophole out of it. The only difficulty is to find who is the next heir to the property. The direct line fails with me—without me, I should say," he added bitterly.

"It seems hard to trace back the remote branch who will hold its honours. As for myself, I shall enlist, I think, under a foreign

"Don't talk so bitterly," she entreated. "It is not like you to be hopeless. Have you—have you seen Savona since this discovery?"

"Great Heaven!" he cried hoarsely, "I forgot. In all my own trouble, I forgot that his villainy could touch you also. I can't do anything for him now."

"What promise?" she asked sternly. "You would not buy his silence for—for my sake. Oh, Ivor, do not tell me that."

He was silent. He only looked at her despairingly, and saw the hot blood rise to her very brow, and mantle all the beautiful pale face in one fiery glow of shame, till her hands went up to cover it

"He will tell my husband," she said slowly. "I know that was what you meant. Well, let him do his worst. I don't fear him."

"But I do, for your sake," cried Ivor hoarsely. "It means ruin to you—it means more than all my troubles put together to me, for—oh, Beryl, I brought it on you, and I can't help you now."

"Yes, you can," she said, dropping her hands, and facing him with a new, bright courage in her eyes; "you can help me by being brave and true, and fighting against your own misfortunes—not by trying to punish me; you can help me by defying that thing."

Two brave and true, and fighting against you; you can help me by defying that scoundrel to his face, not placing yourself at his mercy by purchasing his silence. Let him do his worst to me, even as he has done it to her man's. I don't fear him any longer."

"My brave darling!" burst from Ivor's lips involuntarily. "Hush!" she said, raising her finger warningly; "don't say that! It makes me a weak woman when I want to be a strong one."

"Hush!" she said, raising her finger to her lips. "that—don't make me a weak woman when I want to be a strong one. I will take the weapon out of Count Savona's hands; I will go to my husband and tell him myself how weak I have been. Let him condemn me as he please; at least, no one else shall."

"You—you will do this?" he faltered.

"You—you will do this!" he cried.  
 "As Heaven sees and judges us now, I will."  
 "Then," cried Ivor with a strange gleam of triumph in his eyes,  
 "you give me freedom again; you enable me to fight this cur with  
 his own weapons. Let him do his worst, as you say—we can defy  
 his own weapons."

She looked at him tearfully, bravely, with all her soul in her

"Do you know," she said solemnly, "my life seems to have been one long repentance of that first misjudgment of you. I want to forgive me that, before we part."

## A Family Feud.

(A STORY IN FIVE WEEKLY PARTS.)

## CHAPTER X.

"There is nothing to forgive you. There never could be for me," he said with earnestness as deep as, and infinitely more sorrowful than, her own. He was weak, and ill, and shaken, and it was hard to win back the old self-command. "You are the noblest woman that was ever created, I think. I can never forget you. I can never be sorry for loving you. I only wish it lay in my power to shield you from this sorrow instead of adding to it."

"You won't add to it if you will do what I ask," she said. "Don't give yourself up to despair. How do you know even that this man has not been deceiving your mother. She seems only to have accepted his words, and you accept hers. I don't believe the story—I can't. Were I in your place I would leave no stone unturned to prove this man's account of it."

"You forget," he said very sadly, "that when I leave here I go out to banishment, to poverty. How can I find means to investigate the story? Most of the persons connected with it are dead and buried. The documents I found prove the marriage, the death, my own birth—all the dates are duly certified. Then there is my mother's own confession, the letter she wrote the night of her death. I fear the story is true enough. My only satisfaction is that I can defy this villain now, and bid him dog my steps no longer. He is a sufferer, too, by the discovery, for it seems to have been a comfortable source of income to him for many a year past. But don't let us talk of him any longer," he added with a shiver. "I—I want to know what you are going to do."

"I have written to ask my husband's permission to return to India," she said, growing very white as she met those brave and tender eyes. "But I shall not wait for it; I will leave by the first steamer."

"And—and if he takes a different view of this to what you suppose?" asked Ivor hesitatingly.

"That I must risk," she answered sadly. "Why should you be the only one to suffer?"

"Ah, my dear," he answered, greatly moved, "it is so different for a woman, and I have always honoured you so. Heaven knows I do still; and to think that my own folly has called all this trouble into life. It cuts me to the heart."

"You must not say that; you must not think of it," she answered, steadying her voice by a great effort. "I—I thought I should never see you again, but since I have done so, I must tell you also that I see plainly enough you are not to blame in this matter. Why was I so blind—so foolish? I seem to have been claiming so much from you all these years. What other man would have been to my children what you were? And, after all, I can only repay your kindness by added sorrow."

"I told you before that sorrow from your hands loses half its sting," he answered. "You need not reproach yourself. I—I can't help saying I am glad I have seen you again, little as I ever thought to do so. I think I shall bear my banishment better for remembrance of a parting word. I wish it were not wrong to ask for some news of you," he added wistfully. "But I shall be a wanderer, and can give you no address. Perhaps it is as well, only what shall I do if harm comes to you—if your husband refuses to believe—"

"He will not—he cannot!" cried Beryl almost fiercely. "He knows me better than to doubt my word."

"How pale and cold you look," he said gently; "I have been selfish to detain you here so long. Let me see you home now to the rectory. It is the last time, you know."

She took his arm without a word; she was trembling greatly. In silence they trod the shadowy path, and closed the gate, where Jack and Cyril had been used to swing. In silence, too, they reached the rectory grounds, and there paused as if by common consent, and stood for a moment with clasped hands, looking into each changed and saddened face. Then with a murmured "Heaven be with you!" the trembling hands unlinked themselves, and between these two sundered lives rolled back the dark swift waves of trouble and despair.

With hurried steps Beryl Marsden entered the dark and silent house. A lamp was burning in the parlour. Before the fire the old rector sat dozing in his chair.

"You are late, my dear," he said, "and how white and cold you look. See, there is a letter for you from your friends at Vaux."

Beryl took up the letter mechanically. She saw it was marked "Immediate," but her hands trembled so that she could scarcely open it. When she did an enclosure fell out. It was a telegram from India which Mrs. Dunbar had forwarded from the Abbey.

For one sick, dizzy moment her heart seemed to stand still. Then she tore open the paper, and read these words:

"Don't dare to come out. Go to your lover, traitress!"

"Beryl, my child! Beryl! what is it?"

But ere he could catch the swaying form she fell at his feet like a log, with the paper crushed in her hand.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

CAPTAIN MIDDLEFORD, beyond any doubt, had been foully murdered. But by whom? The medical examination showed that the unfortunate officer had been literally stabbed to the heart, and the hypothesis favoured by both the Hunstone and the Sellworth surgeons was that the treacherous blow had been dealt from the rear. It was surmised that stealthy steps had crossed the library from the northern window, that, hearing a rustle, the captain had turned and half risen from his seat, that, in that very instant, his cruel foe had smitten him, and that, without so much as a single penetrating cry, the baronet's guest had fallen in a huddled, ghastly heap upon the floor. The few facts of seeming importance which came to light in the first hours of confused investigation bore out this theory. It was proved that both the library-windows had been unfastened, and there were marks upon the frame of the northern one which spoke of a hurried and lawless exit. Moreover, a rent, unnoticed before, was disclosed to elaborate scrutiny in the flowing side-curtain. No domestic had heard—or would confess to the circumstance—any unusual sounds. The captain had come in at sunset, had partaken of some refreshments, and had afterwards slipped quietly away to meet his doom.

To Sir Raymond Bradwell the shock was terrible. It would have affected him greatly to have been told by a stranger that his friend and fellow-schemer had passed the mysterious borders of what men call "the seen and the unseen." But for himself to find the captain, whom he had left a few hours before full of life and high spirits, in the chill grasp of death—and of death in so barbarous a guise! It was an overwhelming experience, and for the time it thoroughly unnerved him. The Hunstone doctor was compelled to turn his attention to the living, and to prescribe for the baronet such remedies as he judged might best soothe his patient's almost hysterical agitation.

Where was Harry? This was a question which somehow came to be asked very quickly, and for answer the young man was soon mingling with the excited group. He looked to the full as horror-stricken and bewildered as anyone else, except, perhaps, his father. But he appeared to have no light to throw upon the mystery, and there were those who thought that in this crisis he kept deliberately in the background and was strangely chary of either suggestions or enquiries.

Ominously was this reserve interpreted, the next morning, by those who remembered it; for the rumour ran like wild-fire about the village that Harry Bradwell had been arrested and charged with the murder of his father's friend.

It was even so. Scrap by scrap evidence had accumulated, which to the cleverly-trained intelligences of Sergeant Munn and his subordinates, pointed only too clearly in one direction. They both declared to their cronies in the hamlet that at first they had been loth to believe in the possibility of such a scandal; but this assertion was made in a tone which testified that, whatever the extent of their original reluctance, it had been very successfully overcome.

And the case indeed appeared dark. The fact that Harry had surreptitiously contracted an engagement with a relative of his outcast uncle, and so incurred the risk of a grave disagreement with Sir Raymond, had openly transpired, as also the circumstance that Captain Middleford had become aware of this, and that Harry had reason to fear an inconvenient disclosure at the captain's hands. Here seemed to be a motive for the deed of blood.

Then a plain and trustworthy labouring man, named Ambrose Ellis, came reluctantly forward with a story which tended to show that the crime was premeditated. He first unbosomed himself to a neighbour, who insisted that it was his duty to at once inform the police, and dragged Ambrose straightway into the presence of Sergeant Munn.

"Ellis, here, knows summat about t' cap'en yonder, and Mr. Bradwell," said Ambrose's companion, by way of introduction, and with his breast swelling high with the importance of his mission.

"Indeed," said the officer, "let him tell me quickly, then; I haven't much time to spare."

Ellis feebly objected. "I don't wish Mr. Bradwell any harm; nary a bit," he said. "I didn't want to come up here."

This roused the official curiosity. Out came a big, red-bound memorandum-book.

"At your convenience, Mr. Ellis, please?" A peculiar emphasis was laid upon the last word of the sentence. It broke down the weak barrier of resistance.

"Well, if I must I must; 'tis only what, as luck would have it, I chanced to overhear in t' park avenue one day."

"Date, please."

"Ah, that I can't justly remember; I've nought to fix it by."

"A pity; but proceed."

"I was walking across t' green, sir, and t' two gentlemen were atween t' trees."

"Captain Middleford and Mr. Henry Bradwell?"

"Yes, sir. I don't fancy either of 'em noticed me. They weren't looking my way, an' they were very busy indeed, talking. Their voices were pretty loud, an' I could tell afore I got anyways close as all wasn't as it should be atween house-mates. They were quarrelling, that's what they were at."

"Ah! Go on, Ellis."

"The cap'en seemed far the best-tempered o' the two, but even he twitched at his walking-cane pretty viciously, I thought, at times; an' as for Master Harry, he were in a terrible tantrum, an' no mistake."

"What was the question in dispute?"

"That I can't rightly say, sir. I don't mean to make no foolish guesses."

"Very wise of you, Ellis. Continue with what you do know. You heard something?"

"It was just at t' end o' the talk, sir. They'd both stopped, and Master Harry raised his voice a bit. 'If you do succeed, you shall suffer for it; aye, if it is my own hands that wreak the vengeance,' he said. Master Harry shook his fist so"—the narrator suited the action to the word—"as Cap'en Middleford turned away, and he said something else—about war, I think. That is all I know."

"Thanks; this is very valuable information indeed."

It was an approximate certainty that Harry had been in the house at the moment of the outrage—in fact, he did not deny it. All these things put together and illumined by the vivid imaginations of the police-officers, were held to justify an arrest.

The excitement and consternation in the village and amongst the young man's acquaintances was intense. But gradually the feeling widened and deepened that, however sad might be the truth, the authorities were upon the right scent, and had in custody the genuine culprit.

Harry himself suffered the blow with singular fortitude. Indeed, his apparent calmness and stolidity went a long way towards convincing several of those brought into immediate contact with him of his guilt. They could not comprehend how a prisoner with so grave a charge suspended over him should be quiet and collected, unless he had already forecasted the possibility of being in this trying predicament. Tears, and frantic outcries, and indignant protestations of innocence they could have understood, and would have tried their hardest to have believed in. But this haughty—as they considered—self-possession had its own elements of dark suspicion.

"I know no more of the affair than, at present, does Sergeant Munn or any one of you," was Harry's only reply to the earliest whisper of accusation, and to that declaration he had added very little either of explanation or of defence.

Hunstone at last had its mystery, and awoke to quite a phenomenal agitation and notoriety. How men and women walked long distances merely to stand in front of the shadowed mansion and with curious eyes seek out the fateful window; how tongues wagged; and how the ale at the village inns flowed in prodigious quantities to drive the stiff mill of bucolic imaginations; how theory after theory was broached, and examined, and cast aside as useless; how romance was woven into the texture of the ugly story; and how gossips quarrelled over the pattern of their task—all these things the reader will understand.

At one point both the police and the amateur investigators (whose name was legion) were baffled. No weapon could be discovered with which it was at all likely that the fatal wound had been inflicted. Search was made everywhere, within the manor-house and without; but to no purpose. This was distinctly a missing link; but the seekers were not yet in despair. There were many corners in the manor precincts where a blade of steel might escape observation for many days—to be found at last by some accidental wayfarer. It was known that Harry had at one time possessed a rapier.

#### CHAPTER XI.

If Harry Bradwell bore this sudden and unlooked-for trial with amazing calmness, the same could hardly be said of his father. To Sir Raymond it was a catastrophe on the heels of a catastrophe. Shock was succeeding shock, wave following wave, with such cruel and stern persistency, that the baronet for the first time in his life realised how intrinsically helpless he was when caught in the grip of adverse fates. Of what use were title, wealth, a long lineage, a hitherto untarnished name, when brought face to face with such gigantic disaster and peril? There are summer gales in which pride—reasonable or unreasonable—may act as ballast, and carry the vessel bravely onward. But this was a hurricane—fierce, resistless

overwhelming. It threatened the foundering of both Sir Raymond's physical and mental powers. It would probably have accomplished this end if he had not in the depths of his anguish and despair have tossed his pride and dignity, once for all, overboard.

It was the night of Harry's arrest, and the baronet was pacing his chamber with no thought of rest. Sleep, indeed, at the present conjunction of affairs, was an impossibility. He was racked with anxious cares and terrible forebodings. He had listened to revelations which had staggered him, taking away his breath and filling his breast with many conflicting emotions. He had heard of his son's engagement to Agnes Fenton, the niece of the woman whose presence within the sacred Bradwell circle had occasioned so bitter and lasting a feud. This disclosure had awakened all the anger and bewilderment which Harry had expected. He had been informed of his son's familiarity with the discarded brother, and of the repeated visits which Harry had paid to Croyle Farm. These things had annoyed him past expression. But, dwarfing all else, overshadowing all petty resentments and inherited animosities, was the glaring, miserable reality that his son was a prisoner, accused of having done to death a man whom by every law of hospitality it was his—Harry's—duty to protect. The pain of parental disappointment and terror mingled in Sir Raymond's heart with the acute sense of degradation and shame.

And whither to turn for comfort, for any single ray of light upon this black horizon, he knew not. It had been plain to him that all—servants, neighbours, policemen—believed his boy guilty. No one of them had had the heart to tell him so in so many words. They had shirked any approach to a direct question. Even Sergeant Munn had stuttered and stammered something about its "all coming right, no doubt, in a day or two," when he went to break the news of the arrest as best he could to the stupefied father. But it was easy to read the current conviction in the furtive glance, the grave, subdued voice, the pitying expression of each man's and woman's countenance.

The baronet walked up and down that room for hours, and then threw himself into a chair and sat for hours more with bowed head and clenched, nerveless hands.

At last he reached a decision, and for him, considering what his past had been, a strange one.

"I will go and see—that girl," he murmured hoarsely. "She may know something that may prove of use. She will not believe him the—the thing they say, if she loves Harry."

That this would, well-nigh of necessity, involve also an encounter with his alienated brother, was an idea which occurred to Sir Raymond more than once, and to which he attached small weight. He had at present neither the desire nor the intention to be reconciled with Francis, but if he chanced to meet the self-willed farmer—or worse still, his wife—he would at least be civil to him, or her, and try for the moment to forget the offence. A great grief is a leveller of many human barriers, and has power to bridge over many formidable gulfs.

Sir Raymond carried this resolve into effect at a very early hour on the next morning.

The trim, little servant who opened the door of the comfortable Croyle homestead could scarcely believe her eyesight as she recognised the visitor. The story of the Bradwell feud was common property in the district, and it was reported that the baronet would any day go a mile out of his way to avoid the contamination of his brother's chance company. What, then, should Sir Raymond do at Croyle Farm?

This part of the mystery was quickly solved.

"Is Miss Fenton within?" the baronet asked.

"Yes, sir; come in. Shall I call her?"

"If you will be so good."

Sir Raymond was accordingly shown into an old-fashioned "best parlour," to await Agnes's arrival. Of Francis, or of Mrs. Bradwell, to his relief he as yet saw nothing.

Agnes made very little delay. She too was acutely suffering, and had spent almost as weary a vigil as Harry's parent. She was fully conscious of the thick cloud of suspicion that had gathered over her lover, and was highly incensed against public opinion and the callous blundering of those in authority. With an impulsive young girl's contempt for evidence, and for pedantic theories of cause and effect, motive and crime, she held the faintest suspicion of Harry's guilt as a proof of the entertainers' incompetence and folly. She knew that her betrothed was the soul of honour and uprightness; other people ought to be equally aware of the same glorious truth. That other people had possibly not quite the same opportunities for judging, nor the same bias in the young man's favour, were considerations which Agnes did not stay to take into account. She argued more from the base of intuitive sentiment than of reason. For this cause it is probable that she would have failed to convince many jurymen. But to Sir Raymond her healthy indignation and her confidence in the future constituted exactly the tonic which he

required. It was the wisest step he could have taken, this to which his despair had driven him in his own pride's despite.

She received her visitor with what, under happier conditions, would have been a bewitching air of unaffected surprise.

"Sir Raymond Bradwell, I believe?" she said.

"Yes; I have ventured to call to ask a question or two about—about my unfortunate son Harry," he answered, with a gasp like that of a hesitant swimmer taking an unaccustomed plunge.

Agnes forgot herself and all her personal fears in an instant.

"He is innocent! I am certain he is innocent!" she cried.

"What idiots these country police must be to fix their attention upon the wrong man!"

The warm, impetuous words struck a sympathetic chord in the listener's inmost heart. At that moment he could have abased himself in the dust before Agnes, in token of his gratitude. How he had hungered for this assurance from lips on whose honesty he could rely! That Agnes believed her assertion was evident from the proud ring in her voice, the flash in her eyes, the quiver of her delicate nostril, the petulant stamp of her foot. Had she any evidence to adduce?

"Of course Harry is innocent," the baronet answered huskily. "No one who knows him should for an instant doubt that. But the proof is needed—the proof, Miss Fenton! Can you assist in this matter?"

The girl's passion had spent itself, and she recollected pitifully how valueless was her testimony in the eyes of an uncharitable and censorious world. If only she could have sworn that Harry had been in her own company that evening! But of such an *alibi* there was not the remotest hope.

"I am afraid not. Harry had not been to the farm for a couple of days. I think he was a little afraid of—of—Captain Middleford, and for me to confess that would surely be misinterpreted," she said.

Sir Raymond's dread smote him again. It seemed that he would have his journey for nothing.

"And your uncle has no light to throw on this dark subject?" he asked in a more icy tone.

"None whatever! He would have told me else. I will call him."

"No, no! Not this morning, thank you;" and in the gesture of the restraining hand something of the old haughtiness returned. The breach of long years was not healed yet.

Agnes obeyed by coming again into the centre of the room. She became questioner in her turn.

"You have seen Harry; how does he bear it—this wretched trouble?" she asked.

"As a man should. He is a true Bradwell," Sir Raymond replied.

Agnes clasped her hands as a fresh wave of emotion swept over her soul.

"I must go to him; I am sure he must wish it. He may think, else, that I am like the others—that I doubt him, which is impossible!" she murmured.

"Come to the Manor and go with me this afternoon," the baronet said abruptly. The offer was impulsive and without calculation, the fruit of the girl's passionate outburst. Yet it had its sagacious side. For the villagers to see Sir Raymond Bradwell and Agnes Fenton together would go far to dispose of one part of the theory of the prosecution.

Agnes willingly consented.

## CHAPTER XII.

It has been already hinted that Sussex Row, East, was a very unfashionable and unpretending thoroughfare. It had, however, all the characteristics of the ordinary busy and commerce-devoted London street. Amongst these was a careless contempt for the fate of the unit. Not more indifferent were the dwellers in old Rome to the sorrows and perplexities of the outcast burrowers into her catacombs, than was the average sojourner in Sussex Row to the good or bad fortune of his neighbours. If one man closed his shop another opened it, and it mattered little to Smith whether the name of Brown, or Jones, or haply Robinson, were emblazoned over the opposite door. A stranger might settle here and no one recognise the fact, until his attempts to undersell his rivals brought down maledictions upon his head; and an old inhabitant might disappear and not be missed, until someone recollected that by this date a certain bill should have been honoured.

A very prominent and long-established denizen of the district did so vanish, and his vacant niche in the daily life was thus ignored.

On the very evening of Captain Middleford's visit to the usurer's home, Mr. Samuel Huke deserted his business without the least apparent preparation for such a step, and certainly without vouchsafing to anybody word of either warning or explanation.

Mr. Huke's household was but a small one. He had no wife, and the girl who bore his name and passed for his daughter—only he himself knew with how much right—was the only living being in all London upon whose affection he had the slightest claim. There were those in West End mansions who feared him, those in narrow City lanes who had occasion at intervals to use him, as either tool or staff—woe betide them if the latter!—those (two lads) in his own shop who hated him for the irksome toil he forced upon them, and the biting words with which he sometimes corrected their failings and mistakes. But love he won from none save Miriam.

Miriam's regard was unfeigned, and merely reciprocated the tenderness of the money-lender's own heart towards the lonely girl. Scarcely did reciprocate it, for upon Miriam the usurer had lavished all the wealth of an affection as pure and strong as it seemed incongruous with his ordinary habits and aims. As in the desert the wayfarer is now and then surprised and delighted by the unexpected discovery of some sweet, bubbling spring, so in the waste of Samuel Huke's life a hidden fountain of unselfish love existed. In what strange soil of romantic remorse this took its rise it is impossible to say. There are depths in the human soul into which no plummet can be dropped.

As the long hours of the early autumn night ebbed away, and the absent one did not return; as the next morning, afternoon, evening, passed in like manner, and still without sign, Miriam grew increasingly frightened and uneasy. She had heard enough of the altercation between Captain Middleford and her father to know that for once, at least, the advantage—that power which can override arguments—had not been on the usurer's side. She had understood that after the visitor's departure her father had been the victim of a wild outburst of vindictive passion. The shop-boys had told her of the oaths he had used; of the mysterious threats he had indulged in; of the manner in which he had walked about the shop and tossed bundles of goods hither and thither, as though in action only were there any relief for his overwrought feelings.

There might be exaggeration in the boys' narratives, but that they had some foundation in actual fact Miriam was compelled to believe. And then, too, she recollected, with fresh pangs of a nameless dread, the depression under which her father had laboured for weeks, if not for months, before Captain Middleford's call. To this depression she possessed no clue, but it had at intervals troubled her very seriously, and now she read in it the premonition of an impending crisis. Her father had been nervous, gloomy, and ill at ease, betraying his disquietude to the keen eyes of the maiden in a hundred unsuspected and involuntary ways. That the terrible, unknown something which had surely happened now was the climax of this secret trouble, she could scarcely doubt. A great terror was stealing over Miriam's soul.

How was it possible to arrive at the truth? Many wild and impracticable plans suggested themselves to the girl's harassed mind, and were one by one examined and thrown aside as useless. It was fortunate for her that in the course of this long day she had the shop to superintend and the enquiries of many callers to meet. In this way there was a subdivision of her care, and though it lost nothing of its intensity in that process, it was less overwhelming and less physically crushing.

A second night passed, and from the master of the house there arrived no token. Miriam had no longer the faintest hope that the mystery would be satisfactorily explained. She was certain that, if alive and well and in possession of his freedom, her father would have communicated with her before this. Whatever the urgency and the absorbing character of his business, he would have found space and opportunity to set at rest fears which he must have known would quickly leap into existence in the face of so inexplicable an absence, and with every hour would gain in force and bitterness. Had he even have told her that he was going, without saying whither, it would have been different. But she had received no intimation of any kind.

A hundred times since Samuel Huke had disappeared the girl had gone to the door or the window of the beetle-browed little shop, and had strained her weary eyes to catch, if it were possible, a glimpse of the returning wanderer. With a madly-beating heart she had watched the advent and irregular journey down the street of postman after postman, telegraph-messenger after telegraph-messenger, and always hitherto in vain. No scrap of news had come.

A tobacconist's and stationer's shop was immediately opposite No. 15, and here the contents bills of the *Telegraph*, *Chronicle*, and *Standard* were prominently displayed. This morning one special line of large black type fascinated the girl's gaze. It was, "Terrible Murder in Brakeshire." Brakeshire! That was a county of which she had frequently heard her father speak during these last months. She went closer and read the sub-line: "A Retired Army Captain Stabbed to Death." Completely magnetised by the horror of the theme, and by a subtle creeping dread which was chilling the warm young blood in her veins, Miriam next bought a paper and with trembling fingers unfolded it. There, arrayed in all the crimson

hues of the penny-a-liner's eloquence, and supplemented with as much romantic gossip as assiduous gleaning could collect, was the story of Captain Middleford's mysterious assassination. The reporter seemed to have little doubt as to the culprit, for, while guarding himself by the conventional phrases about "every man being held innocent until proved guilty," he contrived to convey clearly to his reader's mind the theory that the only possible miscreant involved in this case was Harry Bradwell. Of course, Agnes Fenton did not escape. Her name was dragged into the full glare of publicity, and a very distorted account was offered of her supposed influence on the criminal and his crime.

Miriam Huke recognised the name of the victim at once, and a second strange coincidence forced itself upon her attention. The Miss Fenton, whose lover was accused of this hideous deed, was doubtless the same kind-hearted young lady who had come to Miriam's rescue in a moment of grievous perplexity several months before. The episode of the aggrieved cabman and Miriam's own dilemma had never faded from the grateful maiden's memory. She had longed many a time to be able to repay Miss Fenton's generous and trustful assistance. Was this her chance?

But all the misery and despair of the position gradually swept in like a salt tide of destruction upon Miriam's heart. Her brain reeled as she interpreted these two mysteries each by the other, as she linked the money-lender's abrupt disappearance with the fact of this Brakeshire murder, and instinctively, rather than by any conscious mental effort, drew her awful deduction.

With a sudden determination she braced herself for a task from which hitherto she had shrunk. She went into her father's private room, and with two quick strokes of a hammer forced open his desk. Under any less appalling combination of circumstances she would never have dared this. Samuel Huke was notoriously a reserved man, and of the deeper intricacies of his business she knew next to nothing. Any inquisition on her part would surely have been baffled and resented. But she had excuse now.

Nervously, with hot, clammy hands, she turned over the papers which the lifted lid had revealed. There were many which, even to Miriam's anguish-quicken'd apprehensions, had no meaning. They concerned matters of which she was in total ignorance. Others belonged to the past, and were plainly of no moment. But at last she hit on a veritable clue. It was a small, dogs'-eared diary, with strange, ominous—to Miriam's mind, all but conclusive—entries in it. She perused its revelations with tearless eyes and pain-contracted brow.

"And this Miss Fenton—is suffering too. I will go to her," she murmured. "She shall know—all."

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 149.)

## Beneath the Firs.

Oh, meet me when the twilight breeze  
The leaves begins to stir,  
And when the ringdove coos to rest  
Her nestlings on the fir.  
Then softly chime the vesper bells,  
The time of rest is nigh;  
And filled with dew are all the flowers,  
And bright with stars the sky.  
Love lives not in the glare of day;  
It seeks the twilight shade,  
Where of no eyes except their own  
Need lovers be afraid.  
So, dearest, when the sun sinks low  
I'll wait and watch for thee,  
Beneath the firs in yonder grove,  
Till thou shalt come to me.  
Oh, be not shy, my gentle dove,  
To bring my fond heart joy;  
Although 'tis said men only woo  
When maidens fair are coy.  
But meet me with a blush and smile,  
A tender glance and sigh;  
And bid me then from that blest hour  
To love thee till I die!

## Her Childhood's Love.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

NELLY ERLE ought to have been a boy. The event of her birth had been looked forward to with joy and expectation as though an heir to the throne was about to appear. It was a distressing thing

that a girl could not inherit the baronetcy, and that it must go to a distant cousin, who was abhorred by both Sir Lionel Erle and his wife.

But a girl she was and a girl she would remain, in spite of the rage and fury on the part of her father, and the woful lamentations of her mother. Moreover, there seemed little prospect of the defect in her sex ever being remedied by a possible brother, since she had come as a kind of fairies' gift long after her parents had given up all hopes of ever being able to dispossess the hated cousin.

They were obliged to make the best of it, however, and after the first shock began to take some slight interest in this unfortunate baby. Sir Lionel insisted on the old family name being still retained—for what period of English history did not boast of a Lionel Erle? So, although no prefix of "Sir" could ever make the euphonious cognomen complete, she still was christened "Lionel," like her ancestors. But she could not be called by such a manly appellation, although it was her sole one; her nurses tried to say "Miss Lionel," and laughed; her father made an attempt at addressing her as "Lion," but the effect of calling such a fair, gentle girl by such a ferocious name was too ridiculous; so, at last, one and all fell into the habit of adopting the soft-sounding word her mother had discovered in the family name, and she was known as Nelly Erle.

Nelly at seventeen was a very charming girl, delicately formed, with high, arched insteps, and a wealth of wavy, yellow hair—hair the colour of ripe corn with the sun on it, and eyes of deep grey, with long, dark lashes. If she had disappointed her parents with regard to sex, they certainly could not complain that she had not inherited the family beauty; she was more lovely than any of those pictures of beautiful women which hung on the old, panelled walls.

In this portrait-gallery was a face that from her earliest years, when she trundled her hoop there on wet days, had held a strange fascination for Nelly. It was that of a youth about twenty; his features were not regularly handsome like the rest of his race, they might almost have been called plain, but he had wonderful, dreamy blue eyes that looked at you with such a pure, angelic gaze that you felt yourself in the presence of one above his kind—a saint, a poet.

Nelly could never look at this face without a feeling of wishing to be something better and wiser than only a pretty and rich girl, who had everything she wished for, and had never known what trouble meant.

There was no history written of this Sir Lionel Erle, only his name and age were inscribed on his picture, and the date, nearly three centuries ago. Had he died young, or lived and achieved great deeds in battle, or as a statesman? There were so many Sir Lionels in that long line that it became a hopeless puzzle to the girl when she tried solving the question by referring to the scantily recorded archives of the house of Erle; but the beautiful eyes still went on gazing at her year after year, and more and more fascinated her.

"If ever I marry anyone," she resolved, "he will have to be like that."

Now that she was seventeen, and the only child, she had been presented at Court, and made her *début* to the world in general, and great was the admiration her beauty excited, and many were the aspirants for her hand.

But Nelly shook her dainty head at them all. "She did not wish to marry for years to come," she said. "She was a child still, and would remain one as long as possible." In her secret heart she compared all her admirers with the picture that she loved, and felt that not one of them came near her ideal.

But her father, being a matter-of-fact person, getting old now, and not likely, in the natural course of things, to live many years longer, was anxious to have his daughter settled in life and married to some one of whom he himself approved. She would inherit all his money and estates, although she could not hold the title, and he knew that her romantic disposition might render her an easy prey to fortune-hunters.

"Nelly," he said seriously, one day, "it is my wish that you should accept Lord Rookborough."

"I am not in love with Lord Rookborough," she answered lightly.

"Oh, nonsense, Nelly; you talk romantically. Love is only for poets."

"Then I will only marry a poet."

"Now, my dear, I am really in earnest, so don't joke about it. It is my particular wish that you accept this offer. Lord Rookborough is young and handsome, and bears a good character."

"But I don't love him," again pleaded Nelly.

"Pooh, pooh, child! you will love him quite well enough. Why should you not love him, pray?"

Sir Lionel little knew what an unreasonable question he was



asking. Why should any woman prefer one man to another, or *vice versa*? It seems against all reason and common-sense sometimes, but it has been and will be the case as long as the world lasts.

"I do not know, papa," was all Nelly could say.

"Then you must let those who are older, and therefore wiser, than yourself, settle such a matter for you. I have no wish to be severe with you, Nelly, or to force you into any marriage against your will; but since you are quite unable to judge for yourself in the present instance what is really for your happiness, I must make use of my parental authority and insist upon your obedience. I shall accept Lord Rookborough's offer for you."

The girl opened wide her grey eyes in astonishment and alarm. She had never seen her father in earnest like this before. He generally gave in to her in everything, quite spoiling his only child.

"But, papa," she said beseechingly, "I cannot, cannot marry him!"

"Don't be foolish, Nelly; don't be foolish. I have made up my mind. There, go!"

## CHAPTER II.

THE girl who had lived for seventeen years, and never yet known trouble, was to experience now that which all are born to, and receive as they go through life in one form or another.

The old baronet having once resolved on this marriage for his daughter, and having strengthened his resolve by dwelling upon his authority as a parent, became immovable on the subject. Moreover, he soon prevailed upon Lady Erle to see the supreme advantages to be derived from such an arrangement, and how greatly their daughter would benefit.

"All nonsense about love," he would say to his wife; "the girl reads poetry, and fills her mind with trash."

So poor Nelly was quite deserted, having no one to side with her against this marriage which she detested, and which was daily coming nearer and nearer, for Lord Rookborough readily received Sir Lionel's acceptance of him for his daughter without insisting upon having the girl's consent from her own lips.

"She is young and very shy," said the father, in excuse for this answer by proxy; and the young lord, admiring, perhaps, the heiress's possessions equally with her pretty face, was quite satisfied that it should be settled in any way. He had departed to his Yorkshire moor to shoot grouse for a month, and would not return until the wedding morning, which was settled to take place after the month was over.

Time never lags when something disagreeable is in prospect, and the four weeks were going all too rapidly by.

There were but six days left now before the terrible morning that was to bind her young life to a man she felt she could never love, and Nelly was miserable. She had got into a habit of taking lonely wanderings about the park, and in these early September evenings, when her doom was drawing so near, she would try to drown thought and tire herself out by long and fast walking.

One evening she was leaning against an old tree far away on the confines of the property, too tired for the moment not to take a short rest, when along the little, seldom-used path that faced her came a young man, walking with a light, swinging step towards her. He perceived the girl resting against the tree, and stopped, raising his hat.

"I am half afraid I am trespassing."

Nelly looked at him, and her face suddenly blanched.

"You are my picture," she said. "How did you come here?"

"It was because I am too curious," he said, and his voice was sweet and musical. "I wanted just once to see the Erles' ancient home. I am Lionel Erle!"

Nelly was more amazed than ever. The abhorred cousin who would inherit the title had never been mentioned to her, and she herself, in her young carelessness, had never considered the necessity for such a being.

"It is I that am Lionel Erle," she said.

"Then you are my cousin; I am so glad to see you."

"It is all like a dream," said Nelly.

"Why?" asked Lionel.

She looked up into the pure blue eyes of the picture's likeness with their dreamy sweetness, and then grew a little confused, and blushed, and said nothing.

"I have heard of you, of course," he said, "but I dare say you have never heard of me. Your father and mine have not met for many years."

"No; I did not know I had any cousins," said Nelly, regaining her voice. "I did not even think that the picture could possibly be alive, and now it is too late."

"What is too late?" he asked, mystified.

"Never mind," she said, recovering herself with an effort. "I was thinking out loud."

"I heard the news at the inn in the village that my cousin was going to be married in a few days."

Nelly shuddered visibly.

"Don't talk about that. Tell me about your poetry."

"How ever did you guess I wrote poetry?" asked Lionel, blushing.

"I always was sure of it," she answered, growing vague again at the thought of the picture.

"Then, you wonderful cousin, I must confess that sometimes I do write down things that come into my head; they come, and I can't help writing them. I never show them to any one. But I have not much time for poetry."

"What do you do, then?"

"It is very dry work; I am a clerk in a bank at Truro, where we live. This is my yearly holiday, when I always take a walking-tour somewhere, and this time I came into your country, as I had never seen this part before."

"You must come and see papa, and the house," said Nelly.

"I think I would rather not," replied Lionel, smiling.

"Why?"

"Perhaps I am a little proud. I should not like it. And I must start from here early to-morrow."

A feeling of utter hopelessness came over Nelly.

"Then I shall not see you again!" she said mournfully.

Lionel held out his hand.

"Good-bye," he said, clasping her little hand, while he looked down at her with the eyes that had haunted her girlhood.

And so these two met and parted.

## CHAPTER III.

THE wedding festivities were such as befitted Sir Lionel Erle's only child and the lord of Rookborough. The social lie of such a marriage, where the bride felt no love, and the bridegroom a more sincere regard for his wife's possessions than for herself, went to swell the measure of other social lies, and no one was horrified by it, save our poor little heroine, and she wished she had never been born.

It had been no use resisting her fate. Since the night when she met the picture of her dreams in actual human form, although hating the chain that was to bind her more than ever, she felt that she must submit to it. Her cousin was but a poor clerk, and even if he should ever return the romantic affection which she felt for him, and which was a part of her life, what possible prospect was there that they could ever be more than the strangers to each other that they had been all the years before. She loved the picture, and had discovered that the picture lived; that was all. It made no difference to the carrying out of her father's will.

So the "happy pair" went off amid the usual shower of rice and alippers to spend their dismal honeymoon, and learn day by day the bitterness of being tied to one another.

Years went slowly by to Nelly, Lady Rookborough. There were no children to cheer her dreary home, and her husband was with her but seldom. He had become devoted to horse-racing and such like sports, and passed his time among those whose tastes suited his own, rather than with the gentle, refined woman, the very look of whose pure eyes was a reproach to him.

It was the tenth anniversary of their marriage, when news reached her that her husband was dead. He had been killed by the accidental discharge of a gun at Hurlingham.

How could she pretend grief at such an announcement? Her one feeling was that she had at last regained her freedom, and right glad was she to deliver up the burden of Rookborough Hall to the next heir, and go once more to live with her widowed mother in the old home of her ancestors.

Settled down there again as in her girlhood, free to roam as she would through the familiar rooms and long picture-gallery, Nelly almost forgot the sad years of her marriage, and the thoughts and dreams of her youth came back to her. She felt again the happy, romantic girl of sixteen, as she gazed up at the pictured face that from her childhood she had loved and worshipped.

One day, as she was meditating on that human likeness of this portrait and her once strange meeting with him, a thought suddenly flashed into her mind, and she hurried off to Lady Erle's room.

"Mother, my cousin is Sir Lionel Erle now. Why does he not live here? It should be his now."

"Your poor father settled it, upon you, Nelly," answered her mother. "It was not entailed, fortunately."

Nelly opened her eyes wonderingly. Her nature was romantic rather than practical; she understood little about the laws of property, and since her father's death, two years ago, had never once given a thought about what the heir ought to inherit. Her cousin was always more of a beautiful dream to her than a reality, the human form of her pictured hero rather than her father's successor to the title. But now that the fact of his having inherited

the title became clear to her, that the ancient estate should go with it she felt to be only right and justice.

"It is not right that I should have all, and he nothing but the bare title," she said to her mother. "He is Sir Lionel Erle, remember, and should have the inheritance of his ancestors."

"You are as fanciful and romantic as when you were a girl, Nelly. It is fortunate that your father has caused the whole property to be strictly entailed on you and your heirs alone. The will was made at the time of your marriage."

"Then since I have no children, my cousin is my next heir. You and I will go and live in the Dower House, mother, and I shall have Erle Court given over to him at once."

She spoke with so much determination, that Lady Erle had no argument left to bring forward. Nelly wrote to her cousin by that night's post. The answer that came back was in this wise:

"Do not think that I do not appreciate your wonderful goodness, but I cannot accept your offer. As I told you the night we met long ago, I am proud. I make enough money by my books now to supply my wants, which are simple. So I am not poor."

After this decided refusal, Nelly grew very preoccupied and unhappy.

"If I were a man and he a woman it would be easy to settle it," she would say to herself. "I would ask her to marry me; but a woman must be dumb, or the world is horrified."

"Mother, ask my cousin to come here and visit us; he will do that, at all events," she said at last.

So Lady Erle gave the invitation, and he came.

Nelly received him warmly, but as she looked up at his face the blush of her first meeting with him suffused her cheek again; he was older, graver, but the same clear eyes with their dreamy sweetness gazed into hers and reawakened the one passion of her life.

That night she knew she loved him, and therefore she could never let him find it out, unless—Ah, if he could but love her!

But whether he loved her or not, no sign of more than the merest cousinly affection was manifest in Lionel during his short visit to Erle Court. He was charmed with the beautiful home of his ancestors, and his poetic nature revelled in the ancient rooms and all the thoughts they called forth; but Nelly steadily avoided pointing out to him her favourite picture; a strange shyness came over her when she thought of the fascination it had always possessed for her, and how like Lionel was to it. Oh, how like he was!

#### CHAPTER IV.

NELLY was very ill. For weeks she had been gradually wasting away. There was no manifest disease, and the doctors were baffled, but for all that she seemed to be sinking rapidly out of life.

"I am glad I am going to die," she said to her mother, who sat by her sofa; "it will set things right, and Lionel will have his lawful estate."

Lady Erle's tears fell fast, her conscience was reproving her now for the years of enmity against the innocent heir. Must his rights be only purchased by the death of her only child?

"Mother," said the invalid, after she had been lying quiet with closed eyes, "just before I die, when there is no possible hope of my living, I want you to send for Lionel that I may bid him good-bye. Promise me."

She promised amid her fast-falling tears.

A week afterwards Sir Lionel Erle received a telegram, and in a few hours he was standing by his dying cousin's bed.

Lady Erle left them; she knew that the parting was a sacred one.

Nelly held out her thin white hand.

"Lionel," she said, "now that I am going to die I want to tell you something which I never should have told you if I had lived."

The young man flung himself on his knees beside the bed, laid his head down upon his folded arms, and sobbed like a child.

"Nelly, live! I love you so!"

She touched his bowed head, but she could not speak.

He seized the fragile hand, and covered it with kisses and tears.

"Oh, my darling, live! For my sake live! I have so loved you all these years!"

Nelly lay like one in a heavenly trance. Had love come instead of death to claim her? Presently she said in a faint voice:

"I never imagined that you loved me."

"Pride has been my curse," he groaned; "if you had only been poor, long ago I would have poured out all my heart to you; but you were rich and I poor, and I knew your generous nature would have accepted me to make me rich."

"Not for that, but because I love you, Lionel—because I have always loved you."

He raised his bowed head and looked into her face.

"Nelly, if I had only known!" he cried despairingly.

"I shall live now," she whispered, and her eyes closed in gentle sleep.

## The Editor's Note Book.

NOTHING could better illustrate the absurdity of attempting to deal piecemeal with the question of the government of London than the fate of Sir Thomas Chambers's Metropolis Water Bill, which was supported by a strange alliance of the Corporation and the Government, and was defeated by a considerable majority. Unfortunately, though it is perfectly logical to say that the question ought to be dealt with as a whole, it would seem, if we are to wait for that, we shall have to wait a very long time indeed.

THERE seems to be growing up an unpleasant tendency to introduce personal matters into the proceedings of the House of Commons, which is certainly not calculated to increase the respect with which the House is regarded by the country. Thus Mr. Coope's vote on the Bill was challenged by Mr. Firth, on the ground of his being a director of a water company. Fortunately the House declined to accept the principle involved, which, if carried to its logical conclusion, would often prevent half the members of the House from taking any part in its proceedings.

MORE fortunate than the Water Bill, the Bill for the railway under Hyde Park has been read a second time, notwithstanding that it has become obvious that the promises of its promoters are not implicitly to be relied on. For instance, we were first of all assured that there was to be no interference at all with the surface of the park, whereas it now appears that, for a certain time during its construction, the works will be carried on in an open trench. It does not require any very audacious prophet to predict that, very soon after the completion of this railway, a row of blow-holes will be added to the other attractions of Hyde Park.

MR. MUNDELLA, in answer to a deputation, has declared his belief in the London School Board as one of the most perfect institutions of the country, has pooh-poohed the idea that its expenditure is in any way extravagant, and has insisted that the increase in the rate is due to the fact that a larger number of children are being educated. If this were really so, there would perhaps not be much cause of complaint, but, as I have frequently pointed out, not only does the total amount increase, but the expenditure for each child grows in a perfectly inexplicable manner. If Mr. Mundella could furnish the solution to this problem he would be doing good service.

QUESTIONED subsequently in the House of Commons as to the statement made by Dr. Alexander, of Bradford, that he had seen within the last three weeks three cases of brain disease brought on by overwork in school, the Right Honourable gentleman said he did not know anything about that, but that, according to the Registrar General's returns, there had been no increase in the prevalence of brain disease in Bradford during the last fifteen years. Mr. Mundella is, undoubtedly, an able and zealous official, but such an answer as this is a deal too much after the manner of the Tite Barnacles all the same.

SIR SPENCER WELLS has written a very interesting letter to the *Times* on the subject of cremation in Italy, and it has been decided by Sir James Stephen that it is as lawful to burn bodies as to bury them, provided that the process is carried out in a proper and becoming manner. Probably the result of this will be a slight increase in the number of cases of cremation; but the day is far distant when this mode of disposing of dead bodies will be general. No doubt it is the cheapest, most effectual, and, above all, the healthiest; but in matters of this kind there is a sentiment, founded on centuries of custom, which is almost too strong to be broken down by reason.

It may be admitted that an executioner is a necessary officer of the State, and it is quite certain that if he is to exist at all, care should be taken that his terrible work shall be done not only effectually, but decently and even reverently. Effectual, the present hangman may be; decent, his conduct certainly is not. There seems considerable confusion as to who is actually responsible for his appointment, but no reader of the newspapers can fail to agree with me that whoever has the power of restoring Mr. Binns to private life should exercise it without delay.

THE late directors of the London Financial Association have been relieved by Vice-Chancellor Bacon from the responsibilities which it was sought to impose upon them in consequence of their connection with the Alexandra Park Company. As it is, the impulsive resolution to rebuild the Palace, which was come to before the ruins of the first building were cool, must have been long ago heartily regretted by everybody concerned.

IN the City of London Court last week a gentleman sued a theatrical agent to recover the price of a box at Drury Lane Theatre, which the defendant had let to two different parties. There being no defence, Mr. Commissioner Kerr gave judgment in favour of the plaintiff, and so far the case presented no feature of special public interest.

AFTER the case was decided, however, the solicitor for the plaintiff made an application that the defendant should be ordered to pay the costs of solicitor and one witness. The learned judge, however, declined to allow the solicitor's costs, remarking, with a relevancy which is not apparent on the surface, that, if he were to admit such a principle, he might as well order the defendant to pay the National Debt or the School Board rate.

MR. COMMISSIONER KERR's knowledge of law is no doubt greater than his sense of humour, and it may be assumed that his judgment was technically correct, but if it be law it is certainly neither equity nor justice. It is almost impossible for persons ignorant of the technicalities of the Courts to carry through any case without the assistance of a solicitor, and the refusal of the reasonable costs of such an officer amounts to something very like the refusal of justice altogether. It is not likely that people will go to law to redress small wrongs, if they know that their necessary costs will swallow up at least the amount of the sum in dispute. Thus does the law fall into disrepute, and thus is encouragement given to all sorts of chicanery and imposition.

A STRONG agitation has been set on foot for the restoration of Baker Pasha to the rank in the British Army which he unhappily forfeited some years ago. It is understood that the military authorities are in favour of the step, and indeed Colonel Baker's punishment has been terribly severe. The Queen, however, is said to be inexorable, and there seems little chance of any indulgence being shown.

A LETTER was written to the papers the other day giving a circumstantial account of the shooting of an otter in the Thames above Maidenhead. The incident is in itself of no particular importance, but the letter is worthy of note as illustrating the slipshod manner in which information is nowadays given to the public. It was stated that a dog-otter had been shot under the Cliefden Woods by Mr. Lambert of Cookham, whereas it turned out that the animal was of the other sex, and that Mr. Lambert had no connection whatever with it, except that of having bought its skin. "Cliefden," also, ought to be Cliveden—at least the Duke of Westminster spells it so, and he may be supposed to know as much about his own house as anybody else.

It will be good news for the many lovers of the Upper Thames that Mr. Story-Maskelyne has obtained a Select Committee, to enquire into the operation of the Acts for the Preservation of the Thames and the steps which are necessary to secure the enjoyment of the river as a place of recreation.

It is indeed high time that somebody should interfere. The Thames Conservators, on whom I believe the duties pointed out in Mr. Story-Maskelyne's resolution are at present vested, are a body practically without funds, and consequently of limited usefulness. Meanwhile the land and water grabbers flourish exceedingly, annexing here a backwater, there an eyot, and there again even a bit of the towing-path, and setting up preposterous and imaginary fishing rights in all directions, knowing full well that it is very long odds that no private individual will go to the trouble and expense of vindicating the public rights.

It must never be forgotten, at the same time, that there is another side to the shield, and that riparian owners have a great deal to complain of. On the whole, indeed, Sir Gilbert Clayton East did not unfairly summarise their grievances in the letter to the *Times*. The behaviour of far too many of the pleasure-seekers on the upper reaches of the river is, in all respects, disgraceful, and the committee will do well, whilst safeguarding the rights of the public, not to forget the rights of private individuals and the imperative requirements of public decency.

THE very long down-hill lane along which English professional rowing has for so many years had to travel, seems to be as far off a turning as ever. It is not much more than twenty years ago that the idea of a Britisher being beaten in a sculling race by a foreigner would have been almost derided, and now we find that a Canadian sculler, who is notoriously inferior to Hanlan, can give our best man a start of ten seconds over the Thames Championship Course.

To account for the result it is not necessary to assume that Englishmen have deteriorated in physique. There is not so much encouragement for professional athletes as there was in days of yore, and men do not consequently go into the business as seriously as was once the case. The reasons why the supporters of professional oarsmen have dropped away are, in the main, the same which have disgusted amateurs with most professional sports. Honesty is the best policy in these matters after all.

BY the time these lines are before my readers, the celebrated Mr. Weston will, in all probability, have accomplished his task of walking five thousand miles, at the rate of fifty miles a day, without the assistance of alcoholic stimulants, and the Blue Ribbon people will no doubt be jubilant. I cannot, however, see that the feat proves very much. Weston is a man of remarkable endurance, as he has often proved even when he was in the habit of taking a "modest quencher," and it is

quite probable that he might have accomplished his recent journey quite as well under one set of conditions as the other. Temperance, it may be admitted, is absolutely essential to the accomplishment of any athletic feat, but it is by no means proved that total abstinence is equally necessary.

A VERY hard worker in many fields of literature, and one of the most amiable and kind-hearted of men, was Mr. William Blanchard Jerrold. The eldest son of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold, he succeeded his father as editor of *Lloyd's Weekly News*, and held the post for twenty-six years. Few English journalists ever had a more intimate acquaintance with French character and Parisian life than Mr. Jerrold, who will, perhaps, be best known in the future by the work in which he collaborated with M. Gustave Doré. Personally I have to deplore the loss of one of the earliest of my friends.

C. D.

## The Rival Painters.

EARLY on a fine summer morning, an old man was walking on the road between Brussels and Namur. He expected a friend to arrive by the diligence, and set out some time before it was due, to meet it on the road. Having a good deal of time to spare, he amused himself by watching any object of interest that caught his eye; and at length stopped to inspect the operations of a painter, who, mounted on a ladder placed against the front wall of a wayside inn, was busily employed in depicting a sign suitable to its name, "The Rising Sun."

"Here," said the traveller to himself, "is an honest dauber, who knows as much of perspective as a cart-horse, and who, I'll warrant, fancies himself a Rubens. How he brushes in that ultramarine sky!"

The critic then commenced walking backwards and forwards before the inn, thinking that he might as well loiter there for the diligence as walk on farther. The painter, meantime, continued to lay on fresh coats of the brightest blue, which appeared greatly to aggravate the old gentleman. At length, when the sign-painter took another brush full of blue paint to plaster on, the spectator could endure it no longer, and exclaimed severely:

"Too much blue!"

The honest painter looked down from his perch, and said, in that tone of forced calmness which an angry man sometimes assumes:

"Monsieur does not perceive that I am painting a sky?"

"Oh yes, I see very well you are trying to paint a sky, but I tell you again there is too much blue!"

"Did you ever see skies painted without blue, Master Amateur?"

"I am not an amateur. I merely tell you, in passing—I make the casual remark—that there is too much blue; but do as you like. Put more blue, if you don't think you have trowelled on enough already."

"But I tell you that I want to represent a clear blue sky at sunrise."

"And I tell you that no man in his senses would make a sky at sunrise blue."

"By St. Gudula, this is too much!" exclaimed the painter, coming down his ladder, and at no pains to conceal his anger. "I should like to see how you would paint skies without blue!"

"I don't pretend to much skill in sky-painting, but if I were to make a trial I wouldn't put in too much blue."

"And what would it look like if you didn't?"

"Like nature, I hope, and not like yours, which might be taken for a bed of gentianella, or a sample of English cloth, or anything you please—except a sky. I beg to assure you for the tenth time, there is too much blue!"

"I tell you what, old gentleman," cried the insulted artist, crossing his mahl-stick over his shoulder, and looking very fierce: "I dare say you are a very worthy fellow when you are at home, but you should not be let out alone."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Because you must be crazy to play the critic after this fashion: Too much blue, indeed! What I, the pupil of Ruysdael, the third cousin of Gerard Douw's great-grandson, not know how to colour a sky! Know that my reputation has been long established. I have a Red Horse at Malines, a Green Bear at Namur, and a Charlemagne at Aix-la-Chapelle, before which every passenger stops fixed in admiration!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the critic as he snatched the palette from the painter's hand. "You deserve to have your own portrait painted to serve for the sign of the Flemish Aas!"

In his indignation he mounted the ladder with the activity of a boy, and began with the palm of his hand to efface the *chef d'œuvre* of Gerard Douw's great-grandson's third cousin.

"Stop! you old charlatan!" shouted the latter; "you are ruining my sign! Why, it's worth thirty-five francs. And then my reputation—lost, gone for ever!"

He shook the ladder violently to make his persecutor descend. But the latter, undisturbed either by that or by the presence of a crowd of villagers attracted by the dispute, continued mercilessly to blot out the glowing landscape. Then, using merely the point of his

finger and the handle of a brush, he sketched, in masterly outline, three Flemish boors, with beer-glasses in their hands, drinking to the rising sun, which appeared above the horizon, dispersing the gloom of a greyish morning sky. One of the faces presented a strong and laughable caricature of the supplanted sign-painter. The spectators at first were greatly disposed to take part with their country man against the intrusive stranger. What right had he to interfere? There was no end to the impudence of these foreigners.

As, however, they watched and grumbled, the grumbling gradually ceased and was turned into a murmur of approbation when the design became apparent. The owner of the inn was the first to call "Bravo!" and even Gerard Douw's cousin nine times removed, felt his fury calming down into admiration.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "you belong to the craft, honest man, and there's no use in denying it. Yes, yes," he continued, laughing, as he turned to his neighbours, "this is a French sign-painter, who wishes to have a jest with me. Well, I must frankly say he knows what he is about."

The old Frenchman was about to descend from the ladder, when a gentleman riding a beautiful English horse made his way through the crowd.

"The painting is mine!" he exclaimed in French, but with a foreign accent. "I will give a hundred guineas for it."

"Another madman!" exclaimed the native genius. "Hang me! but all these foreigners are mad!"

"What do you mean, monsieur?" said the innkeeper, greatly interested.

"What I say. I will give one hundred guineas for that painting," answered the young Englishman, getting off his horse.

"That picture is not to be sold," said the sign-painter, with an air of as much pride as if it had been his own work.

"No," quoth mine host, "for it is already sold, and even partly paid for in advance. However, if monsieur wishes to come to an arrangement about it, it is with me that he must treat."

"Not at all, not at all," rejoined the Flemish painter of signs; "it belongs to me. My fellow artist here gave me a little help out of friendship; but the picture is my lawful property, and I am at liberty to sell it to anyone I choose."

"What roguery!" exclaimed the innkeeper. "My Rising Sun is my property; fastened on the wall of my house. How can it belong to any one else? It's painted on my board, and no one but myself has the smallest right to it."

"I'll summon you before the magistrate," cried he who had not painted the sign.

"I'll prosecute you for breach of covenant," retorted the innkeeper, who had half paid for it.

"One moment!" interposed another energetic voice—that of the interloper. "It seems to me that I ought to have some little vote in this matter."

"Quite right, brother," answered the painter. "Instead of disputing on the public road, let us go into Master Martzen's house, and arrange the matter amicably over a bottle of beer."

To this all parties agreed, but in nothing else; for within doors the dispute was carried on with deafening noise, and remarkable energy. The Flemings contended for the possession of the painting, and the Englishman repeated his offer to cover it with gold.

"But suppose that I did choose to have it sold?" said its real author.

"Oh, my dear monsieur!" said the innkeeper, "I am certain you would not wish to deprive an honest, poor man, who can scarcely make both ends meet, of this windfall. Why, it would just enable me to lay in a good stock of wine and beer."

"Don't believe him, brother," cried the painter; "he is an old miser. I am the father of a family; and, being a painter yourself, you ought to help a brother artist, and give me the preference. Besides, I am ready to share the money with you."

"He!" replied Master Martzen. "Why, he's an old spendthrift who has no money left to give his daughter as a marriage portion because he spends all he gets on himself."

"No such thing. My Susette is betrothed to an honest French cabinet-maker, who, poor as she is, will marry her in September."

"A daughter to portion!" exclaimed the strange artist; "that quite alters the case. I am content that the picture should be sold for a marriage portion. I leave it to our English friend's generosity to fix the sum."

"I have already offered," replied the young Englishman, "one hundred guineas for the sketch just as it is; but I will gladly give twice that amount if the painter will consent to sign two words at its corner."

"What words?" exclaimed all at once.

The Englishman replied, "Pierre David."

The whole party were quiet enough now, for they were stricken dumb with astonishment. The sign-painter held his breath, glared with his eyes, and, frantically clasping his hands together, fell down on his knees before the great French painter.

"Forgive me!" he exclaimed, "forgive me for my audacious ignorance."

David laughed heartily, and, taking his hand, shook it with fraternal cordiality.

By this time the news of the discovery had spread; the tavern was crowded with persons anxious to drink the health of this celebrated

visitor; and the good old man, standing in the middle of the room, pledged them heartily. In the midst of the merry-making, the sign-painter's daughter, the pretty Susette, threw her arms round her benefactor's neck, and her intended husband raised quite a cloud of sawdust out of his jacket from the violence with which he shook the great Frenchman's hand.

At that moment the friends whom he was expecting arrived. They were M. Lessec, a theatrical manager, and the renowned Talma.

## Spring Cleaning.

### PART II. DRESSES.

DOMESTIC servants who demand and receive high wages are certain to require liberal supplies of pots, pans, brushes, cloths, cleaning stuffs, etc., and mistresses, not daring to deny the wants of so pretentious an officer, generally purchase without a murmur. The cheap domestic, on the contrary, is expected to work wonders little short of miraculous, with the most limited supplies of essentials. To commence a spring cleaning of dresses, curtains, furniture-covers, table-covers, etc., without the proper requisites is worse than folly, it is downright waste. The success of some processes depends altogether on rapidity, and any makeshift tends to destruction of colours, or the ruin of textures and patterns.

FEILD'S oil soap is one of the most valuable kinds, as it has no unpleasant smell, and does not congeal after being dissolved. Mottled soap is economical, but must be used for warm processes only, as it stiffens when the water cools. Ultra-economists think that in soft-soap there is great saving, but this is a delusion. Being made from fish-oil it is not fit for delicate fabrics, especially for articles of clothing, on account of the smell which remains. Camphine is a variety of spirits of turpentine, and is obtained from the *Pinus Australis* of the Southern States of America. It is sold in sealed tin boxes or cans, containing one quart, two quarts, or one gallon each, and can be obtained at almost any oil-shop or drysalter's. When it is too dirty for further use, it is taken back to the shop at which it was purchased, and exchanged for clean; one pint of clean camphine being given for each quart of that which is dirty. Benzine is of great value where there are grease-spots upon woollen materials, but if the soil has in it no grease, the benzine fails to do any good, owing to the oil which is in itself, and the same remark applies to naphtha. To remove the oil, place a quantity of benzine in a bottle and drop into it a little oxalic acid; this will carry with it to the bottom of the glass all the oil remaining in the benzine, leaving the greater part perfectly pure. After standing for an hour or two, carefully pour off the clear fluid on the top into another bottle, and it will be ready for use. Common sour, which is sometimes required, is merely clean water with sufficient oil of vitriol to make it taste sharp. The vitriol is to be bought at a drysalter's, not at a chemist's. The best starch for cotton dresses, etc., is Colman's. Furniture-covers are calendered with starch and beeswax; but there is no economy in attempting this process at home, as the articles must eventually be sent to the dyer's to be pressed and finished.

SEVERAL large tubs, or earthenware pans, are essential, as, if the articles were wet, and kept waiting until a pan had been emptied and refilled, nothing but failure would be the result. A good supply of dry, coarse, cotton or linen cloths, some coarse flannels, several pieces of coarse sponge, two or three hard scrubbing or scouring brushes, two or three silk scouring-brushes, of different degrees of hardness, one or two clean sheets, and abundance of clean water, hot and cold. A cleaning-board is five or six feet long, and about three feet wide, must be free from splits or knots, and planed smooth. One side of this board is covered with green or drab baize or flannel, stretched very tight and smooth, and fastened to the edges by tinned tacks. A second board for finishing silks is requisite, but need not be so broad, as silk is rarely wider than twenty-seven inches. Cover the board loosely, and then stuff it with wool until it is raised in the centre and sloped off at each side. The professional cleaner has a great advantage in the possession of a stretching-frame, in which silks and cloth are tacked to dry, and under which a pan of charcoal can be run backwards and forwards to dry the silk. In old-fashioned houses there may still be hunted up old quilting frames, which answer admirably for this purpose, and in very new-fashioned ones, large embroidery-frames are to be found. Chair-covers, and embroidery of all kinds, should be strained to dry in these work frames.

WHEN the dyer is receiving instructions from his customer who consigns some articles to his care, he asks the question whether English or French cleaning is desired. To the uninitiated the difference seems to be chiefly one of money, the latter costing about thirty per cent. more than the former. The price of the camphine which is used for French cleaning adds to the expense, but much more care is required and greater skill in finishing. English cleaning may be either thorough cleaning, or dry cleaning, the difference being merely in the way of

carrying out the work. Thorough cleaning is what our grandmothers called scouring, plunging the article into a tub of soap-and-water, washing it well, and rinsing in clean water. This is possible with breadths of cashmere, serge, tweeds, children's woollen clothes not too elaborately made, nor trimmed with perishable ornaments. Shop windows present to us, very frequently, made-up dresses to which a card is affixed, "Cleaned without being taken to pieces." These have been treated with dry cleaning, as it is called, but the successful result is in many cases matter of opinion. Cheap white satin dresses, light-coloured brocades, cream nun's-veiling, and *écru* lace, are exhibited usually with considerable pride. If the materials have originally been first-class, dry cleaning is successful, but if cheap and fourth rate, are proportionately nasty. The art of successful dry cleaning is to do it rapidly, rubbing as dry as cloths can make the article, and allowing no wringing or crumpling. French cleaning is done with camphine, and is applied to costly and dainty materials.

To clean silk or satin dresses it is well to take out the sleeves, and separate the skirt from the bodice or waistband. Have two earthenware vessels which will hold about two gallons each, and put half a gallon of camphine into each. Soak the bodice in the first pan, and when wetted, lay it on the cleaning-board (as described) wrong side up. With one of the scouring-brushes clean the lining first, then turn and clean the outside as fast as possible. Plunge it again into the first pan. Take it up and allow some liquor to run off. Plunge it in the second, and drain for a few minutes over the latter. Turn the plain side of the cleaning-board, spread a clean sheet out on it, take the bodice, which has well dripped, and lay it down smoothly, allowing no crumpling; rub well with clean India-cotton cloth until quite dry. Treat the sleeves, then the skirt, as far as possible in the same way. Hang up in a hot room for twelve hours to take off the smell of the camphine.

SILK dresses are more effectively cleaned when the breadths are separated. In such a case the cost of camphine may be saved by substituting soap, but several pans of cold water must be ready at hand, as not more than five minutes should be spent over each breadth from first to last, or it will have an unmistakably washed, instead of a cleaned appearance. Never brush silks or satins across the width, as doing so causes them to fray out, and spoils them for re-making.

DISSOLVE two pounds of soap in two gallons of boiling water, use when cold. Have four pans of cold water, with four pails of water in each. Into one of these put a small quantity of the dissolved soap, making a weak liquor. Into another, dissolve a quarter of a pound of tartaric acid for spiriting. The other two pans are for rinsing. Spread a width wrong side upwards upon a scouring-board, being careful that the latter is quite clean. Pour over it sufficient of the dissolved soap to wet it thoroughly, and well brush it, lengthwise, with a soft brush; then turn and treat the right side in the same way. Pass the silk through the thin soap liquor; then in one, and then in the other of two rinsing-pans. Handle it well in the spiriting-pan and take it up to drain. Have the board and clean sheet as in the camphine method, and dry with clean cloths. After all the breadths are done, not more than five minutes being spent over each, they must be finished in a frame, or on the stuffed board, one by one.

MOST silks require a little stiffening, which is the last process. For black silks and satins, a size made of old black kid gloves is excellent, and as these are the most useless of all a lady's possessions when no longer fit to wear, it is comforting to be able to turn them to account. The gloves are to be cut up into small pieces, put into a vessel of cold water, a stone jar or porcelain-lined saucepan, and very slowly simmered for an hour or two, or until the quantity of water is reduced to one half; strain through fine muslin, and use warm, but not hot. Another size, that usually applied by dyers, is made of parchment shavings or cuttings, washed, cleaned, and simmered slowly like the gloves, one pound of parchment to four quarts of water, boiled to two quarts, and strained. One teaspoonful of this to a quart of water is enough for silk finishing. Take the board with the stuffed covering, lay on it one of the cleaned breadths, flat, no wrinkles. Sponge it carefully and evenly with the size and water. Pin down the two ends of the silk on the board, then the two sides. Two people are required for this process, as the silk must be well stretched. Pins about an inch apart. Rub once more with the damp sponge, and dry before a brisk fire.

TEXTILES which are a mixture of silk and wool may be strained on the board, but no size is needed. Cotton materials to be ironed on the wrong side; a box-iron, being the cleanest, is recommended. Satin sometimes requires to be ironed on the wrong side after being taken off the frame, to give it brightness.

NUN'S-VEILING is a nice material when new, especially in cream colour, and in pale blue or pink. If cleaned in the ordinary manner, the bridesmaid's pretty dress, or little Cinderella's party-going frock, is not to be recognised. Even the best dry cleaning is but half successful. But if nun's-veiling must be cleaned, there is more hope in rice-water than in soap, or even in camphine. Boil one pound of the best

rice in one gallon of water for three hours, and when done pour off into a basin a sufficient quantity to starch the dress. When the remainder is partially cold, well wash the dress with it, without using any soap, and rinse in cold water, one pan full after another. Wring the dress well, and starch it with the rice-water put by for the purpose, and dry quickly before the fire. When sufficiently dry, iron with a cool iron, as the starch in the material is likely to scorch; if any parts are too dry to iron, use a damp cloth to touch the places. The whole washing process of nun's cloth must be done quickly, and the articles must not, even for an hour, be left damp, or they will spoil. Of all the dress materials at present worn, this is the most difficult to clean properly and restore to a decent condition.

## Business Morality.

SUPPOSE three sailors cast away on an uninhabited island and obliged to maintain themselves there by their own labour for a series of years. Suppose two of them separate to farm different pieces of land at some distance from each other along the coast; each estate furnishing a distinct kind of produce, and each more or less in need of the material raised by the other. Suppose that the third man, in order to save the time of all three, undertakes simply to superintend the transference of commodities from one farm to the other, on condition of receiving some sufficiently remunerative share of every parcel of goods conveyed, or of some other parcel received in exchange for it. If this carrier or messenger always brings to each estate from the other what is chiefly wanted, at the right time, the operations of the two farmers will go on prosperously, and the largest possible result in produce or wealth will be attained by the little community. But suppose no intercourse between the landowners is possible, except through the travelling agent; and that, after a time, this agent, watching the course of each man's agriculture, keeps back the articles with which he has been entrusted until there comes a period of extreme necessity for them, on one side or other, and then exacts in exchange for them all that the distressed farmer can spare of other kinds of produce; it is easy to see that by ingeniously watching his opportunities, he might possess himself regularly of the greater part of the superfluous produce of the two estates, and at last, in some year of severest trial or scarcity, purchase both for himself, and maintain the former proprietors thenceforward as his labourers or servants. This would be a case of commercial wealth acquired on the exactest principles of modern political economy.—*Ruskin*.

## A Chat About Sparrows.

FREDERICK THE GREAT, King of Prussia, had a very decided fondness for cherries. He is not the only conqueror who has shown a predilection for the good things of this world, but for a long time it seemed as if the fates had in council determined that the supply of his favourite fruit from his own gardens should be but limited; and with this object in view, the weird sisters sent into the royal demesnes an innumerable multitude of sparrows, each of whom had as decided a liking for the luscious fruit as the conqueror of Rosbach himself. If the sparrows had been economical in the gratification of their desires all might have been well, but the shameless rogues would only just bite the tit-bit out of each individual cherry, so that the remainder was entirely wasted. Vainly did his majesty swear at the sparrows in right royal style, as his majesty knew how to do on occasion; but the delinquents merely answered coolly with "Cheek! cheek!" and pecked out the luscious sunny side of the very cherries which royalty had marked for its own. There was no help for it, therefore, and an imperious mandate was issued that the sparrows must die. Accordingly the feathered thieves were forthwith shot down with as little compunction as if they had been deserters or runagates from the army in the field. After a few of these murderous fusillades had been held, the sparrows seem to have learned that discretion is the better part of valour, and they therefore merely peeped in over the walls of the royal gardens to cry "Cheek! cheek!" and then disappeared. But even great conquerors must submit to the decrees of fate; and old Fritz was no exception to the rule. The king's cherries were to suffer; and suffer they accordingly did; for though the king saved the fag end of the crop that one year by the slaughter of the sparrows, yet, next year—though it was said to be a good cherry season—he gathered no cherries at all; for the grasshopper, the caterpillar, the canker-worm, and the palmer worm, were all there before him to devour his crops while yet in the bud—and the sparrows peeped slyly over the wall, crying exultingly, "Cheek! cheek!" Poor old Fritz, the mighty conqueror, was himself conquered. He could not shoot the caterpillars and their allies, but had quietly to submit to their depredations, and—"this was the unkindest cut of all"—to listen to the jeering "Cheek! cheek!" of the sparrows, as they sneeringly looked over his walls. And so it continued for two or three years; the king had no cherries at all,



except what he chose to pay for with hard money. It was for some time in vain that he endeavoured to coax back the pert sparrows; they would do nothing but cry, "Cheek! cheek!" in reply to all his blandishments: and it was only after several seasons of persevering flattery on his part that they once more trusted themselves in the royal gardens, and condescended to eat up the vermin from his majesty's cherry-trees. In fine, old Fritz was obliged to own that cherries were made for pert cock-sparrows as well as for great kings.

Alas! how many thousands of cultivators have been obliged to own the same great truth. How little do we care to own our obligations to the small birds of this world, whether they are merely cheeky little sparrows, or whether they are small fry in human form!

In this country, and in Europe generally, wherever we turn, wherever there is a house, or a corn-field, or a fruit-garden, there are we certain to find a sparrow. "A sparrow!" cries the farmer. "If it were only one we would not say one word; but it's hundreds that we complain about. There is the sparrow everywhere. He is a sly, impudent thief, he is a robber, a murderer, a sinner above all sinners. If we sow seeds he eats them up long before they have time to germinate; if we keep poultry he is ready on the wall to assist them at feeding-time. In fact, we could very well do without him altogether."

And then again, our little children chime in with their pretty little song, so persistently taught them by their nurses:

"Who killed Cock Robin?"  
"I," said the Sparrow,  
"With my bow and arrow!  
And I killed Cock Robin!"

If the sparrow will confess this much, we, his apologists, must say in reply, he is at least truthful; so although he owns to being a murderer, there may be some hope for him yet. "No, no," says popular opinion; "he is a dull-brown fellow, scarcely respectable as to his personal appearance; he has a disagreeable, unmusical voice; he is impudent almost to vulgarity in his bearing; the very pose of his head shows him to be of low origin; his whole existence proves him to be a Communist, a Red Republican, an utter reprobate. He is the very fox of small birds; he cheats them out of their nests if they are only swallows, but if they are birds of greater degree, such as wood-pigeons, or rooks, or storks, he becomes a Land Leaguer, and manages to live rent-free somewhere or other under the shadow of the big uniformly nest. In fact, he reaps everywhere, especially where he has not sown. Yes, he follows the sower to the field, and when the reaper commences he is ready to follow him too, whilst he has not the slightest objection to adjourn with the thresher to the barn. Nay, his impertinence is astounding; for he will eat with the horse out of his crib, he will join the pigeon in the dovecot, where, not content with what he can pick up, he will actually peck open the crop of the young fledgling to get at the undigested seeds within. No, no! We dare not show him mercy."

Though he is greedy and likes tit-bits, his name, Sparrow—German *Sperling*, Old High German *Sperch*, *Sperk*—is literally the sparer, the seeker, the collector. Although he takes the ripest, sweetest morsel of our cherries, and of our fruit generally, and robs our corn-fields mercilessly, yet we must not forget that he is more particularly fond of caterpillars, insects, larvae, and spiders, so much so, that a pair of sparrows and their brood will devour on an average three thousand of these pests a week at least. What, we ask, is two or three pennyworth of fruit a week in comparison with the depredations of the insect world—say of an army of three thousand caterpillars? No wonder that rough old Fritz was glad to renew his treaty of friendship with such valuable allies.

The sparrow, in truth, is a great friend of man, especially of the man who cultivates corn. He came into this country, and into Northern Europe generally, with the Romans, for as they extended the cultivation of cereals the sparrow followed in their wake. In cold countries, where there is a scarcity of insect-life, the sparrow is unknown until the introduction of corn culture. Thus, he only appeared in Siberia in 1753, and he has not yet made his entry into Kamtschatka.

He does not care to cross any breadth of sea. He is found in Java somewhat plentifully, for a Dutchman is said about the year 1800 to have introduced six pairs into his garden in Batavia in order to give a European character to the settlement. The sparrows prospered, although the linnets and nightingales who shared in the experiment perished utterly. Not that the sparrow cares much for these outlandish settlements, for he will only acclimatize himself in the European villages, and not one is to be seen in the native portions. This curious fact is explained by the circumstance that the sparrow, being especially fond of tit-bits, such as the refuse of the European kitchens, will only prosper where these tit-bits are to be procured, and utterly ignores the native kitchens with their everlasting rice.

In Java and other Asiatic countries within the tropics, the sparrow's dull colours brighten up amazingly, and he assumes quite a gay reddish hue.

It was only in 1852 that the sparrow was introduced into the great continent of America, when three pairs were set free in a garden at Portland. Soon afterwards, other pairs were introduced into Boston and New York. The reason of this introduction of these pert little marauders, as our farmers consider them, is instructive. In the summer there was scarce a tree or a shrub, in any of the public gardens and parks, which was not an unsightly mass of dry stripped

branches, spiders'-webs, and caterpillars, most offensive to everybody. The sparrow was introduced, and with that red republican spirit of his, he soon changed such abuses, and by the year 1866 the insect world was so far subdued that the public parks once more became pleasant to the eye. No wonder then that the American appreciates the sparrow, that he even erects him patent nests in public places, and that he has him fed in the winter. He treats him, in fact, as a public benefactor ought to be treated.

Our own colonies of Australia and New Zealand have for similar reasons, and with a like result, introduced the sparrow among them.

Honour, then, to whom honour is due. The sparrow, though a rollicking, good-for-nothing fellow in his private character, is a useful public servant, and should be appreciated as such.

But are we never to shoot a sparrow? Certainly, but shoot him as if you loved him—that is, with discretion. In other words, be selfish in your shooting, thinking betimes of old Fritz and his cherries, the moral of which history is this—so long as the sparrows consume the caterpillars on your cherries, spare them, even if they steal a little fruit; but when they turn their attention to the corn, reduce their numbers; or, to put the matter more tersely, spare them in the breeding season, when they must feed their young on soft food.

What is here said generally of the sparrow may be taken to apply more or less to all small birds. The schedule of the Wild Birds' Protection Act needs careful revision, and all small birds which feed their young on soft food, such as caterpillars, ought to be included as carefully as those who furnish sport to the country gentleman under the name of game. The question is fast becoming one of national importance, for not a season passes in which we do not hear of acres of crops being destroyed by some insect depredator or other. Man destroys the balance of nature, and is obliged to suffer. It seems almost an anti-climax to say that a few families of sparrows, or other small birds, would restore that balance in many a district of these islands; but whether it is a climax or anti-climax, we are afraid that in very many instances it is a plain truth.

You call them thieves and pillagers; but know  
They are the winged wardens of your farms;  
Who from the corn-fields drive the insidious foe,  
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms.

## Lonely Young Men.

"It's the easiest thing in the world to get married," said the American lecturer advocating matrimony for young men, in an up-town hall; "it's as easy as rolling off a log, as the saying is. Ministers tell him that it is his duty; moralists upbraid him because he does not get a wife; philosophers argue that the foundation of the state is the family; friends point out to him the happy lives of many married persons. The young man has no protection against all this opposition, and, if he is a right-minded person, he will not try to oppose such logic. If he is of proper age, is matured in his judgment, can support a wife, and is reasonably industrious, he ought to be married before twenty-five. But there are many less fortunate young men in this city. Some are engaged in shops where only men are employed; others in offices which never have a female visitor. Their homes are in lonely furnished rooms, with meals at restaurants. These poor fellows actually pine for refined female society. One whose loneliness has come to my notice lives in Harlem."

The reporter saw this celibate, and got from him this story: He was living in a furnished room, and boarding at a restaurant. After two years of this life, he began to wish for some refined female society, and accordingly engaged board in a fashionable boarding-house on East Seventeenth Street. He was somewhat surprised by the greed with which his week's board was demanded in advance, and almost snatched out of his hands, but comforted himself with a glimpse of a golden-haired head through a half-opened door.

The young man had stipulated for a fire in his room, but on going up at night found it as cold as a barn. He called for the landlady, and, after repeated trials, succeeded in gaining her attention. In an injured tone, she promised to raise a little fire in the room. In half an hour or so, during which the young man grew warm from inward heat, a frowsy and slatternly servant-girl came in with a bang, threw some kindling wood on the hearth, lit it, put on a little coal, and went away, taking the coal-bucket with her. He started after her to secure the bucket, but too late, and he heard the golden-haired beauty say: "What's the matter with that galoot upstairs?"

"Oh, he wants a fire, bad luck to him."  
"Well, he must be a gilly. Carry him up the kitchen stove."  
Slowly and sadly the young man in search of refined female society pulled on his overcoat, walked down to the street, hired an express waggon, helped to put his trunk on, and quitted the house just in time to hear the golden-haired young woman remark: "Well, I knew that fellow was a fraud when I first saw him."

He went to his old "furnished room." It had not been let. It was warm and comfortable, and he heard the cheery laugh of the landlady and her delighted remark: "I expected you back, but not quite so soon." That was his last attempt to find refined female society. The young man said there were sixty such isolated fellows in his block.

## Household Gardening.

**SEED-SOWING** is a very important duty in gardens at this period of the year, and the first essential in contributing to success is well-prepared soil. The best of seeds may be wasted if care is not taken to provide a good seed-bed; and this consists in having the ground light and friable, by forking it over frequently when dry, and breaking all the lumps, not those at the top only, but equally the greater number below the surface. The roots of flowers and vegetables, but especially the former, as first formed, are so fine and delicate that they cannot penetrate a hard, stubborn medium, and hence it is that so many seedlings appear just above the surface of the soil but make little further progress. Make the ground light and free from the surface downwards, as deep as the fork can be inserted, adding well-decayed manure, or a little soot, if a fertiliser is required, and the growth of the plants, the weather and slugs permitting, will be satisfactory.

### PREPARING HEAVY SOIL.

If the soil be very heavy a liberal application of decayed vegetable matter of any kind, such as leaf-mould, spent hops, old tan, sawdust, cocoanut-fibre refuse, or anything of that nature that is the most readily obtainable, is sure to be beneficial, and so also is sand or fine gritty substances, such as road-sweepings, or sifted coal-ashes. These latter have little or no manurial value, but they serve an important mechanical purpose in rendering strong soils porous, so that the water can escape from them quickly and the heat of the sun find correspondingly ready entrance. If more care than is customary were taken by amateurs in the preparation of ground for the reception of seed, failures would be far less numerous every year, money would be saved, and much discontent averted.

### COVERING SEEDS.

For ensuring success, seeds of all kinds must be covered regularly, but never too deeply, and the soil for this purpose, especially for the smaller seeds, cannot possibly be too fine. Burying seeds too deeply is a common error, and the cause of many failures. The smallest flower-seeds, that almost resemble dust, must never be covered more than a sixteenth of an inch deep, and even then the soil must be finely sifted, or few or no seedlings will follow. A good rule, to be followed as nearly as possible in sowing seeds, is to cover them with soil equal in depth to their own diameter. That may be taken as a safe guide, and those who act in accordance with it with the most exactitude, will succeed the best.

### DRILLS FOR SEEDS.

Some persons are in the habit of scattering seeds broadcast on the surface of a bed, and scratching them in with the rake, or sprinkling a little soil over them with the hand; others, more careful, prepare drills for their reception, regular in depth, and this suitable for the particular seed that is to be sown. This is by far the better plan, as the seeds are covered of a uniform thickness, and a much less quantity is required than by the old rough and ready method first named.

### EXAMPLES OF SOWING.

Suppose a bed of Mignonette, or any other dwarf hardy annual with similarly small seed, is desired, perhaps the majority of persons would scatter the seeds all over the surface of the bed; but we should draw drills straight across it with a piece of stick as thick as the thumb, but not pointed, or if the soil were very light, a strip of wood half an inch wide, and reaching across the bed, would, by simply pressing it into the soil at intervals of six inches, make a series of indentations just within the surface, and certainly not a quarter of an inch deep. In these the seed would be scattered evenly, none being wasted between the drills, and the soil neatly raked over; or what is better, if the ground were strong, a little light compost would be sprinkled over the seed in the drills with the hand. Seed thus treated would be sure to grow, and being covered of a uniform depth, the seedlings would all come up at once and be of uniform height, not irregular and uneven.

### SOWING SEED IN PATCHES.

A number of individuals—indeed, probably the majority, instead of having a bed of one particular kind of flower, prefer having patches of several kinds at intervals in the border. In such cases the seed is scattered over a portion of surface about equal in size to a breakfast-plate, and a little soil spread over it. The plan has often answered, no doubt, as we have proved in thousands of instances; but experience has nevertheless satisfied us that it is quicker, better, and more economical to sow even these patches in drills. It is done in this way: When the ground is just moist enough to receive an indentation, the bottom of a six-inch flower-pot is grasped with the hand, and the rim is simply pressed down into the soil. Thus a circular drill or ring is made in a moment, the seed is sprinkled in it, the soil levelled over with the hand, and the work is done. A few popular flowers will be noticed on a future occasion; in the meantime let the ground be well prepared, and we now pass to another subject.

### ORNAMENTAL FOLIAGE PLANTS.

Numbers of plants are very handsome, and admirably adapted for room adornment, that do not produce flowers under that mode of culture. Among these are Indiarubber-plants, Palms, Begonias,

Grevilleas, Aspidistras, Dracænas, and the ever-welcome Ferns. All such plants require attention now, some needing the leaves washing, others re-potting, while many may be refreshed by a little fresh soil added to the surface of the pots in place of an inch or two of the old that can be removed.

### RE-POTTING THE PLANTS.

A Norwood correspondent writes: "Will you please tell me when and how to re-pot my Indiarubber-plant; the lower leaves have dropped off, but those at the top look fair; it is in a pot five inches across the top. Also two Palms, which have been in the same pots since I bought them three years ago. I have only windows to keep them in. Will soil out of a wood suit?"

By inserting and answering this letter we shall give information to many other persons similarly circumstanced, as the plants named are now grown in hundreds of rooms, and, well tended, succeed as well in windows as in greenhouses.

### SUITABLE SOIL.

"Soil out of a wood" will, as a rule, suit admirably, as it is usually of a loamy nature mixed with vegetable matter by the decayed foliage of trees. Take the soil from off the surface, not digging it from any great depth below, and let it be moderately moist, not decidedly wet, when obtained for use. Unless it is somewhat of a sandy nature mix a small teacupful of white scouring sand in sufficient soil to fill a pot seven inches in diameter across the top, and an excellent compost will be prepared.

### METHOD OF PROCEDURE.

As to "when and how" to re-pot, proceed at once as follows: If the soil now in the pot is dry and crumbles to the touch, give it a thorough watering, and the next day it will be in suitable condition for turning out of the pot. It is never well to re-pot a plant when the soil is very dry or very wet. Assuming it is in the right condition as to moisture, remove the pot in this way: Place the left hand across the top of the pot, allowing the stem of the plant to pass between the fingers, two on each side of it. Now, with the aid of the other hand, gently turn the plant upside down. Take hold of the bottom of the pot with the right hand, then raise it a few inches above a table, and with a sharp downward movement strike the rim of the pot on its edge. This will loosen the soil from the sides, and the pot may be drawn off, the plant resting in the hand, roots uppermost. In this state they can be examined, and scan them attentively, as their appearance will determine the next step to be taken.

### CONDITION OF THE ROOTS.

If the roots look fresh, healthy, and active, they must not be much disturbed. The crocks, if any, may be removed from the bottom of the ball, and an inch or two of soil from the top, that is all, and the plant must be placed in a seven-inch pot. But if, as is not improbable, the roots look dry, dark, and dead, like a coil of tobacco bound round the ball, about half of the soil must be removed and the dried roots cut off. In this state the plant will only need a six-inch pot, or even a pot of the same size as it is now in may suffice, it being a great mistake to over-pot a plant with unhealthy roots.

### DRAINING THE POTS.—ADDING FRESH SOIL.

The pot to be used must be washed perfectly clean inside, then dried. Place in the bottom a flat oyster-shell, then a layer, an inch thick, of broken shell, particles of old flower-pots or charcoal, and cover with a leaf or two, or something to keep the soil out of the drainage. Now put in a little of the soil, pressing it down pretty firmly. On this place the plant, exactly in the centre of the pot, and the top of the roots should be quite an inch and a half below the rim. Now add the fresh soil round the sides, a little at a time, pressing it down as it is put in, and so proceed until the pot is filled to within half an inch, more rather than less, of the top. When finished, the new soil must be just as firm as the original soil is in the centre. That is important.

### WATERING AFTER POTTING.

If the old soil and new are both, as they should be, pleasantly moist, no water will be needed for a day or two; but the leaves must be well washed with a sponge and warm water, and afterwards moistened daily. This will be very refreshing, and counteract the effects of the check given in re-potting.

When water is given to the soil, say on the second day after potting, let it be tepid, and poured through a fine rose in sufficient quantity to fill the space above the soil, and to pass down and moisten every particle in the pot. Then wait until the soil no longer feels pasty when rubbed with the finger, and apply water copiously again; but in the meantime draw a damp sponge over the leaves daily; this will help the plant much in producing new roots, and as soon as these take possession of the new soil, fresh healthy growth will follow, and the leaves assume a richer green hue, that is so desirable.

These remarks apply equally to the Palms, and especially remember that success depends on the exercise of sound judgment in watering. Do not lightly and frequently sprinkle the soil, making it wet on the surface while it may be dry below, but keep it uniformly moist right through the mass; this can only be done by watering thoroughly whenever water is needed, and this is when the soil approaches dryness; for it must never be allowed to get really dry—not drier, indeed, than a new bread-loaf is when it is first cut—before water is given.

# Odds and Ends.

A QUARREL once took place between Raphael Félix, the brother of the celebrated Madame Rachel, then a *pensionnaire* of the Théâtre Français, and the actor Brindeau, when the latter so far forgot his dignity as to give his youthful comrade a sound box on the ear. As a necessary consequence, arrangements for a meeting on the following day were made and seconds chosen. Brindeau, however, thinking on reflection that he might possibly have gone too far, dispatched one of his seconds early next morning to his adversary with a letter of apology. After carefully perusing it, the recipient replied that he would be found in the Bois de Boulogne at the appointed hour, and declined giving any further answer. Both parties were punctual at the rendezvous, and, on the appearance of his antagonist, Raphael, stepping forward, addressed him as follows: "Monsieur, I have received your letter, and am perfectly ready to accept the apology you offer, neither wishing to kill you nor to be killed by you; but you will allow me first to ask a question: Supposing that you were in my place, would you, after a similar affront, consider yourself satisfied with a similar excuse?" "Certainly," replied Brindeau. "You are quite sure?" "Quite." "Delighted to hear it!" coolly retorted Raphael, at the same time administering to his astonished opponent a vigorous cuff with one hand and with the other presenting him with a copy of his own letter.

SOME time back Professor Sedgwick was geologising in a quarry near a high-road, dressed in a rough suit for the purpose, and striking vigorous blows with his hammer upon a rock, when a carriage coming up, stopped at the place, and a gentleman within beckoned to the professor to come up to the door, as he wanted to know the way to the residence of a nobleman in that locality. Professor Sedgwick having very readily answered this and various other questions put to him, the gentleman, pleased with what he deemed the intelligence and civility of the quarryman, offered him a shilling, which was received with thanks. The carriage drove on, taking its occupant to the nobleman's house, where he was an invited guest. Soon after, Professor Sedgwick followed him, for he was staying there at that time himself. At dinner they happened to be seated near each other, and soon fell into conversation. After a while the gentleman, looking earnestly at Professor Sedgwick, observed: "I think I must have had the pleasure of seeing you before, and that not very long ago." "Oh yes," was the reply; "you saw me this morning, and gave me a shilling for answering a whole string of questions—and I was much obliged to you for it."

THE following is Dr. Parr's first and only love-letter to the lady who became his wife. In appealing to the curiosity rather than the heart of the lady, he displayed at the same time his modesty and his knowledge of woman: "Madam,—You are a very charming woman, and I should be happy to obtain you as a wife. If you accept my proposal, I will tell you who was the author of 'Junius.'—Samuel Parr."

CIVIL marriage in South Africa is not a lengthy rite. The *Colonies* mentions that a happy pair entered the Queen's Town House, smiling and ogling one another, the bridegroom paid a five-pound note, signed a document, took his spouse by the arm, and walked her out of the building, saying: "How do you do, Mrs. —?" The ceremony lasted just two minutes.

Two gentlemen are discussing a third, while the coach jolts painfully over the uneven surfaces of the street: "He's a sad scoundrel, I fear," says one of the gentlemen. "Not such a sad scoundrel," replies the other as the vehicle plunged into a hole in the pavement, "as you—" "Wh—what?" "As you think," says the other triumphantly, recovering his breath.

THERE is a story of an English tourist who entered a restaurant, and by a few scraps of French was able to order dinner. He wished some mushrooms, very delicious and large. Not knowing the name, he demanded a sheet of paper and a pencil, and sketched one. The waiter understood him in a second, disappeared for ten minutes, and returned with a handsome umbrella.

A PRETENTIOUS haberdasher once boasted to Douglas Jerrold that he was descended from Cardinal Wolsey, at which the caustic wit exclaimed: "Cardinal Wolsey! My dear sir, you must mean Linsey Wolsey."

A MAN left a bony steed in the street, and coming back a short time afterwards, discovered that a funny youth had placed a card against the fleshless ribs, bearing the notice: "Oats wanted—enquire within!"

LITERARY bracelets are adopted by studious Transatlantic belles. The bangle consists of twelve tiny gold books linked together, with the name of some favourite author enamelled on the back of each book.

AN old Quaker, in passing near a racecourse on a field day, stopped and asked a spectator: "Why this concourse, my friend?" "It isn't a concourse!" exclaimed the man; "it's a racecourse."

A PERSON being asked what was meant by realities of life, answered: "Real estate, real money, and a real good dinner, none of which can be realised without real hard work."

A YOUNG lady being asked by an acquaintance whether she had any original poetry in her album, replied: "No; but some of my friends have favoured me with original spelling."

THAT was not bad of an opulent old gentleman, recently deceased, of whom it was asked: "How much did he leave?" "Oh, everything! he took nothing with him."

A SENTIMENTAL young man thus feelingly expresses himself: "Even as Nature benevolently guards the roses with thorns, so does she endow women with pins."

"I SAY, my friend, where have you been for a week back?" "I haven't been anywhere," was the reply, "and I haven't got a week back."

ON a woman with red hair who wrote poetry: "Unfortunate woman! How sad is thy lot! Thy ringlets are red, but thy poems are not."

TAXATION is said to bear equally on all classes, from the fact that it hardly presses on the rich and presses hardly on the poor.

"How sad!" exclaimed one blade of a pair of scissors to the other. "How sad! We only meet to sever."

A JOURNEYMAN hatter, a companion of Dr. Franklin, on commencing business for himself, was anxious to get a handsome signboard, with a proper inscription. This he composed himself as follows: "John Thompson, hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money," with the figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to thought the word "hatter" was tautologous, because followed by the words "makes hats," which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word "makes" might as well be omitted, because the customers would not care who made the hats; if good, and to their mind, they would buy, by whomsoever made. He struck that out also. A third said he thought the words "for ready money" were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit; everyone who purchased expected to pay. These, too, were parted with, and the inscription then stood: "John Thompson sells hats." "Sells hats!" says his next friend; "why, who expects you to give them away? What, then, is the use of the word?" It was struck out, and "hats" was all that remained attached to the name of John Thompson. Even this inscription, brief as it was, was reduced ultimately to "John Thompson," with the figure of a hat subjoined.

"GOOD-MORNING, children," said a suburban doctor, as he met three or four little children on their way to school; "and how are you this morning?" "We durstn't tell you," replied the oldest, a boy of eight. "Dare not tell me!" exclaimed the doctor. "And why not?" "Cause papa said that last year it cost him over ten pounds to have you come in and ask us how we were."

"Boy," said a gentleman to the ostler of an hotel, on alighting from his phaeton, "extricate that quadruped from the vehicle, stabulate him, donate him an adequate supply of nutritious aliment, and when the aurora of morning shall again illuminate the oriental horizon I will award thee a pecuniary compensation for thine admirable hospitality."

AT a village not many miles from Newcastle, two miners were discussing the question of Home Rule for Ireland. "Noo, Bill," enquired one, "can thoo tell me what Home Rule is?" "Te ma mind, Jacob," was the reply, "it is this: Irishmen to have a guvornment iv thor aan, and England to rule over them; that's what it is."

Two countrymen paused in the serpent-house in the Zoological Gardens, and contemplated the boa constrictor. "I say," said the first countryman, "what's that insect tied himself up in a knot like that for?" "Oh," replied his companion in a superior manner, "I suppose he wanted to remind himself of something when he woke up."

A DEFINITION was given by a high ecclesiastical authority in an appeal case heard at Westminster, which may be of service on some future occasion. "What," asked Lord Coleridge, "is a nobleman's chaplain?" "A nobleman's chaplain," replied Dr. Phillimore, "is a spiritual luxury."

SCENE: In the auditorium of a theatre. Actor, who has appeared in the first piece: "Good-evening! May I take the seat next you?" Lady: "Certainly. But don't you appear any more to-night?" Actor: "No." Lady: "Oh, I am so glad! Pray sit down."

A LITTLE girl in a Sunday-school who had been pulling her doll to pieces during the week, was asked by the teacher: "What was Adam made of?" "Dust," replied the little girl. "And what was Eve made of?" "Sawdust," was the answer.

CURRAN being angry in a debate one day, put his hand on his heart, saying: "I am the trusty guardian of my own honour." "Then," replied Sir Boyle Roche, "I congratulate my honourable friend on the snug sinecure to which he has appointed himself."

GEORGE III., speaking to Archbishop Sutton respecting his large family, made this remark: "I believe your grace has better than a dozen?" "No, sire," replied the archbishop, "only eleven." "Well," replied the king, "isn't that better than a dozen?"

"I HAVE three children, who are the very image of myself," said Jones enthusiastically. "I pity the youngest," returned Brown quietly. "Why?" asked Jones. "Because he is the one who will have to resemble you the longest," said Brown.

A MR. H., a young coxcomb, one day hearing people speak of age and appearance, said: "Jerrold, don't you think I look much younger than I am?" The reply was: "It is not your looks, my boy; it is your conversation."

JOHN SMITH now accounts for the origin of his name. He says that when the world began everybody was named Smith, and whenever a man acted like a rascal he was tossed out and given another name.

"GENERAL," said a major, "I always observe that those persons who have a great deal to say about being ready to shed their last drop of blood, are amazingly particular about the first drop."

"Is your vessel your home?" asked a lady, addressing a man-of-war's man. "It is, ma'am," replied the seaman, "in times of peace, but when we're in close action we're only boarders."

JULIUS came out of college highly educated, and made his mark in the world. "But what of that?" cried Mr. Scruggins. "I never had any education, and I always make my mark."

AN Irish gentleman having a small picture-room, several persons desired to see it at the same time. "Faith, gentleman," said he, "if you all go in, it will not hold you."

"HAVEN'T you finished scaling that fish yet, Sam?" said a fishmonger to his boy. "No, master; it's a very large one." "Why, you have had time to scale a mountain."

"SH-H-H, child. Young people should be silent when other people are talking." "Then when shall young people talk, mamma? Old people are never silent."

"WHAT is the name of your cat?" one lad asked of another. "We used to call him William until he had fits, but now we call him Fitz-William."

A SMART schoolboy says it takes thirteen letters to spell "cow," and proves it thus: "See O double you."

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## ANSWERS.

AUDINE.—The conundrum is not good enough to print. And we do not ourselves know the answer to it.

CEYLON.—Yes; but how did the Pirates of Penzance come by it?

C. W.—"Walton's Argentine" is an excellent silvery fluid, and gives a coating of pure silver equal to electro. Price 1s. 6d. the bottle.

DERBYSHIRE LAD.—Like many other old sayings, that of "The Bishop's had his foot in it," when milk is burned, is variously accounted for. The most probable explanation of the origin of this saying is that given by the author of "Tusser's Redivivus, 1710": "When the Bishop passed by (in former times) every one ran out to partake of his blessing, which he plentifully bestowed as he went along, and those who left their milk upon the fire, might find it burnt to the pan when they came back, and perhaps ban or curse the bishop when any such disaster happened, for which our author would have the mistress bless (Anglice correct) her servant, both for her negligence and unmannerliness," etc.

DIGAMMA.—You have not given the formula correctly. We do not know how the trick is done.

EXACTING CORRESPONDENT.—Abderite is an inhabitant of Abdera, a maritime town in Thrace, and is sometimes a term equivalent to a stupid person, the inhabitants of this city having been anciently proverbial for their stupidity. Abdera was the birthplace of Democritus, called the Laughing Philosopher; hence the term applied to incessant or continual laughter.

GOVERNESS O.—Miss Emily A. E. Shirreff is President of the Froebel Society. You will find her book, "The Kindergarten at Home," published by Joseph Hughes, most useful and helpful.

HARK, HARK.—1. The poem ("More Hullah-Baloo") you want was written by Tom Hood with reference to the new system of popular music introduced by the late Mr. Hullah. The first and last verses of the poem are as follows:

Amongst the great inventions of this age,  
Which every other century surpasses,  
Is one—just now the rage—  
Call'd "Singing for all Classes"—  
That is, for all the British millions,  
And billions,  
And quadrillions,  
Not to name Quintillions.  
That now, alas! have no more ear than asses,  
To learn to warble like the birds in June  
In time and tune,  
Correct as clocks and musical as glasses!

I say you ought to labour!  
You are in a funny case,  
You have not sixty years upon your face,  
To come and beg your neighbour,  
And discompose his music with a noise  
Much worse than twenty boys—  
Look what a street it is for quiet!  
No cart to make a riot;  
No coach, no horses, no postillion.  
If you will sing, I say it is not just  
To sing so loud. Says he, "I must!  
I'm singing for the million."

HISTORIOUS.—The earliest known examples in art of the bare crown, by way of tonsure, are of the sixth century. Boccaccio, in his "Commentary on the 'Inferno' of Dante," says: "Some maintain that the clergy wear the tonsure in remembrance and reverence of St. Peter, on whom, they say, it was made by certain evil-minded men as a mark of madness; because, not comprehending and not wishing to comprehend his holy doctrine, and seeing him fervently preaching before princes and people, who held that doctrine in detestation, they thought he acted as one out of his senses."

H. S.—We suppose you have tried glycerine. There is a preparation which we can highly recommend for chapped hands, called "Lethean," prepared by E. G. Hughes, Victoria Street, Manchester. "Lethean" is useful also when the skin of the face is affected by cold winds.

IGNORAMUS B.—A 1 is a combination of characters applied to a vessel of the highest class in Lloyd's Register of Shipping. Iron vessels are classed A 1 with a numeral prefixed, as 100 A 1, 90 A 1 (the numeral denoting that they are built respectively according to certain specifications), and they retain their character so long as, on careful survey, they are found in a fit and efficient condition to carry dry and perishable cargoes to and from all parts of the world. Wood and composite vessels are classed A 1 for a term of years; hence such expressions as 12 A 1, etc., subject to survey. A 1 in red denotes vessels that have already been classed A 1 in black, but are now reduced to second class. The letter A denotes the first-class character of the hull for build and seaworthiness; the figure 1 that the vessel is well found in rigging, gear, etc. When fittings and equipment are insufficient, the 1 is omitted.

JOHN N.—Many thanks. Your little contribution to "Odds and Ends" appeared in an early number of this journal.

LAURINA.—1. If the vicar is a married man, it is usual for the ladies of the congregation to call upon his wife. If he is a bachelor, he calls upon the ladies of his flock. 2. It is never too late to mend. Call and explain your mistake candidly.

M. A.—There is the Merchant Seaman's Orphan Asylum, Snarbrook, Essex. Offices, 132, Leadenhall Street. Your nephews are eligible for any general orphan asylum.

M. A. B.—Many thanks. No doubt the joke about the lap-dog is one of the original twenty-one referred to in a paragraph in "Odds and Ends," HOUSEHOLD WORDS, No. 150.

M. E. B.—When the wine or syrup used in making jelly does not give a sufficiently brilliant red, cochineal colouring is used. Orange and sherry jelly will be made a rich amber by using a very little burnt-sugar colouring.

MRS. J. must be patient. We get piles of stories every week, and as we give them all careful attention, some time must necessarily elapse before a decision is come to in any individual case.

MRS. W. D.—We are much obliged for your suggestion, and are sorry that we cannot undertake the work.

NERVOUS.—It is not at all so bad as you imagine. The number of passengers killed from causes beyond their own control, from accidents to trains, was in proportion of about one to forty millions. The proportion is not only much less than in the preceding year, but it is very much less than the average of any of the preceding years for which the figures have been recorded. Up to the end of last year the amount paid by way of compensation for personal injury to passengers was not more than half what it was a few years ago.

PERPLEXED.—We are not aware that any new Partnership Act has been passed since 1880.

S. F.—You can get a copy of the Apocrypha through any bookseller. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge publishes it at a shilling.

SOUR TOOTH.—You seem to be aware of an excessive liking for pickles, and yet not to have the courage to moderate your appetite. A small quantity of vinegar by way of condiment is wholesome enough, but too much is certain to be injurious to health. Dr. Atcherley says: "Sulphuric acid (oil of vitriol) is unfortunately permitted by the legislature to be added to vinegar in the proportion of one to one thousand by weight. This mixture is held as necessary to prevent a peculiar fermentation said to take place in vinegar not so fortified. It is, however, doubted whether the addition is really necessary. On the Continent it is not allowed, and is justly stigmatised as injurious to the consumer." Besides sulphuric acid, hydrochloric acid, tartaric acid, and pyroligneous acid are used in adulterating vinegar.

THIRRE.—1. "Beautiful Snow" is to be found in "The Handbook of Recitation," published by John S. Marr and Sons, Glasgow; post free, 4d. It is also to be had at Tweedie's, in the Strand, or Kempster's, St. Bride's Avenue. 2. We like your handwriting very much, and are glad that you are so greatly interested in this journal.

WATCHER.—The verse is one of the poem for the twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity, "The Christian Year," Rev. J. Keeble:

Why should we faint and fear to live alone,  
Since all alone, so Heaven has willed, we die?  
Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,  
Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh.

W. T.—Perhaps St. Peter's Home, Mortimer Road, Kilburn, would suit your invalid. There are many other homes for persons who can afford to pay the sum you name, a list of which you will find in "Dickens's Dictionary of London."

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 153.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Winifred's Ghost.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"EDWARD THE MARTYR, Ethelred the Second, Edmund Ironsides."

The bright afternoon sunshine, peeping into the little school-house, seemed to hint of shady dells, of cool, mossy banks, and trickling watercourses—of many things bearing a much better flavour to the juvenile mental palate than the Heptarchy.

"Canute, Harold Harefoot, Hardicanute."

The summer breeze just rattled the blossom-covered casements, wooing a dozen longing children to leave Saxon and Dane. And at the foot of the rugged Cornish cliffs, the blue sea, forgetting its darker moods, its times of wrath, and death, and despair, was leaping merrily, as though it would say, "Come forth and dance with me."

"William the First."

A vagrant wasp came intruding its lazy flight into that humble temple of Parnassus, and buzzing in dangerous proximity to a shapely little nose, which in the drowsy warmth was sinking nearer and nearer to the plain deal desk, awakened its owner to the fact that one pupil had disregarded the Third Edward, and swept away Harold, as ruthlessly as did the Conqueror.

Even wasps have their uses, and perhaps it was as well that Winifred Vane was aroused; for at the instant all those sleepy voices ceased. Not for the expected gentle reprimand—there was a far more exciting episode than that. A dozen pairs of small ears caught the sound of wheels outside. A dozen pairs of small eyes turned in expectancy to the door. A dozen small faces assumed their most respectful bearing, and a corresponding number of small forms sprang to their feet, to tug forelocks, or drop curtsies, according to sex, as Mrs. Tregarthan swept grandly in.

They could hardly abase themselves enough before this, the great lady of the place. There was something awe-inspiring in the cold haughtiness of her face, in the richness of her dress, in the obsequious servants and the carriage, the very horses of which spurned the ground, not like common people's steeds. The little ones all felt it, save one who stood erect, a juvenile Hampden, inclined to resent this visit as an intrusion. He was accustomed to render his homage each Monday, when Mrs. Tregarthan came, the one district-visitor of that poor Cornish village, in her official capacity to ask a few questions, to pat with daintily-gloved hand the one or two curly heads nearest, and to go forth again, a lady who had performed a duty. But that was Friday. All his young memory could not recall such departure from established rule, and the urchin wondered what she wanted there; also, as an English child's school-house is his castle, he was indignant at the unceremonious proceedings of Mrs. Tregarthan's companion.

This was an elderly little man, plainly, almost coarsely dressed, whose first act was to bring two forms together for a more comfortable seat, his next to produce a pipe, which, like the rough grey coat from the pocket of which he produced it, had seen much service. Having carefully filled and lighted this, he took a refreshing puff or so, and then he said to the astonished scholars, in sharp quick accents:

"Now, children, never mind about Egbert or Ethelred, Ironsides or Coppersides either. It will do you a deal more good to scamper in the sunshine. Work is over. I proclaim a holiday. We are come to teach a lesson to Miss Vane. So clear."

Wondering at this new ruler, they looked at Winifred for confirmation, and seized caps and sun-bonnets, as they received it in a mute glance.

Both Mrs. Tregarthan and the mistress of the humble school had a letter.

The one produced hers from an elaborately-worked hand-bag, her invariable companion—a bag dreaded by the children for its endless store of peculiarly nasty medicinal powders, and by their elders for tracts of anything but a comforting nature. But Winifred's was hidden away from sight, and trembling fingers closed over it as if to derive courage and assurance from the very touch.

"Miss Vane," and her visitor's tone was measured and distinct, "this is Mr. Tregarthan, my dead husband's brother—Gregory Tregarthan's uncle."

At the words, that individual tumbled off his extemporised couch to acknowledge the introduction, with a muttered something, and an

awkward bow; then he resumed his pipe, and his fixed contemplation of a blackboard and a dilapidated map of England. And whatever hopes the girl might have entertained, were chilled at once by his harsh voice and almost sullen manner.

"Mr. Tregarthan," and the speaker slightly waved her hand towards him, "Mr. Tregarthan and myself almost trusted not to find you here still. We had dared to hope that your own good sense would have ended this most romantic, absurd, and impossible affair; that you would have been ready to avert poverty and wretchedness from the man you say you love."

"I do not bring him wretchedness," said Winifred.

There was no tremor in the answering voice. A brighter flush on the fair and perfect face—a fearless light in the blue eyes steadfastly regarding the other—no more.

"Were it for Gregory Tregarthan's good—were it his wish—I, who would lay down life itself for him, could—aye, though my poor heart broke with the deed—send him from me. I have told him all—told him I may not wreck his prospects—told him to forget each promise, to release me. And—and—I have his letter here, and he will not. He says—"

"Stay," interrupted the older lady with a scornful smile. "I do not care to hear. I have his letter also. The same rhapsodies, probably, adorn both. But romance cannot smooth away those difficulties, or make my son's contemplated alliance with you, Miss Vane, less degrading."

"Degrading!" and the girl's tone was proud enough, uttering the one word.

Mrs. Tregarthan smiled again, a cruel, mocking smile.

"We are travelling over the same ground as at our last interview, I fear. I used that word, and advisedly. Do you think you are a fitting match for the old line—for a Tregarthan, of Tregarthan Hold?"

"I imagine that a penniless, friendless girl, earning her bread as a school-teacher, may not boast of ancestry," and Winifred faced the other with a proud look contradicting the words; "but my family is old as the Tregarthans. For Queen and country, at the head of his regiment, my father died a soldier's death before the Russian guns. A Tregarthan could do no more. And, pardon me, I do not know that a Calthorpe ever did so much."

It was a keen little thrust. The sword of the dead Captain Vane never found its mark more surely. For Mrs. Tregarthan's late father, a great contractor, had made himself a name by supplying bad clothing, and worse boots, to our Crimean troops.

"You hear, Brother Paul?" and the lady turned to that personage, still smoking in silence. "This is the lady whose arms are to be quartered with yours. This is the lady whose love for our nephew is to bring him poverty, ruin, and disgrace."

"Ah, I hear," he rejoined with a huge puff. "But what did you expect, Agatha? I don't think any the worse of this young lady that she shows fight. Tregarthan Hold and my money are worth fighting for, even though there is not much hope of victory."

"Is there nothing in life," cried the girl despairingly—"nothing save wealth? No higher aims—no nobler purposes? Is poverty so dreadful?"

"No, not at all," sneered Mrs. Tregarthan. "My son, absorbed in his artistic studies, of course has told you that, and a great deal more romantic nonsense. The idea of a Tregarthan meddling with paint-pots, and pencils, and dirty brushes!"

"Quite true, Agatha," put in her brother-in-law. "Unless the lad's paintings brought him the shekels."

"Shekels!" she echoed contemptuously. "Would it bring him bread-and-cheese? Come, Miss Vane, be rational," she added more gently. "Though my son be headstrong and wilful, your hand should not lead him to his ruin."

"Alas! I seem doomed to bring him sorrow," sighed the girl. "You speak of ruin, but at least he has the Hold."

"Oh yes," rejoined his mother, smiling cruelly. "Yet surely you have weighed the chances carefully enough to know what that means? Gregory Tregarthan is master of the Hold—a tumble-down mansion and a few acres of poor land. Why, but for my small fortune, he would be a beggar; and now, when the world is opening before him, fairer, brighter in every way, you and his own folly are to be the wreck of all."

"That is so," chimed in Paul Tregarthan. "Let me explain, young lady," and he laid aside his pipe in preparation for a speech. "Let us understand each other. Mine was the misfortune, for I suppose that is what people call it, to be a younger son. Your lover's father came into these estates. His inheritance was any amount of mortgages and debts, with an old name well-known amongst money-lenders, and not much respected by the tribe of Judah. I, lacking these precious gifts, turned out in the world to seek my fortune, and found it in Chicago, in commerce—the pig-trade, as a matter of fact. Of course, living under the stars and stripes so long, I learned to sneer at ancestral pride, therefore," and Paul smiled mockingly—



"therefore I came home, with all my dollars, to buy back our lands—to restore the lustre of the old race—to make my nephew, Gregory, my heir—to see him allied to some noble family, the sort of thing which, as a true republican, of course I worship—and I find you."

"What shall I do?" came her cry when he had ended. "I may not wreck his life, and yet—and yet," with a quick, sudden motion she sprang forward, and was kneeling at Paul Tregarthan's feet, "I plead not for myself, but for him—for him!"

She did not even look at Mrs. Tregarthan. She was striving to gaze in Uncle Paul's face, and it was turned away, as, unmoved, he was re-lighting his pipe.

"Have you no pity? Surely, in some far-off day, you knew what it was to love. You must have some remembrance of the dreams of your own youth."

"Hush!" he said softly. He turned his face yet more from her, and was silent a while. When he spoke again, his voice shook a little, but his features showed no relenting. "I have loved, and it does not kill. You will learn that lesson, Miss Vane, even as I have."

"Be content," and the girl rose to her feet in the calmness of a great despair. "You have triumphed. I leave Gregory—my Gregory that was—to his brighter destiny, and go from here to-morrow—will see him no more, and may Heaven aid and pity us both!"

Her head bowed down in sorrow, Winifred listened to their departure, and then she heard him return—knew that he was standing by her side.

"Miss Vane," and she looked up, dashing her tears away, to meet his pitying glance, "I fear that we are playing it rather low down on you. Will this be some little compensation?"

His hand held a roll of bank-notes, of greater value than ever the girl had seen in all her life, and, with a quick gesture, she put it aside.

"My love is not bought and sold," she said in scornful bitterness. "Perhaps, with your ideas of commerce, you may not understand that. But pride is not the exclusive prerogative even of the Tregarthans. Poor and humble as this dwelling may be, until to-morrow it is mine. Please to leave me. Misery enough is for me, without this last insult."

## CHAPTER II.

"STAND back, sir!"

The speaker was but small, yet his voice was large, and it vied with the parting whistles of two trains gliding out of St. Bedwas Station.

The official dignity was hurt. True, St. Bedwas was only a little place, a mile or so from the Hold. But a station-master, though new to the post, is a station-master, and must not be roughly pushed aside by a handsome, but certainly unceremonious young man, even though his ancestors once owned all the lands around.

"Back, sir. It is against the company's rules. Stand back, I say."

"Hush! It is Mr. Gregory, the young master."

The words were well-nigh jerked out of an obsequious cap-touching porter, as his superior was tossed into his arms by one whose course was not to be stayed. Then Gregory Tregarthan's impetuous hand wrenched open the door, and, after running an instant by its side, he sprang lightly into the moving carriage, tenanted by only two travellers.

"Master Gregory! My dear boy, how can you risk your life so?"

He smiled a careless smile at an elderly lady, very plainly attired, who had regarded his leap in fearing admiration.

"I would risk nine lives, if, like a cat, I possessed so many," he cried gaily, "in such a cause. You know that, Jane Barnard—" Then in a moment his voice grew grave and tender, and his glance rested lovingly on the fair maiden shrinking away from him, striving to hide herself behind her companion, and failing signally, inasmuch as Miss Jane Barnard was so supernaturally thin and spare, that it was cause for wonder how in such a small face, such pinched withered features, so much affection could dwell, as now beamed on them both. "Winifred, why do you look so? Why do you turn from me? Your face is pale, dear one, as if I were a ghost—not your own Gregory come to claim your promise—to hold your hand against all the world."

Winifred Vane uttered no word. Her only answer was a low, weary sigh—a drawing away yet farther from him—a futile effort at interposing her spare fellow-traveller.

Gregory Tregarthan pushed Miss Barnard aside. Not quite as he had treated the outraged station-master, but with the same firmness.

"I have been in your arms many a time, you good old soul, so excuse me now."

Without another word he deposited her on the opposite seat, then he sat himself down by Winifred's side, and took her hand in his. There was a feeble effort to deny him, but he was not to be gainsaid. His strong grasp imprisoned the trembling fingers, and would not let them go.

"Winifred, speak to me! Say, what is the meaning of this! Where are you going? This train is bearing you away from St. Bedwas—from the home which was to be yours and mine, love, and I was coming to claim you."

"Yes," she whispered in sorrow. "You say truly. It is bearing me away, and it must be so. The Hold is farther from me each moment, even as it must be in the future. And—and—"

Then, with a quivering sob, she bowed her face in the one free hand.

"Miss Barnard, dear friend of my sorrow, guide of my hard path, in pity tell him, for I—I cannot."

"Yes, tell him, somebody," cried Gregory Tregarthan. "Although what need is there? Can I not see my mother in this? And the lovingkindness of my uncle Paul? Is it for this that I have laughed at his promised wealth—disregarded threat and sage remonstrance, even as I will and do disregard all and everything, save my love. Winifred, is your faith so weak? And Jane Barnard—you who have served our house so many years—who have nursed me, a child, in your lap; who loves me, or at least I fancied so, till now."

"And loves you still," answered the elder woman. "This is no time for reproaches. The name and fame of Tregarthan Hold are dear to me as to you, although I am—or rather, was—only a poor servitor of the old line. It is for your sake, for your brighter life, that Winifred takes her hand from yours—is going far away with me to London."

"She does not take her dear hand from mine," he cried. "See," and his own closed more tightly upon it, "I hold it so, and will never let it go from me. Ah, I feared this! yet," and his face lightened with a trusting smile, "I knew, when again I met her, the arguments of Paul Tregarthan, the scorn of my mother, would be but as dreams to my darling. Say, Winifred, is it not so?"

"No, no," she murmured, "it must not—it can never be. Who am I, to be the evil star of your life, Gregory? You will forget poor me when I am lost to you, unknown in London."

"Yes, that shall be so, when it happens," and he laughed in unbelief. "You may go there, but I go too; and I say I will never lose you. Although," laughing again, "I confess I fail to understand why Jane Barnard wants to be lost also."

"Master Gregory," a tear rolled down the withered cheek as she called him by the name of his boyhood, "Master Gregory, I am dismissed from Tregarthan Hold."

"After all these years! My poor old nurse!" ejaculated the young man. "Will you tell me why? Stay, I can tell you: it was for taking my part."

"Yes, Master Gregory," said the other, forgetting prudence in her grief, "you are right. I have no cause of complaint, perhaps. I am old for service, but St. Bedwas was my home so long. And Mrs. Tregarthan need not have sent me away so unkindly. I was there when she was brought home, a fair young bride, by your poor father. I held you in these arms, a baby." And there Jane Barnard fairly broke down.

"Nay," interposed Gregory, "no tears on this, which I mean to be a happy day. It strikes me that we have all three 'got the sack'—my lady-mother would condemn the slang, but it embodies the position—for about the same cause. So nothing remains for us poor offenders, expelled from Eden, but to stick together and make the best of the outer world. Jane Barnard, where are you going?"

"My sister dwells in London; I am going there. Thank goodness, my small savings will suffice for my few remaining years, even though I see Cornwall no more."

"And Winifred was going with you;" and it was a statement more than a question.

"Winifred was to make her home with me," she assented. "Not to eat the bread of idleness. Until she could find something to do—some employment."

"That is found at once," he cried gaily. "As the wife of a poor man, and a worse painter, my darling shall gratify her desire for work in darning stockings and making pies. Winifred dearest, look up and say it shall be so."

The girl's happiness was in her grasp, yet her hand, only striving for what she deemed his good, would have put it away from her.

"No, Gregory. Hard though my lot may be, it may not be so."

"But I say it shall. You cannot help yourself. Your promise is mine, and I will not release you. I will never let you go. I always had my way as a child, as a boy—ask my old nurse about that—and I will have it as a man."

Her answer was again an effort to withdraw the hand he still held, and Gregory Tregarthan let it go. He released it—only to

throw his arms around her, to press her passionately to his heart, to rain kisses upon cheek, hair, and brow.

"I do not fear the future," he said in hopeful joy. "I can get on without Uncle Paul and all the wealth from a million defunct Chicago porkers. Tregarthan Hold is mine. I might let it; but it is my mother's home. Alas! it may not be ours whilst she scorns my bride, but that cannot last for ever, dearest. I have my little patrimony; it is bread-and-cheese, if nothing more. And I have my beloved art. I sold a picture yesterday. You would deem me a Cæsus if I told you for how much. There is nothing to keep us asunder. And nothing shall. Winifred, lay your dear hands in mine—so, darling, and send me away if you can."

Her eyes met his at last. But all he could read there was love, and tenderness, and trusting faith.

"Now say, 'Gregory, I am yours ever.'"

Her lips murmured something, certainly not the words which rang through the carriage from an unsympathetic collector, "Tickets, please, tickets." And then that obdurate individual proceeded, in default of the young man possessing that necessary adjunct to railway travelling, to enforce the company's rules (illegal, by-the-bye), and mulct him from whence the train had started.

"It is a bit of a pull," said Gregory Tregarthan, restoring his purse with a wry face. "And it is your fault, dear—yours and Jane Barnard's. Just as I was beginning to be economical. Going without gloves, and learning to smoke fourpenny bird's-eye. Nevertheless, this is the happiest journey of my life."

### CHAPTER III.

"GREGORY dear, do you believe in ghosts?"

The question was propounded by Mrs. Tregarthan. Not the lady of the manor, who distributed discomforting tracts and juvenile physic at St. Bedwas. This speaker was young and winsome, and fair to look upon. But the face usually so happy and bright, was quite grave, as her loving blue eyes rested on the man whose name she took very soon after her impetuous husband made that memorable journey.

"Do you believe in ghosts? Are there such things as haunted rooms?"

"Well, yes," he rejoined. "As a Cornishman, of course I do," with a smile for her gravity. "The studios of most of the fellows I know are haunted by the same unpleasant shade—the ghost of chronic impecuniosity—which sometimes takes a very tangible shape indeed."

"Gregory, I really am not jesting."

"Nor am I," he laughed. "You give me an idea of quite a novel branch of high art. Only fancy the scope in 'Hamlet' and 'Macbeth'! Why, Jane Barnard's sister might ask any price for these rooms, if she could guarantee an obliging ghost, kept on the premises, and willing to be a model."

The girl did not smile. Nervously she glanced round an old-fashioned chamber, in a rambling, old-fashioned London dwelling, and away to where a curtained doorway led into Gregory's painting-room.

"You may laugh," she rejoined gravely. "But there is something—something strange here. I have felt it many times lately. I say 'felt' it for want of a better word. A kind of knowledge of being watched by something."

"My dear child," and Gregory saw that she really was distressed, "you are out of sorts, and no wonder. This gloomy old house, this busy London, make a sad change after the sea, and the cliffs, and the Cornish wild moorlands. We must try and see it all again as spring advances. Meantime, I must not leave you of an evening."

She shook her head.

"It is not then, Gregory, not so much when I am by myself as when we are together, quietly talking. Last night, as we sat here, I felt that we were not alone. I knew that each word of ours was heard by other ears; that eyes were watching us—nay, I could see them, I am sure I could. Yet I, myself," and her pointing finger trembled at the reminiscence, "had closed those curtains. And—and—I heard stealthy footsteps in there."

"You dear, silly little goose!" he answered fondly, as he drew her to him, till the fair head rested on his breast. "And you never said anything. Why should there not be footsteps? We are not the only people in the house."

"I did not say anything," she whispered, with courage returning in his fond embrace. From what evil would not that protecting arm shield her? "You would only have laughed, sir, even as you are doing now, sir."

"A true Cornishman does not laugh at ghosts," with assumed gravity.

"But when you left me," Winifred continued, "I was very brave. For I searched everywhere; especially, though I dreaded to go there, in the painting-room. And what do you think I found?"

"I dare not hazard a guess, darling. Perchance a strange cat."

"I found nothing!"

"Just what I expected," interpolated Gregory Tregarthan.

But she laid her hand on the mocking lips.

"Nothing to see. But some one—something had been there. The curtains were parted in the middle. The door which leads out into that dismal corridor was open. More than that, those same footsteps passed through it as I approached."

"I must ask the mistress of the house about it," said the young man. "Even a ghost has no right to a London lodging without payment. Or perhaps my old nurse can enlighten us. Living under the same roof, possessing a goodly store of Cornish superstition, Jane Barnard may have the same supernatural privileges as yourself."

"I have asked Jane," said his wife with a smile of triumph. "Jane and her sister too. They were both strange and confused in their manner, and pretended not to understand me. Gregory, I am convinced there is some mystery in this house."

"Therefore, dear, we will leave it very soon."

Lightly as he had spoken, the girl's revelations had impressed him. More than that, even as they had been talking, he had fancied a quiet footstep in the next room. And he was listening keenly, although making no sign.

"I am getting on very well, and am so thankful for your sake, darling. My mother is going to reside for an indefinite time with her relatives in the North, and, as I told you, I think I can let the Hold. Why, I shall be quite awfully rich."

"But Paul Tregarthan," doubtfully, "what will he do? And now, he is buying back all the old lands."

The owner of Tregarthan Hold laughed just a trifle bitterly.

"I do not know that we need concern ourselves with Uncle Paul's future. Our present does not trouble him. I imagine that astute individual can take care of himself. The wealth of a porcine commercial magnate enables him to live anywhere, and for the matter of that, the Hold is as free to him as any other tenant. I cannot forget that I, his only brother's only son, have hardly seen him since his return to England."

"Yet you bear him no animosity, Gregory? Say that you do not," pleaded Winifred, as her husband's brow darkened. "I should be so sorry, for it would be my doing."

"Animosity? No, indeed, dear one. He takes his path in life, even as I take mine, and well for him if he had found the same happiness. I ask him for nothing, he offers me nothing, not even his hand, which I would gladly grasp. But I must let the Hold for your sake—for mine."

"And I have robbed you of it, my own. Can you never live there again?"

"Never is a long word, dear," kissing away the gathering tears; "I hope, I pray, that my old home may be mine once again. But it may not be yet. Our small means could not maintain it. The hill of the world has to be climbed first. Yet, if I never see St. Bedwas again, I would deem it well bartered for your love."

The young man paused abruptly, and she failed to notice his abstracted look, as the girl's ghostly suspicions occurred to him with a certain force. Surely he had heard footsteps. And if mistaken in that, there could be no error about a well-known cold draught sweeping in through the studio-door. Gregory was intimately acquainted with that particular draught. It always made a dead set at his knees when at work, and he could swear to it in a thousand, even as he could swear that the door was no longer closed, though his own hand had fastened it.

"Winifred," he said quietly, "will you go upstairs for me? My favourite pipe is about somewhere."

It was purely an apocryphal errand. The article in question was resting in his pocket. He knew it, but was anxious she should leave him.

Alone, Gregory Tregarthan's actions were peculiar. Rising from his chair, with every sense keenly sharpened, but to all appearance undisturbed, he gradually worked his way towards the curtain, which he distinctly saw move, then quickly he dashed it aside and passed through, to find—not a ghost; ghosts do not wear garments on which strong hands can lay a tangible grasp, ghosts possess not harsh cracked voices, and a ghost must have been on very intimate terms with him indeed, to call him Gregory.

When Winifred returned from her unsuccessful quest, she found the young man very serious and thoughtful. When he left her the next day he was serious and thoughtful still. He was more serious, more thoughtful, when he returned in the evening. Then he said:

"Winifred, congratulate me! I have let the Hold for a better sum than I dared to dream of. No, not yet, dear one; I have better tidings still. The new tenant is a man of unbounded wealth."

He is simply insane on Cornish scenery, and has given me an unlimited commission for pictures around St. Bedwas."

## CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT a lot of things have happened in the past six months, and hardly a single one to be regretted. It seems so long ago, that I fancy the old home ought to be showing the ravages of time."

So spoke Gregory Tregarthan, as, his wife by his side, he saw again the turrets of the Hold.

The place was, indeed, little changed. The shrubs perhaps were better trimmed, the drive more carefully tended than before, but there was nothing else to mark the new reign—a month old then, since Winifred detailed her ghostly suspicions.

The sunlight of the west was fading away in a glowing crimson glory. The evening mists were rising over the moors to soften the rugged grandeur of the Cornish cliffs, sweeping in gently from the quiet sea, whose murmur, the only sound to break the restful calm, seemed welcoming them back.

"Are you glad to see it all again, dear one? Does it appear familiar?"

"Hardly that," said Winifred, and her voice was very grave, even sad. "You forget, Gregory. It was never very well known to me. I was a poor school-teacher, with no right here. I scarce ventured to intrude more than once or twice within those hard-hearted old gates. I feel myself on forbidden ground now."

"Well, sweet, as a matter of fact, we are on forbidden ground—at least you are."

He smiled very brightly, with a happy look not at all becoming in a trespasser.

"I have a certain business here—on my employer's premises—a right of way to the studio, at least. But I have not brought you all the way from town merely to see the outside of the house. At all events I may show you the rooms where I have to work."

He passed with her into the wide hall, the doors swinging back silently before them; and they stood amidst the relics of his race. Battered armour was on the walls. Helmets and shields, lances, swords, the trophies of war and the chase, from a long line of brave ancestors, were all around. Banners, tattered and war-worn, hung from the carved oaken beams, and the failing light of the evening shone through stained glass upon it all, and on her grave face grown graver still.

"I cannot bear this, husband. It makes me so sad—so sorrowful. I have thought of it all many, many times. But until now I never saw it—never realised what my hand had done. Oh, why did you—how could I let you—cast it all aside for my poor love? All these things seem a reproach. But for me it might be yours still."

"It is mine," he answered proudly. "Mine! and shall be mine still more some day, even though fickle fortune compels me to leave it to another a while—to Mr. Jobling."

"I hate the name!" murmured the girl almost indignantly.

"Well, I dare say, Winifred, its owner does too," he rejoined. "It is not a pretty patronymic, and does seem a trifle out of place and incongruous here. But everyone must have a name of some sort, and Mr. Jobling is not a bad fellow. Artists, even those at the top of the tree, may not select their patrons on account of names. It is good enough for a cheque-book. Come, darling, let me show my workshop."

"Oh, Gregory! How charming it is! I never dreamt of anything like this," and Winifred repressed a little cry of admiring wonder.

Her husband had drawn aside a curtain of heavy velvet, not like that faded baize, behind which the girl used to imagine all sorts of horrors, in the home she had left, and she stood in what was to be his studio.

The light was failing fast outside, and much of the large room was in shadow, save where, in the centre, an antique silver lamp was burning. Its gleam fell on the polished floor, strewn here and there with costly skins and rare Oriental rugs; on carved oak, on splendid bronzes, on curiously-fashioned weapons, on mediæval brass-work, on *bric-à-brac* from every part of the world, such as money can command, and the artist's soul delights in.

"I am glad you like it, dear one," he said. "You can hardly see it in this gloom," and the young man turned the lamp higher. "But you shall examine it all to-morrow."

"Gregory dear, am I to—shall I ever come here again?"

"Certainly," was his assured response. "You shall come here and see me work as often—as much as you like. It is an agreement with the owner of it all—with Mr. Jobling."

"Gregory, what is that?"

At the far end Winifred had caught sight of a mass of drapery, which in the obscurity had seemed to stir.

"An artist's wife," he laughed, "and unacquainted with a lay figure."

"But I thought—I fancied it was moving."

"It had no business to, then," and he laughed again. "That is not carrying out the contract. You see, dear, it was not quite fair to leave our old friends in town, and so your ghost is down here with us. Prepare yourself for a surprise."

Gregory Tregarthan left her side. He tossed away a huge hat, a disguising great cloak, and disclosed—not the "Bravo of Venice," but a spare little man, whose fingers clutched a short pipe, suffered to go out for once.

"The best friend we have in the world," and her husband's voice trembled in spite of himself. "My employer—Mr. Jobling," and Uncle Paul Tregarthan himself stepped forward to kiss her.

"I do not understand," gasped astonished Winifred, her gaze wandering from one to the other, and to a fresh personage, who attired in crisp, rustling black silk, attended by the jingle of keys, looked the picture of a highly respectable housekeeper, and was—Jane Barnard.

"Will you tell her, uncle?" said Gregory. "I am a little too happy for talking."

"Yes, dear boy."

The two men grasped hands, and Winifred had never fancied that Paul Tregarthan could speak so jovially.

"Wait just a moment."

Uncle Paul was lighting his pipe. Perhaps it was to hide his own emotion, but there was something in the action which carried her thoughts back to the past troubles, to the little school-house on the moor, to the man who had appeared so hard and merciless, so cruel then.

"I did not know anything about you once, my dear," went on Uncle Paul. "What I had heard was from this lad's mother, and—there, I must say so—it was not to your advantage. I understood you to be a cunning, designing young person, who had entrapped my nephew. I make no doubt you *did*, my dear. He could not help it. And I envy him his luck. Well, I did want to break it off. Living so long in a republic, affecting to sneer at all the old world's ways, it goes without saying that I would have given my ears to see Gregory make a great alliance, with a countess, a duchess, a grand duchess, or a princess"—warming with his subject—"but it was not to be. Few dreams dreamt by Mr. Jobling," and the old man sighed, "have ever been realised, save the one of wealth, and that is not everything. You do not understand the name of Jobling. I traded under it. When I left England long years ago, ancestral pride was not for me, but I had too much respect for the old line to post Tregarthan over the pigs. Well, the boy's happiness was my care, and I did not know, Winifred, your love could be so true, so unselfish. Do not blame me," and he was speaking sadly. "I loved once, and—and—There, enough of that. I was deceived, and had learned to doubt it all."

A pitying impulse moved the girl, Uncle Paul's voice was so full of a weary sadness, and she lightly touched his withered cheek with her lips.

"Thank you, my dear," he said simply. "That was very good of you, and I take it as an earnest that we will be better friends in the future—that you will pardon me my mistrust."

"Rather, uncle"—yes, Winifred did call him so—"rather you should forgive me for thwarting your plans."

"Hush, my dear child! You have made Gregory a happy man; what more could all the British peerage do? Well, let me finish. I meant not to be unkind to the lad for ever. I thought to try this wonderful love by the cruel tests of time and poverty, and with the Tregarthan obstinacy, your silly husband foiled me there, for you were married. Then I made friends with Jane Barnard here, and her sister. It was not enough that they told me how good and patient you were. Still unbelieving, they smuggled me into the house, and night after night I watched you, all unsuspected."

"No," interposed Winifred. "I was sure there was some mystery."

Uncle Paul kissed her into silence.

"I know, my dear. You thought it was a ghost. Well, ghosts, like other listeners, ought to hear no good of themselves. But this ghost did. Listen as I might, I heard no evil from those pretty lips. Never a harsh word of one who had been harsh to you. Nothing but hopeful, loving faith for your husband, and pitying kindness for a worldly, suspicious old man."

"You were the ghost, then?" cried Winifred; "and Jane Barnard knew it! Jane, how could you?"

But that respectable housekeeper could, and weeping a few happy tears on her own account, seemed no way ashamed of her share in the transaction.

"Yes, Jane knew it. She told me of your terrors, and I, convinced at length, was going to declare myself, when the ghost was laid, exorcised by your husband's exceedingly strong hand. It is

a month ago," said Uncle Paul, ruefully touching his neck, "but I feel the grip of those fingers yet. Then we took counsel together, and prepared a pleasant little surprise for you—the more fitting, as this is the first of April."

Then came smiles and tears, sobbing and rejoicing. And there was a quartette, embracing all round, for Jane Barnard was not left out.

"How happy you have made us, Uncle Paul!" murmured Winifred. "You dear, unbelieving, kind-hearted, sceptical ghost. Only one thing is wanted yet," with a shadow of pain; "Mrs. Tregarthan—Gregory's mother."

"I think I can answer for her," cried Paul Tregarthan. "She is gone off in a bit of a huff. She will come round in time, but will not return here because she is going to be—Gregory knows all about it—married again herself."

"Married!" ejaculated Winifred.

"Why not?" said Uncle Paul. "Do you think no one has a right to that happy state but yourself? But she will do well if it bring her the same joy and peace which has come to us all on this most happy first of April."

## Going to the Ball.

THE rhythmic beat of the horses' feet

Rang on the frosty road;  
Away in the west, o'er the low hill's crest,  
One star in splendour glowed;  
On fields and fells, like sentinels,  
Stood many a leafless tree,  
And as we swept, by the watch they kept,  
I thought of thee.

Over the ridge, where the grey-stone bridge  
Arches the swollen river;  
O'er the winding path, the oaks beneath,  
Where the shadows lurk for ever;  
Through the village street, where the idlers meet,  
The flying wheels to see;  
O'er the breezy down, through the little town,  
I thought of thee.

Through the lonely park, where in boskage dark,  
The deer in covert lay;  
Past the wooded shades and the ferny glades,  
Where the fairies love to play;  
Then a sweep around, and a clash of sound,  
And the lights of revelry.  
And the carriage stopped, and the world's veil dropped  
O'er thoughts of thee.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," &c., &c.

### Book VI.

#### CHAPTER I. FAME.

DUSK was falling over the thick autumn woods of Vaux. Lights gleamed here and there from the windows of the house like watchful eyes mistrusting the deepening shadows. Now and then the rising wind shook a shower of leaves from the branches, and then went sighing round the grey old Abbey, and rushing through empty corridors and passages in a weird and echoing fashion of its own.

The pretty mistress of Vaux walking through one of those corridors shivered involuntarily.

"It makes one think of ghosts," she said, and quickened her steps, finally pausing before a closed door through whose cracks a faint light streamed. She knocked, and then entered.

The fire-light was leaping up the wide chimney, and seated on a low chair before the flames was the outlined figure of a woman; she raised her head and looked round:

"Come in," she said. "I have done work for to-day; you don't disturb me."

Mrs. Dunbar closed the door and advanced. Another chair, small and cosy, stood invitingly opposite that already occupied. She drew it close to the fire and shivered:

"I hate this time of the year," she said. "Did you ever hear anything so mournful as the wind? Makes one think of ghosts, and all sorts of creepy horrors."

"Are there ghosts at Vaux?" asked a voice, low and musical, but with a tired sadness in its soft notes that spoke of trouble, and pain,

and knowledge of life's sorrows—of something that had hushed youth's music, and brought in its place only faint and far-off echoes of what "had been."

"Ghosts!" cried Madge Dunbar. "My dear Beryl, of course there are. Could one have a properly authentic ancestral possession, without some history appertaining to it? There's one about Vaux. The housekeeper told me, and it gave me the horrors for a time. Cosmo laughed at me. What a blessing it must be to be a man, and have no nerves. By-the-bye, would you like to hear the story? you might introduce it in your new book, you know. If I were an authoress, I should be always on the look-out for information. I can't imagine how you can write at all, buried alive as you are. I do wish you'd come out of your shell. You really ought to. Why, do you know when people say to me, 'I wonder who on earth "Damia" is,' I am absolutely in agony to tell them, 'Why, she's my dearest friend, and her real name—'"

"Oh, hush, Madge," interposed that low, pained voice; "we have gone over that ground often enough. A woman situated as I am cannot bear the light of publicity. I don't want anyone to know me as the woman I am—deserted, suspected, friendless. Why should my private history be at the mercy of every chattering fool? What gain is it now to be known as Beryl Marsden, or 'Damia'?"

"I don't know about the gain," said Mrs. Dunbar, ringing the bell for some tea as she spoke; "I should think it was nice to be famous myself. I don't think I'd hide my light under a bushel. Why, the way you've got on is wonderful. Only three years, and already your name is quite famous."

"Famous! Ah, my dear, do you call mine fame? I just had the luck to write on a topic and in a style that hit popular taste for the moment. I had twelve months of trying and failure with that same book. I am still wondering what could have possessed Tonson and Co. to publish it. I am sure Colonel Dunbar had a hand in it."

"How modest we are," laughed Mrs. Dunbar merrily. "Our own merits count for nothing. Why, my dear, I always knew you were clever, but everyone says now you are a perfect genius. And you must be. Gracious! Fancy writing a whole book, page after page—chapter after chapter. To me it seems a perfect marvel. And such a book. Why, it's a household word now!"

Beryl Marsden smiled sadly.

"You were always my consolator and encourager," she said, looking fondly at the bright face. "I should have lost heart long ago if it hadn't been for you. Besides, I owe you the suggestion. I should never have thought of authorship myself."

"Oh yes, you would," said her friend, wheeling her chair round to the tea-table, which the footman had just set out. "It would have come by inspiration, or something. Why, years ago you told me you studied people because you were collecting materials for a book."

"Did I?" said Beryl with a faint blush. "That must have been one of my random speeches."

"I wish you made them now," said her friend as she brought her the cup of tea she had just poured out. "I wish I could see something of the old, bright, sparkling Beryl I once knew."

"She is getting an old woman now, dear—a woman who has had far too long an acquaintance with sorrow and with pain, to be bright, or thoughtless, or heedless any more."

"You have indeed had trouble—a mountain of it," said Madge tenderly. "I wonder sometimes you are alive."

"I should not be if I only sat with folded hands and thought of it," said Beryl with a weary sigh. "There is never a day in my life that I don't say, 'Thank Heaven for work to do and brains to do it with!' I can lose myself, and all memories of what I am, and what I have lost, in that, and that alone."

"I wonder what your worthy husband would think if he knew," said Madge incautiously.

The beautiful sad face beside her grew very white.

"Nothing I do can affect him now," she said slowly. "He misjudged me by the calumny of others. I care very little about justifying myself in his eyes again."

"I expect he is sorry for it now," said Madge Dunbar thoughtfully. "Mephistopheles rather over-acted his part, didn't he? His treachery did him no good and you no harm. I wonder sometimes you consented to a separation. I should have fought it out to the bitter end."

"And faced the scandal, the disgrace, the horror of it all? Oh, I could not! I would have consented to anything rather than that. Wretched as my married life was, I could not bear to see it analysed and discussed through the length and breadth of the land. And what could freedom be to me? Only deeper shame."

"Was he very unkind to you?" asked Madge tenderly.

"I suppose he would not think so," said Beryl. "We were only thoroughly unsuited. I—I don't like to speak of this subject,

you know, even to you. I did not think he cared for me enough even to be jealous."

Madge Dunbar's face flushed suddenly.

"My dear," she said, "it was not that—only. Cosmo told me long ago. He wanted to screen himself at that time. Everyone knew the reason. All Simla was ringing with it. I should think Mephistopheles has often ground his teeth in wrath over the money wasted on that telegram. Failing Ivor Grant, he must have tried John Marsden. I shouldn't think he was an easy subject to wring money out of, though. I wonder what has become of the wretch!"

"Don't talk of him," cried Beryl with a shudder; "his name is always ominous of trouble. I hate its very sound."

"And poor Ivor!" continued Madge Dunbar softly. "How completely he has disappeared. I wonder when they will find the missing heir to the Court. They've been nearly three years over it now, and it looks so desolate all shut up and neglected."

Beryl Marsden only sighed. Her thoughts went back over a passage of years, sad, and cruel, and bitter years; which had changed her from a frank, bright girl into a suffering woman. Years in which she had striven to do her duty bravely and honestly, yet somehow always seemed to fail. With her children had come new hopes and tender sympathies, but they, too, were blighted in the uncongenial soil to which her own life had been transplanted. Then followed darkness and anguish, on which she dreaded to look, till like a rift parting the thick black clouds of sorrow came that sweet and manly sympathy for which her heart had hungered through starved, cold years of brave endurance, only to find—too late. Since then there had only been for her utter solitude of heart and life. All effort to justify herself in the sight of her husband had been unavailing, the truth being that he dared not show himself in England, and dared not have her out in his retreat among the hills. His own gaoler was a tyrant as unscrupulous as himself, and would have thought nothing of ordering his death had the whim seized her to do it. He was not averse, therefore, to turn the tables on his wife, and utterly refused to believe her own and her father's assertion of her innocence, or put his own suspicions to the proof.

"Some day," he said to himself, "it may suit my purpose to be magnanimous and forgive her, but not just now. I must teach her a lesson first."

Beryl had been three years learning that lesson. The first year had been spent at the rectory with her father, and spent also in setting herself to work at the only thing for which she felt she had any talent, or inclination—literature.

She was not sure of her fitness to be an author, and the first year had only added to her doubts, yet failed to quite extinguish that little spark which burns only in those who feel within them the power to conquer, as well as to achieve.

Beryl possessed that feeling in a remarkable degree. Obstacles did not daunt, difficulties did not baffle her. Having said in her heart, "I will succeed!" she simply went on in the path she had marked out for herself, turning neither to right nor left. Often discouraged but never hopeless, until now, after three years, success began to smile on her, and her *nom de plume* was already one of note and soon to be one of envy.

Looking at her now in the dim firelight, she did not by any means seem to agree with the typical idea of an authoress.

Only a pale, delicate, sad-faced woman, with an air and appearance more suggestive of the atmosphere of home than the arena of Fame. A woman who did not give any impression of power or genius, and yet possessed both in a remarkable degree.

Perhaps there is nothing more disappointing than preconceived ideas of celebrities. People always expect their looks to bear the impress of the gifts or talents with which they are associated, and not unfrequently refuse altogether to believe that a commonplace, ordinary-looking individual can possess a mind that is very far from being either.

However, Beryl Marsden had not yet run the gauntlet of public criticism, for only Mrs. Dunbar, and her husband, and her publishers knew her real name.

Once launched upon that treacherous sea of public favour, it was surprising with what eagerness and enthusiasm she threw herself into the profession she had adopted. Her life and thoughts seemed to hold nothing else. Experience of life and indomitable perseverance are absolutely necessary to genius, however great its natural gifts, and Beryl Marsden possessed both. Her whole heart was in her work and in the characters she produced. The sorrows and joys she had lived through were actual things to be transcribed—not phantoms to be outlined. Word-painting may be very beautiful, but it is not life, it cannot touch us to tears, or smiles, or laughter. No, that is an art unteachable, and marks the unapproachable difference between mere ability and genius. The former is a laboured effort to accomplish what the latter performs with no effort at all. It is the rare combination of the two which marks out the path of success, and

brings to their possessor that laurel wreath of fame which thousand vainly covet.

A long silence had fallen between the two friends—silence filled by that thoughtful retrospect of her past, in which Beryl Marsden rarely indulged. It made her weak and sorrowful, it took the very light of hope from life; it made her say to herself:

"Of what use to struggle, to fight, to waste time, and thought, and energy? Will any single soul, out of the many who read or know me, have even one grateful or regretful memory for me when I am dead?"

Therefore, because thought led to retrospect, and retrospect to sorrowful misgivings, and misgivings in their turn to that inevitable cry of every tired and weary soul, "*Vanitas vanitatum*," she rarely allowed herself to indulge in them.

That one bright, beautiful romance of her life had faded away into the sombre colouring of regret. Regret for her own blindness and folly, regret for the sorrow brought on the noblest, manliest life she had ever known, regret for the passionate joys for which her heart had once thirsted, and which were never—never—to be hers.

In her writings alone such feelings found vent. In her picture heroes lived again and yet again that hero of her own dreams. Every energy of her nature, every gift of her mind, every thought that glorified her pages, were but so many tributes laid at the feet of the man who had called forth what was best in that mind, who had worshipped her so vainly and so well, and to whom she mentally dedicated all she did, saying to herself: "One day, perhaps, he will know, and feel a little proud of the woman he called friend."

On the whole, at this period of her life, Beryl Marsden was far less unhappy than a woman in her unfortunate position might have expected to be. The most wholesome, perhaps the only cure for sorrow is occupation of the mind. It is that idle brooding over trouble, that endless lamentation over the love, or the loss, or the suffering of life, that makes grief so bitter and so trying a thing. Life must be lived, be it ever so wearisome or so hard.

Beryl Marsden had learnt this fact, and even got used to accepting it, though she was only a lonely woman struggling against fate, with very little love or comfort in her life. Perhaps the ideal world took her out of her own, perhaps the people who talked with her, suffered with her, in whose joys her own lived again, and for whose sorrows her own tears fell, helped more than she herself knew to console her. She forgot in their companionship that her own life was so dull and empty. She felt that interest, and delight, and inspiration which every author—if he be worth the name—feels, as the children of his brain grow into life and being, and become actual realities, not figments—the substance of a shadow they have embodied, not the unsubstantial presence of that shadow itself.

Perhaps that time of creation is the sweetest of all. No alien voices come between the writer and his friends—no reviewer's scoffs brush away the bloom of fancy and inspiration; no cynical minds jeer at sentiment, or mock at pathos; no blame or praise of the world at large invade the sanctity of his chamber, and drag him thence into the cold, hard light of day.

Well, Beryl Marsden had served her apprenticeship and learnt by experience that writing and publishing are two very different things; she had not had much idea of making money, though she longed to be independent even of her father, and after three years of hard work she knew that her success was, after all, only problematical. Still, she had done something—she had got the thin edge of the wedge in, and was determined to drive it farther and farther. Madge Dunbar thought her wonderful, but then Madge was a mere butterfly of fashion in comparison with Beryl Marsden, and knew it too. That fact, however, did not prevent her loving Beryl with a wonderful, admiring, and most loyal love. In fact, her pride, and belief, and encouragement were her friend's sweetest incense at this time, and those periodical visits to Vaux were the brightest and happiest of her brief days of leisure.

So for three years had her life passed; so at the close of those three years it finds her now; a woman on whom success begins to throw the glamour of its smile—yet a woman who, after all, is true enough to the instincts of her sex, to long and long, as only a woman can, for one brave, tender heart on which to rest her weary head—for one voice which should whisper in her ear, not of praise or homage, or wonder or renown, but only the sweetest words which thrill her soul as never trumpet-call of fame did yet: "I love you—is not that enough?"

## CHAPTER II. A GHOST-STORY.

"HAVE you fallen asleep?" cried Mrs. Dunbar with a sudden start. "You haven't spoken a word for a quarter of an hour."

Beryl roused herself with an effort.

"I—I was thinking," she said.

She rose from her seat, and stood with an arm resting on the oak



mantel-shelf, and leant her head on her hand. Her face had resumed its expression of settled melancholy.

"You were going to tell me that ghost-story," she said, with her eyes on the dull glow of the wood-fire.

"Ugh!" said Madge Dunbar with a shiver. "Why did you remind me of it? This is such an eerie place, and the very sound of the wind makes one fanciful. Besides, I don't suppose the ghost-story would interest you at all, for you have a mind superior to superstition."

Beryl smiled faintly.

"For all that tirade, I know you are dying to tell me the story. Say on."

"Well," said Madge, settling herself more comfortably in her chair, "you know the north corridor; at least, perhaps you don't know it, for it leads past a suite of dismantled rooms that we never use. Well, hundreds of years ago, when Vaux was an abbey really, a beautiful young girl, daughter of an ancient Catholic race, was serving her novitiate here, and a very wicked and unscrupulous priest had fallen in love with her. The girl knew nothing of it, no more did anyone else, so says the story; but, of course, like most of the holy retreats of that time, Vaux possessed secret passages and doors, and all that, and one night the nuns and the abbess were awakened by fearful screams, and came rushing out of their cells to see what was the matter, and there on the oak floor of the north corridor lay that poor young novice—murdered. No trace of the murderer was ever discovered, and years went on, and the priest grew powerful and rich, and became a great Church dignitary; but it happened that one dark wintry night he was weather-bound on the way to some monastery, and obliged to put up at the Abbey of Vaux. The abbess received him most hospitably and proudly, of course, and was entertaining him with—not quite monastic fare—in her own rooms, when a message came to say that one of the nuns was dying, and was calling unceasingly for a confessor. So the abbess thought she would take the holy prior to the cell, as it was a great privilege for the humble sister to be shrived by so great a man. Well, as they got to the north corridor, the prior suddenly turned ghastly white, and began to tremble so much that the very teeth in his head shook. The abbess was amazed. 'What is the matter, holy father?' she asked. But he only stood shivering and pointing, and looking such a perfect picture of terror that the good lady was quite bewildered. The truth is that the prior could not move a step forward because that bleeding nun barred the way; but no one could see her but himself, and he was too frightened to say what it was he really saw. And all the time the poor dying sister was crying out for someone to hear her confession, and there outside the door stood the great and holy man, utterly unable to attend to her bidding, for, every time he took a step forward, that dreadful vision waved him back, and struck fresh terror into his guilty soul. At last, made desperate by the entreaties of the dying woman, the abbess left him in the corridor, and went on a few paces, and entered the cell. She said some soothing words, and then turned back to see if the holy man was able to do his duty. The corridor was empty! Imagine the consternation, the confusion, the terror of the whole body of chattering, nervous women. But, search where they would, look where they would, not a vestige of that holy man was to be found. He had disappeared as completely as if the ground had opened and swallowed him. Of course after this, all sorts of strange stories were told about the north corridor, and the nuns used to declare that they saw the priest's figure in his cowl and gown standing there, as they went by to their cells, and after several had died of fright, and a great many others gone out of their minds, the cells in that corridor were closed, or only used for punishment-cells. And now for the conclusion. Years and years after, when most of the abbeys and monasteries were taken from the priests and given by Henry VIII. to his faithful followers, Vaux descended into the hands of our venerable ancestors, and was turned into a habitable dwelling. Then at last it was discovered that underneath that corridor was a stone staircase leading to a passage that traversed the lower portion of the building. The entrance to this passage was through a small, square oak plank, let into the flooring of the corridor in a manner that defied detection, and opening by a spring inside the vault. At the time these discoveries were made, a human skeleton was found at the foot of the stairs, the skull broken in such a way that it showed death must have been instantaneous. And now there's the story for you. Isn't it thrilling?"

"Very," said Beryl with a faint smile. "Rather improbable, though. Who could have opened the spring, and shot the priest down the trap-door if the secret staircase was unknown?"

"The ghost, of course," said Madge. "Don't you see the sublime justice of the affair? The priest came up that stair to kill the ghost—by the way, she wasn't a ghost till afterwards, but that's a mere detail—the ghost comes up the stairs and kills the priest. The only weak point of the story seems to me that—"

"That no one found the trap-door?"

"Oh no. That no one seemed to possess any olfactory organs," laughed Madge. "Fancy living for years above a mouldering body, and not discovering it!"

"The corridor is not haunted now, I suppose?" said Beryl.

"I beg your pardon. Did I not tell you the family considered it absolutely necessary to have a ghost laid on the premises—quite as much so as the water? Oh yes, the good prior still takes his 'walks abroad,' in and out of season, and always in that same corridor. I think it's a pity he does not vary the locality a little; even ghosts must find one spot for perambulation a trifle monotonous."

Beryl's lip curled with faint contempt.

"Has anyone professed to see it?"

"You are sceptical, I see," said Madge Dunbar lightly. "Well, so was I. But I do most solemnly assure you, Beryl, that I actually did see it once."

"My dear child!" exclaimed her friend, "don't try and impose on me any further."

"It's not imposing on you," said Madge gravely. "It was some years ago now. In fact—why should I mind saying it?—it was when you were staying here that Christmas, and—and Ivor Grant. You know what a number of people were here? And one night I was looking at some rooms with the housekeeper that I wanted arranged for some coming guests. I had never heard this ghost-story then, and was going along the corridor quite unconcernedly, when I saw before me a tall figure in an odd sort of black robe. I wondered who it was, and called out. At the sound of my voice it turned, and I caught a glimpse of a pale face and glittering eyes under the shrouding cowl. I can't tell you for a moment what a horrible feeling it gave me. I stood quite still, I was so frightened, and then, quite suddenly, it seemed to melt away, and there was nothing."

"Fancy!" said Beryl laconically.

"Fancy, indeed!" said her friend with an indignant glance. "It was nothing of the sort."

"Well, did you go along the corridor, and see if anyone was hiding there?"

"No—o," said Madge doubtfully; "I was too frightened."

"That's how all ghost-stories are so weak," said Beryl. "People never try to trace them out. They see something, and terror and imagination do the rest. The stories never lose in the telling, you know."

"I am perfectly convinced I saw the ghost of the Abbey," said Madge decidedly; "and nothing would induce me to go through that corridor at night—nothing in the world."

"Wouldn't you come with me?" asked Beryl, smiling. "I really feel very much inclined to brave the ghost."

"I hope you won't," said her friend energetically. "It's all very well to make fun of ghosts and supernatural things, but I'm sure there's something in them for all that."

"Air," remarked Beryl concisely.

Madge shook her head in pretended wrath.

"Sceptic, beware! Perhaps you'll say there's no such thing as magnetism or clairvoyance, or feelings that come by inspiration, like antipathy—instincts that warn us of something to be avoided, and which, if disregarded, invariably lead to harm. Did you never feel such an antipathy?"

"Yes," said Beryl in a low voice, "once."

"And who was it gave you the feeling?"

"Count Savona."

"Ah," said Madge quietly, "you see my theory is right. You have seen very little of that man, yet you felt he was repugnant to you, and he has worked all the harm of your life. I do wonder what has become of him," she added abruptly. "I would give anything to know."

"We are leaving the field of mysticism," said Beryl. "After all, the count has done as much harm as lies in his power. Why did you bring him up, Madge? It always makes me feel uncanny."

"Well, let us drop the subject," said Madge, rising with a laugh, and pushing back her low chair in order to stand beside her friend. "It is about time for me to dress. You might come down to dinner for once," she added, "and help me entertain the county fogies."

Beryl shook her head.

"Don't ask me to break my rule, dear. Besides, I am much happier here. I can always work best at night."

Madge shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"Each to his taste, and certainly yours would not be mine. I hate solitude."

"I am never lonely now," said Beryl, glancing at the piles of manuscript covering her writing-table. "I have plenty of companions there."

Madge was silent for a moment. A step sounded outside in the corridor, and she was listening to it, wondering whether Colonel Dunbar was coming for her, as he often did. A knock, and then the door opened, and she saw her husband standing there with the post-bag in his hand, his usual bright face clouded and troubled.

"Letters?" she said, and stretched out her hands lazily.

He gave them her in silence. He was looking at Beryl, and she, catching his gaze, felt her heart give a strange, sudden throb.

"You—you have heard something?" she said hurriedly.

Madge looking up from her letter at sound of the sharp, troubled ring in her friend's voice, read too that strange expression in her husband's face.

"What is it, Cosmo?" she asked timidly.

He held an open newspaper in his hand, and at their joint questioning he pointed to a paragraph contained in it.

"Shipping list," murmured Madge vaguely. "What of that?"

But Beryl Marsden's face grew like stone. She saw plainly enough what was printed there. Only a list of passengers homeward bound in the mail-steamer from Madras, and midway in that list was her husband's name, "John Marsden."

### CHAPTER III. THE HAUNTED CORRIDOR.

LONG, long after, while Mrs. Dunbar was entertaining the "county fogies," and lights were gleaming and voices sounding through the brilliantly-lighted reception-rooms, Beryl Marsden sat alone in her little "study," as Madge had named her sanctum; sat with listless hands, from which the pen had dropped, and aching brain from which all inspiration had fled—sat, wondering and conjecturing what she had best do under such strange and unexpected circumstances.

Why was her husband coming back to England? Was it for reconciliation, or the reverse? Would he demand her return, or widen still further the breach that treachery had created?

How distinctly she remembered when last they parted! How, in frenzy, and terror, and wild grief, she had accused him of being the cause of her children's danger, and scarcely paused to say farewell, in the agony of mind caused by Ivor Grant's message!

Then she remembered his unsympathetic receipt of the news that had almost broken her heart, his cool advice that she should remain in England with her friends until her spirits were likely to be less morbid and depressing; then her own illness and his long silence, and the vague rumours following—rumours on which fell, sharp and swift, the horrors of disgrace and ruin. After that all had gone wrong between them. He had hurled at her life the bitterest insult that can touch a woman. He had refused to believe in her innocence or receive any justification from her hands. He had left her with neither pity, nor counsel, nor means; left her in the most painful situation that can befall a woman; banned by suspicion, homeless, husbandless, moneyless. And now what would he do?

Conjecture showed her a hundred pictures, equally unlikely, yet equally possible, but in one and all she only saw herself enduring, suffering, struggling with the dreariest, emptiest life that ever showed itself to a nature passionate, and gifted, and faithful as her own.

How strange it is that some lives are so ordered, that thirsting for joy and sympathy, and full to the brim of passionate affection, of the capacity for giving and receiving happiness, they yet never can taste that tantalising cup, never drink one draught from the spring on whose borders their feet are stayed!

Beryl raised her head at last with a weary sigh, a sigh that echoed strangely in that quiet room. She might have been in some far-off desert for any sound or sign of human life about her.

The fall of the wood-ash, of the tick of the clock, were the only audible sounds, and she rose from her chair at last with a faint, nervous shiver, and stirred the logs into a brighter blaze.

"I can't work to-night," she said to herself. "I am thoroughly upset. Oh, Heaven, what will become of me if I have to go back to that old miserable life! I would sooner die now!"

Poor Beryl! sad, and tired, and heartsick. She had yet to learn how elastic may be the heart's capabilities for sorrow ere Death can still its weary aching, or chill its throbs of pain.

The wind still went round the house with plaintive sighs. The long empty corridors re-echoed to its sounds. She grew nervous and irritable, listening to those weird complaints that were like the sound of a human voice in pain.

"I can do no more work to-night," she thought to herself, as she put the scattered sheets together, and wheeled the table away into its recess. Then she opened the door, and went out into the dimly-lighted passage.

The little study set apart for her use in all her visits to Vaux was far removed from the reception and morning rooms. As she moved slowly along, her eyes turned half unconsciously to the staircase leading to that disused suite of rooms opening on the north corridor. Her thoughts were far enough away from any memory of Madge Dunbar's story; indeed, she was wrapped in a maze of sorrowful and perplexed thoughts, in no way associated with the ghostly legend of the Abbey. Yet suddenly a deathly chill seemed to fall over her, as if some numbing blast had swept across her face.

Involuntarily she paused, and her eyes caught sight of a

figure moving swiftly along in the dim gloom of the unlighted corridor. Half in wonder her glance followed it. A tall figure in dusky, swaying garments, and drawn over its head a monk's cowl. Then swift as thought came the memory of Mrs. Dunbar's story, and Beryl caught her breath in a sudden spasm of fear. An instant, and she sprang up the staircase, her light feet echoing on the polished oak. The figure turned. From a window above a flickering ray of moonlight fell across the gloom, and showed her a white, bloodless face, with eyes that glittered evilly beneath that shrouding cowl.

For a second's space that look held her spellbound, as much by some memory re-created, as by the thrill of terror that ran through every vein. Yet, summoning all her courage, she thrust aside the fears that crowded round, and still advanced.

The figure retreated. That sight gave her courage, and quickened her own pursuit. But, as she reached the last stair, the moonlight faded into darkness, and the whole corridor was again wrapped in gloom. At the same moment, her foot slipped on the polished oak surface, and she fell backwards, clutching at the balustrade to save or break her fall.

Bruised and shaken, she rose at last, and again, as if in mockery, the flickering moonlight showed her the long, dusky corridor stretching before her. It was empty. Not a sight or sign of living creature as the moon-rays swept it from end to end.

Trembling greatly, she paused midway on the staircase, wondering what she should do. She felt she had not courage to pursue the intruder, whether material or ghostly, and a shuddering fear took possession of her.

Dazed and shaken, she groped her way back, and found herself at last in her own room. The reflection of her face startled her as she met it in the glass. Involuntarily she pressed her hands to her eyes as if to shut out their fixed look of horror.

"What have I seen?" she asked herself, and only the wild throbs of her heart answered the question. She sank into a chair before the fire, and there remained lost in deep and confused thought.

It seemed to her that hours had passed since she had left the study. Her limbs ached with the shock of that fall, and a large bruise was slowly showing itself on her white forehead where it had struck the balustrade. But she was unconscious of pain, or lapse of time.

The sound of Madge Dunbar's laughing voice struck on her ear at last like a jarring discord. The presence of the pretty little woman fluttering into the room in her Parisian toilette and glittering jewels seemed to her horribly incongruous and irritating. Madge was too excited and full of chatter even to notice her friend's strange appearance. She was used to see Beryl sitting in absorbed meditation, and accustomed to her prolonged fits of silence. She rattled on with a description of her dinner-party, and the dresses, manners, and conversation of her guests. Seeing, however, that Beryl never seemed to heed or hear her, she stopped abruptly, and took a survey of the white face leaning back on the chair-cushions.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked abruptly. "Mercy, you look as if you had seen a ghost!"

"I—I think I have," said Beryl Marsden.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## A Family Feud.

(A STORY IN FIVE WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER XIII.

IT occurred to Sir Raymond Bradwell with a vague sense of wonder, as he retraced his steps from Croyle Farm to the manor-house, that from the first word to the last of his conversation with Agnes Fenton, no direct reference had been made to the relations existing between herself and his son. The presumed engagement had been tacitly ignored. In face of a common and urgent peril, all lesser considerations had fallen out of sight. But it by no means followed that the offence was condoned. When once this cloud had passed it would be time to deal with the minor problem. The baronet assured himself that Agnes would understand this, and would know that a judgment upon Harry's youthful rashness and disobedience was for the present simply suspended. Somehow he had faith enough in the girl's good sense to believe that she would not regard the day as won, and all obstacles removed out of her path, merely because Harry's father had found it necessary to consult her in a very unconventional and awkward strait. Whether in the last resort—if Harry were obstinate and Agnes true to him—Sir Raymond would yield, was a question advisedly left unanswered.

According to arrangement, the interview between Harry and his father and his betrothed duly took place in the one cell of the little Hunstone detention-house. As was inevitable, it was a pathetic

meeting, and yet there was an element of constraint in both the demeanour and the utterances of each member of the trio. A consciousness of the delicacy of the situation, and of the liability of his own words and acts to at least some measure of misinterpretation, weighed upon the baronet, in addition to the burden of shame and grief which he carried on Harry's account. And a closely kindred reserve oppressed Agnes. In the presence of this stern, grave elder—friend or foe she could hardly as yet divine—she could not possibly give vent to the half that was in her heart. Harry, in his turn, was bewildered by what he saw and heard, and while grateful to his father for bringing Agnes to his prison, was convinced by a peculiar hard gleam in Sir Raymond's eye, and by the pursing of Sir Raymond's lips, that the phenomenon implied far less than at first he had been eager to suppose.

The discussion naturally concerned, mainly, Harry's defence. This had been placed in the hands of a popular and clever Sellworth solicitor, and he was that very hour in Hunstone testing evidence and weaving together important facts.

"Of course it is absurd to believe you guilty, Harry, for a single moment," Sir Raymond said, "but I'm afraid there's a considerable prejudice against us in the village—the fools!"

"I am aware of it," Harry answered gloomily.

"Nadow thinks it will be advisable to employ a London detective. If we could discover the real criminal, that would upset the theory of these stupid country police in the most satisfactory manner."

"That is precisely what he urged upon me this morning. I gave him instructions to use his own judgment in every way."

"Exactly, and I reiterated your directions. Cost cannot be allowed to stand in the path. He thinks you innocent—I am convinced of it," Sir Raymond answered, eager to apply to his own heart the warmth and consolation of the assurance. "He holds that the motive of—of the murder was most probably robbery after all. He fancies that the assassin was either disturbed in some way, or took fright at his deed and decamped without his meditated spoil. He says he has known instances of this sort of thing, of a man's nerve failing him in the crucial moment, before now, and Nadow has a wide and lengthy experience."

Harry was silent, and the gloom upon his countenance refused to be dispelled. He had his doubts how far this hypothesis would commend itself to a jury, if ultimately his fate should depend upon the decision of that tribunal.

For a couple of precious minutes at the close of the conference the lovers were alone. The baronet had stepped into the small courtyard with the police-sergeant, who, for the time being, was in charge of the prisoner.

"Do not worry, Agnes dearest," the young man whispered; "I am innocent, and this will soon be proved. Who knows but that good may come out of this seeming evil yet? Every cloud has a silver lining, remember."

For his sake the girl kept up her spirits, and even smiled wanly at his forced enthusiasm of faith.

"At least there is one heart which can and does trust you altogether, Harry," she answered, "and whatever comes you will be certain that I am loyal. If only some door would open by which I could help you, and show to the whole world your freedom from this terrible stain!"

She little guessed how nearly this wish was hovering on the verge of fulfilment.

Agnes went home, and was astonished to be informed by her aunt that a second visitor awaited her.

"It is a girl, scarcely as old as yourself, I should imagine," Mrs. Francis Bradwell said, "and she seems half dazed by some trouble of her own, poor thing! I told her you were out—engaged; but she said that she must and would see you. She has walked from the station at Hunstone Junction. You will find her in the second parlour."

A moment later Agnes was face to face with Miriam Huke. The recognition was mutual and instantaneous. But how altered Miriam was! Pale, dishevelled, with heavy, drooping eyelids, and face haggard with an ever-present anguish, her whole appearance testified to the accuracy of Mrs. Bradwell's description. Agnes exhibited the marks of her suspense and sorrow; but this girl seemed to have tasted the very bitterness of despair. What could be her errand?

"You are surprised to see me, of course," she began rapidly, in a low, vibrating voice; "but you did me a kindness once—and a friend of yours is—is—charged with—an awful crime, isn't he?"

Agnes Fenton's interest was almost painful in its suddenly aroused intensity.

"Yes, yes," she said; "he is innocent—he is innocent, and you know it! I can see it in your face. Oh, tell me who did it—the murder!"

There was a brief pause, measured in seconds on the old-fashioned dial-plate, but in years to Agnes Fenton's strained imagination. Miriam Huke was fighting for some semblance of self-possession.

When the story did come it was in half-coherent sentences, with many a break between. Agnes listened, with tightly clasped hands, and conflicting sentiments of pity and relief—pity for the narrator, relief at the tenor of her narrative.

"I fear it was—my father," the girl groaned. "The gentleman—this Captain Middleford—came to our house on business in the morning of—that day"—a shudder seized the speaker—"and my father and he had a quarrel—at the time I didn't know what it was about; I can guess now. Then the captain went away, and the same afternoon my father disappeared also. I haven't seen him since. I fear—I fear—that he followed Captain Middleford—that—that beside himself with anger, he struck the blow." Miriam's voice was paralysed by a wild outburst of sobs.

"I am so sorry for you," Agnes said, a great compassion going out to this tried and weary stranger. And she came closer, and took Miriam's ungloved hand with an impulsive, protecting gesture. Alas! she was powerless to console the suffering one.

"I read the account of—of the affair at Hunstone in the newspaper," Miriam continued, "and my duty seemed plain. I was sure before that that something was wrong, else my father would never have stayed away. But indeed I do not think he had been well or quite himself for a long time. He had met with losses, and they had preyed upon his mind. My poor father! And—and I found proofs. This was amongst my father's papers; it is almost a confession."

She drew from some hidden receptacle the dingy-looking diary, and opened it. There, on the indicated page, Agnes deciphered Samuel Huke's inelegant scrawl as follows:

"Middleford has been here again, and at length I've forced him to an avowal of his intentions. He repudiates the bargain—the scoundrel! the cur! He did it in so many words, and as coolly as one could please. There should be room for no further mistake, he said. Mistake! Yes, I have made a big one—a mistake in supposing that there was honour amongst thieves—we are that, the captain and I—in thinking that I could depend on him when once the screw was loosened. And he shall discover that he's made a blunder too. He has led this country baronet by the nose so successfully that he can play fast and loose with promises, and throw away his old tool with contempt. Can he? I've nothing to live for—except revenge. It has been the dream of my life to make Miriam a lady; and he was bound by a dozen vows at least to marry her. It seemed a bright chance. For that I sacrificed half my fortune in his schemes. And now Miriam is forsaken, as I forsook her mother; and I am his dupe! He shall wed no other wife: I'll see to that. If he lives to float these Drincorn mines—swindle, like the rest—it sha'n't be my fault. I've a long debt to pay, and I'll pay it at once. Good-bye, Miriam, my little one, my doubly-lonely little one! You shall soon be avenged."

As Agnes read slowly on, her last doubts were removed. Here was indeed the key to the mystery.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THE Hunstone police were astounded, and well-nigh indignant, at the turn events were taking. To be proved to have perpetrated an egregious error is not exactly delightful, even to men not marked out by destiny as the guardians of the social order. Even Prime Ministers have been known to lose their tempers when confronted by such an unhappiness. And where prestige counts for much in guiding moral weaklings and overawing wrong-doers, whatever detracts therefrom is surely of the nature of a public misfortune. Such was Sergeant Munn's opinion.

"It's a nuisance," he confided to Brentley, the innkeeper, "a confoundedly awkward nuisance! Here's a case as plain as daylight—everybody said so, crowner's jury an' all—knocked into a cocked hat by the chatter of a couple of girls. Why, 'twill be no wonder if, when we catch a fellow in the act next, he sets up a plea as he wasn't there at all. Ay, and gets evidence to prove it."

"Yes; but you never do catch anybody in the act; 'tisn't police rules, ye know," answered Boniface, chuckling.

The London detective, telegraphed for by Mr. Nadow, had arrived only to find his services forestalled. The clue so unexpectedly supplied by Miriam Huke had been followed, and was being followed, with sufficient success. Already it was certain that both the adjourned inquest on the murdered man and the forthcoming magisterial investigation would have a like issue—the release of Harry Bradwell and the removal of even the faintest stigma upon his character. As is invariably the way of the world—living from hand to mouth in its judgments—a strong revulsion of feeling had now taken place in the village in Harry's favour. Those who a few hours earlier had been foremost in the ranks of the accusers, were now wishful to persuade their acquaintances that they, at any rate, had seen through the absurdity of the charge. Of a sudden it had become quite glaringly obvious that so dastardly a crime was out of all keeping with the young man's antecedents and disposition.

The chain of facts ensuring Harry's vindication was destined to be rendered complete by a further melancholy discovery. Long before the breakfast-hour on the third morning the intelligence was speedily around the village that a body had been found in the stagnant waters of Hunstone Mere. "The rumour was well founded. A labourer, passing by accident along the brink, had observed a puzzling shadow where no tree existed on the sloping bank to play wanton freaks with light and shade. A narrower scrutiny revealed to the man's horrified gaze the outline of a human figure. He raised the alarm, a little crowd was soon collected, grappling-hooks were used, and the corpse of Samuel Huke, pawnbroker, commission-agent, money-lender, murderer, was dragged into the chilly autumn sunshine.

It was felt that identification was scarcely needed, except as a matter of form and a tribute to the genius of red-tapeism. But Miriam was brought to the little roadside inn where the remains lay, and with many a heartbreaking sigh and sob recognised the features of her erring father. He and the man of higher rank and better birth who had deceived him had quitted life's stage together. Whether, after hunting down his victim and accomplishing his fell purpose, the usurer had mistaken his path, and in hasty flight had stumbled unintentionally into those dark waters, or whether he had committed suicide, it was impossible to say. Public opinion—backed, certainly, by the final words of passionate farewell in the diary—was unanimous in clinging to the latter theory.

Harry Bradwell was once more free. As the convalescent measures his joy at the fresh vigour beginning to bound in his veins by the recollection of days and nights of sickness; as the returning exile measures his happiness at seeing again the white cliffs of Britain by the loneliness he has undergone in a foreign land; so Harry could but estimate his present relief by the pain and depression of spirit which he had so recently endured. The burden he had carried loomed heavier in the retrospect than it had actually been. In his cell the constant elaboration of plans of defence had helped to keep up his spirits.

It was a strange sensation to step out into the familiar streets and receive the congratulations of friends who did rejoice, and of friends who desired to rejoice—Mr. Keith in the one category, Sergeant Munn in the other. Brief as had been his incarceration, the regained liberty seemed a thing to test, to dally with, to but half believe in. There was a novelty about this return to the active, bustling world, very different to any earlier experience on which Harry's memory could lay its hand.

Harry's father was there to welcome him, and to drive him home to the manor-house.

"I was confident that it would all come right in the end," Sir Raymond said. "I had a letter of very warm apology this morning from Ockley at South Cedars, who committed you. Of course I know that he had no option but to sign the paper on the testimony the police brought forward. I should have done it myself if the cases had been reversed, and his son had stood accused. Murder is a grave charge."

"He was not in the least to blame."

"Decidedly not. I wrote and assured him that these unfortunate circumstances—especially now the matter was made clear—would make no alteration in the regard either you or I entertained towards himself and his family."

"It would be very ridiculous if they did."

"And I find, Harry, that I as well as you have been saved from a peril. I was thoroughly mistaken in Captain Middleford. To speak ill of the dead is not a pleasant task, but there are times when it is more or less inevitable, and this is one of them."

Sir Raymond was speaking swiftly, and in a lowered voice. It was evident that the confession he was entering upon was a very disagreeable one. In making it in any shape he was doing violence to his pride. Harry listened intently, far better prepared than his father guessed for the revelations that were coming. He had in his pocket at that very moment the memoranda which he had commenced to compile from Mr. Keith's notes, and from information obtained from other sources.

"Captain Middleford, under the disguise of friendship, led me into many unprofitable adventures," Sir Raymond continued, "and if occasionally I doubted his good faith, it was only for an instant. I did not dream that any man could so abuse another's hospitality. I was an easy dupe"—a world of bitterness and self-upbraiding echoed in the accents—"an easy dupe! He must often have sneered at the blindness of his victim. The speculations that he recommended I rashly ventured upon, and miserably I have paid the piper for my dance! And but for that felon's blow, I might to-night have been a totally ruined fool!"

"Sir!" Harry ejaculated. He did not like to hear his father talk in this strain. There was a reflected humiliation in it.

"Aye, it is true, too true!" the baronet said. "He, Middleford, had called my attention to the draft prospectus of a new mining

company, the Drincorra, and he persuaded me that in that venture I should not merely make good past losses—no light inducement in itself—but make a large and permanent increase of income. He represented the undertaking as absolutely safe, even rivalling the solidity of English railway shares, and I believed him, and had actually made it my business at Sellworth to arrange for throwing all the remaining capital on which I could lay my fingers, into—the sea, or his pockets, and those of his precious confederates."

Sir Raymond gave a hoarse and unnatural laugh, and paused a little.

"For my own part I had come, almost by chance, to suspect his true character," Harry remarked.

"Which was that of a swindler. I have discovered since these events have taken place, that had the purchase of shares actually been made, and had the chief promoter of the Drincorra lived, every penny would probably have been lost beyond redemption. Middleford was scheming to rob the very benefactor whose bread he ate."

"I am not very greatly surprised at what you tell me, sir, considering the nature and the extent of the information I already hold," Harry said. And he rapidly recounted the facts of which Mr. Keith had put him in possession. "I should have approached you on the subject most likely that same evening," he added, "but for the catastrophe which unsettled all plans."

"And saved an estate. I trust I've learnt for the future to abjure speculation."

A long conference in the Manor library followed, and the embarrassments of the inheritance which must one day be Harry's were fully gone into and energetically discussed. Fronted bravely, the problem presented its gloomy features certainly, but was not one to necessitate despair. The humbled and contrite baronet was happier that afternoon than he had been for months, if not for years, past.

But Harry was not yet content. At length he rose, with a new huskiness in his voice, and a peculiar line of determination across his forehead.

"I am going down to my uncle's, to Croyle Farm, for an hour or two," he said.

A flash of anger crossed Sir Raymond's face, and for a second his eyes met his son's. There was no flinching in Harry's gaze.

"You want to see—that girl?"

"My future wife. You will admit that the desire is a natural one."

Sir Raymond was silent. The power of resistance was consciously slipping from him. Was the family feud at last to be healed?

Harry lingered for no permission.

#### CHAPTER XV.

SIR RAYMOND was perplexed and mortified, but scarcely so angry as he wished to bring himself to believe. He had expected this conduct on Harry's part, and the sensation of surprise being discounted, the remaining resentment was the less formidable.

Not that the baronet yielded without a struggle. Few things are harder to abandon than an old and cherished enmity. The habit of the evil, vengeful thought clings to a man or a woman like a language learned in youth. To exorcise its spell a real effort is required, and in this instance the force of tradition was behind the hatred. It had originated and received its earliest emphasis in the heart of Sir Raymond's father. Had not old Sir Harry sternly forbidden his self-willed second son to so much as cross his threshold after his alliance with Ruth Rayne?

Yet it was plain that Harry would be obstinate, and during the last fortnight circumstances had combined to play into his hands and to break down barriers. Sir Raymond felt like an indifferent swimmer battling in vain with a current too strong for him. He had gone through deep waters, and his trials had chastened him. He had lost his confidence in his own wisdom. He was subdued, humiliated.

For a full hour he sat in his library chair and meditated. Gradually and painfully he reached a decision.

"The girl deserves her reward," he soliloquised hoarsely; "there can be no doubt of that—no doubt of that. She stood by Harry staunchly, and she helped materially in the unravelling of the mystery. She is pretty, too—as pretty as she seems ingenuous and modest; I don't wonder at the lad's choice. She will disgrace the family neither by her looks nor by her manners."

If the maiden whose qualifications for the exalted position of a baronet's daughter-in-law were being thus weighed in the balances had overheard the praise, she would probably have been both pleased and amused. Her lover would have interpreted it correctly as a sign of approaching triumph.

At length Sir Raymond folded away his papers and made a move.

Mr. Francis Bradwell was superintending harvest operations in a field near to his farm, working early and late to garner safely his more than usually bountiful crops. Suddenly a gate swung on its



hinges at his side, and a stranger entered. He looked up half startled and recognised his brother.

"Ray!" he cried, using in his mingled bewilderment, alarm, and pleasure the unforgotten boyish diminutive, and with equal impulsiveness he stretched out a sunburnt and toil-begrimed hand. Sir Raymond took it, which, to the men and gleaners smitten into statuesque astonishment amongst the sheaves, was a far more wonderful phenomenon.

"This is a fine day again, Francis; a splendid season!" said the baronet, speaking with a nervous haste which to keen ears would have betrayed his inward agitation in spite of his commonplace observation and the matter-of-fact tone in which he had tried to utter it. There was a dramatic publicity about this reconciliation which made him half regret his haste. But it was too late to retreat. And if he were to welcome Agnes, there must be a pact of friendship at whatever cost with these kinsfolk.

"You have my son here, have you not?" he added in lower accents. The farmer made a gesture to his subordinates to proceed with their several tasks, and then turned towards the house in company with Sir Raymond.

"I believe Harry is indoors," he answered. "I am very glad that this preposterous charge against him has been torn to shreds as it has."

Here was a topic on which both could agree, and around which conversation might safely revolve. In the course of a dozen minutes the chasm of twice as many years was satisfactorily bridged over. The alienation and prejudices of the past were never once referred to. The family feud had slipped into oblivion.

The baronet's ordeal was not yet ended. He had to undergo a formal introduction to Mrs. Bradwell and to her merry little daughter. But the awkwardness of this also was more formidable in imagination than in fact. Mrs. Francis Bradwell was deficient in neither self-possession nor tact, and she received this embarrassing visitor with a grace and an urbanity which was calculated to set the most nervous individual at his ease. Sir Raymond was compelled to admit to his own inner conscience that for good-breeding the farmer's daughter—condemned as she had been—was surpassed by no high-born lady of his acquaintance. Perhaps the heightened colour on the matron's face was the only proof that she comprehended how, after many days, her hour of revenge had struck.

Harry could scarcely believe his eyes as he saw his father enter. Agnes blushed shyly, and, the baronet thought (Harry would not have contradicted him), looked tenfold lovelier than ever. Sir Raymond had resolved to make no reparation by halves. He crossed the room to where Agnes was standing, and with a stately, old-fashioned politeness saluted her.

"My son has made his selection, I am confident a happy one," he said, "and I beg you will grant me the privilege of ratifying it."

The girl submitted, the rosy glow upon her cheeks mounting to her very temples.

"You have made a double conquest, Agnes," Harry whispered slyly; "I shall be jealous soon."

Whereat the dangerous dimness in the damsel's eyes cleared away, and a rippling, April smile broke out.

In the course of the lengthy conversation that followed, the name of Miriam Huke was mentioned.

"Poor girl! the shock of these events has been terrible, almost enough to upset her reason," Agnes said, "and no fault could possibly be imputed to herself. Like Harry, she is an innocent sufferer."

"And lonely too, I presume," replied Sir Raymond. "Cannot we devise some scheme to assist her?"

"I am writing to-night to a friend in town. Frank Neale I can thoroughly trust, and he will go to Sussex Row and make enquiries," Harry said.

"A matron's assistant is wanted at the Sellworth Infirmary, perhaps she would accept that post. The duties are light, and no doubt I could procure Miriam the appointment," suggested the baronet.

"I should imagine that a change would be good for her in every way," Mrs. Bradwell replied, "and Sellworth will be far enough removed from the scene of the crime to prevent melancholy thoughts springing out of the association."

The upshot of the discussion was that by the end of the quarter Miriam Huke was domiciled at Sellworth, and preparing to find relief from the dark shadows of her own bygone life in doing good to others.

At Christmas there was a wedding at Hunstone, and the whole village was rejoicing.

"The old manor-house yonder has never seen a bonnier bride," said Host Brentley, of The Swan, speaking with the authority of a judge of beauty, and no loiterer within his bar was rash enough to dispute the verdict.

(Concluded.—Commenced in No. 149.)

## A Year in Our Lane.

I KNOW a lane, by poet never sung,

Where, when the sun has melted winter snows,

But bare trees tell us that the year is young,

Amid the moss, the first shy primrose blows.

First here and there, after long search, we find

The pale sweet blossoms, that so coyly hide

Beneath their leaves, but, if the spring be kind,

Right soon they gem the banks on either side.

And when the primrose gold no more is seen,

The hedge above puts on its Maytide dress,

And clothes itself in panoply of green,

While hawthorn buds burst into loveliness.

Here, when the hawthorn snow has passed away,

The wild rose bends to kiss the ferns below,

And honeysuckle with its trumpets gay,

Looks through the hedge to where red poppies blow.

At last, when summer's treasure all is spent,

An autumn glory fills our tranquil lane,

Till 'neath a leafy pall, in calm content,

It rests until the primrose comes again.

## Scared.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

"It is many years since it happened, yet the vivid recollection of that dreadful episode in my life will never fade from my memory. It is present with me now as though it had occurred but yesterday. I seldom speak of it, for it always—even at this distance of time—has a disturbing effect upon my nerves. But sometimes at night, in my dreams, it is there; or, when I lie awake in the still small hours of the morning, it stands before me. It is that that caused this portion of my hair to turn grey all of a sudden."

So spoke Mrs. Douglas, a handsome lady, hardly yet arrived at middle age, to three or four of us assembled in the comfortable library at Pencombe Manor, in Blankshire, one evening towards the close of last year; and her narrative made such an impression on me, that next day I committed it to paper, I think almost word for word as she related it to me. I subjoin it (with Mrs. Douglas's entire sanction), as possibly someone besides my wife may care to read the story.

"My husband was quartered with his regiment at Cawnpore, but had obtained a month's leave in order to go up country in quest of sport. We went up north, or rather north-west, as far as the neighbourhood of Roorkee, in the Valley of the Ganges, and were fortunate enough to be able to hire about the best bungalow in the place from a gentleman and his wife, who had been forced to go south on account of some law business, which was expected to last four or five weeks at the least. They were very pleased to get rid of the responsibility of home and servants during their absence, and I need not say we were delighted to find a little establishment ready to our hands. It was a case of sheer good luck on both sides.

"The reason Colin had taken me with him on his shooting expedition was; that I was far from well at the time, being scarcely acclimatised as yet, and the change of air was likely to prove beneficial to me. Besides, we—we were very fond of each other," this with a pretty blush as she recalled her early days of wifehood, "and did not like to be separated from each other then—any more than we should now.

"After we had settled ourselves in our temporary home, my husband, accompanied generally by two or three officers from the neighbouring military station, a native guide, and some beaters, would sometimes start at daybreak, and not return for perhaps a couple of days. I never felt alarmed at his absence, for I had a conviction that should anything happen to him, I should know of it on the instant.

"Know of it?" I asked incredulously.

"Yes. I am obliged to you for only looking incredulous, and not laughing at me. Coming—as well as my husband—from the land, *par excellence*, of second-sight may have had something to do with it; but I had a strong belief in what has been called a 'sympathy-wave.' This wave I believed was capable of being set in motion between two persons who might be strongly of accord, and acting as communicator between the one and the other in any crisis of life or moment of danger. Perhaps you will not think me so very foolish for my belief when you have heard all.

"Well, on a certain Monday, Colin had set out as usual early in the morning, telling me that it was most probable he would not be back till the evening of the next day. He had kissed me before he took leave, but I remember noticing it as strange that, after he had, as I supposed, finally bid me good-bye, he turned when he had reached the door, and, again taking me in his arms, said: 'Good-bye, my girl; take good care of yourself till I come back.' I laughingly said I would,



knowing that I should only be separated from him for about thirty-six hours at the most. And away he went.

"What should I do while he was gone? First, I wrote a letter home, telling them all the news since last mail. Then I took up a piece of wool-work which I had been employed upon for the last six months, off and on. I am ashamed to say I hated needlework, and had I been the orphan-girl recommended by the young man in the poem, as a fitting sewing-pupil for Lady Clara Vere de Vere, I think I should have begged her not to have forsaken her flirting proclivities on my account. How I detested that particular flower on which just then I was engaged! I had but completed three petals in two months, so I leave you to guess when it was likely I should finish the remaining twelve or fourteen—to say nothing of the rest of that nauseating nosegay! Of course I was young and foolish then. I have grown wiser with my years. After an interview of about a quarter of an hour—no more—with my petal, I rang the bell for my 'bawarchi,' in order to discuss ways and means. But he did not make his appearance, so I ran to the kitchen; only, however, to find it empty. I suddenly remembered that it was a Hindoo feast of some kind, and that, although Colin had given permission to one or two of the servants to observe the holiday, he had left strict injunctions that I was on no account to be left unattended. But the ways of Hindostanee servants are 'peculiar.' Those among our little household who had absented themselves without leave would have the skilfully-prepared lie ready in their mouths against their return, and so plausible a tale would they unfold that it would be next to impossible to convict them."

"Were you not afraid when you found you had been left alone in the bungalow?" one of us asked.

"Not in the least—what was there to fear? so I thought. It was certainly annoying to be left without your cook when you were bent on discussing household affairs; that was all. So I sat down to the piano. It was fortunate for me that the wife of the gentleman from whom we had rented the bungalow was a musician, for a capital Erard in the drawing-room was the result. Now of music I was really fond, and was generally considered a remarkably good player—at least, I was by Colin, but then he may have been prejudiced."

"What should I play? As a beginning I indulged the four walls—much more attentive listeners apparently than the talking noodles of London afternoons—with Gungl's last. Next my ambition prompted me to attempt Beethoven's 'Sonata Appassionata,' but found that the artistic soul within me was hardly equal to coping with its many difficulties. Result of the first trial—dismal failure. Again I attacked the citadel; this time I mentally chronicled—with slight confusion of metaphor—'decided improvement in the patient' (for I was, very)—it sounded like a bulletin outside the door of an illustrious sufferer! I was now becoming engrossed in my work, and struggled bravely through shoals of flats and quicksands of sharps. I would try to give at least a fair, though necessarily amateurish, rendering of the piece."

"What was it that made me pause in the middle of one of the least difficult passages—one which I had already waded through with some degree of comfort, and had looked forward to, as to a kind of musical harbour of refuge? What was it that made me instinctively look over my shoulder? There was not a sound in the room to distract my attention. But I felt there was some other living thing in the room besides myself."

"I looked slowly round in my chair, and the sight that met my gaze transfixed me to the spot. I held my breath and stared in the direction where stood that living thing—a large snake, glistering, smooth, flat-headed, and with the stony, pitiless eye of his kind."

"He had uncoiled himself to nearly his full height, and stood with head erect, motionless. No sign of life appeared to be in him save the occasional darting forward of the cruel forked tongue and the low hissing sound that issued from the hard, thin lips."

"What could I do? I was too terrified even to scream; besides, who could have heard me? The servants were out. I was alone with the creature. I dared scarcely draw my breath, for I felt that if I stirred a muscle the thing might dart forward and close with me. I had heard that with head elevated, as if to bury their fangs with greater energy, they threw themselves upon their prey with a fierce and sudden bound."

"Thought is never quiescent; the brain, no matter what the terror endured, must fulfil its functions; so thought flowed on as I sat appalled at the sight before me. The snake had been attracted by my playing; he had, noiselessly and unmolested, glided into the room, and was fascinated by the music. These were the conclusions at which my thoughts arrived. It was evident that when I stopped he would be dangerous. While I played I was safe. All the signs preparatory for a spring were there, as though he desired revenge for being even momentarily deprived of his musical treat."

"With an almost imperceptible movement I cautiously reached one hand back to the piano, and touched a note. In a moment a change seemed to come over him. His eyes no longer glittered

fiercely, he appeared to rest them on me as upon one from whom he derived great pleasure; he moved his head, too, slowly to and fro to the music. Once more he stood spell-bound."

"My other hand now touched the keys, and unconsciously my fingers formed the notes of a dreamy waltz; from this I glided almost imperceptibly into one of the 'Lieder ohne Worte'; then to the tender 'Spirito Gentil' of the 'Favorita.' It is strange how I can recall these slight details, but they have, I suppose, become crystallised into my brain."

"Still I played, still the reptile seemed wrapt in the charm of the melodies I poured forth. It will scarcely be believed that I felt so safe while I played that all fear gradually left me. If I with my music fascinated him, he in his turn 'held me with his glittering eye.'"

"At length I had the courage to turn round and closely watch him. I marked the strange hood about the head, the black patches resembling old-fashioned spectacles; the sinuous body thickening towards the middle. I knew then that the creature was the dreaded cobra."

"Still I played. Still he listened."

"Why do not the servants return? Had I been in a reverie? I was awakened to consciousness by a feeling of extreme weariness. How long had I been playing? My back ached from the upright position in which I had been sitting. My fingers felt cramped. Had I fainted? Was it a dream? I peered with caution over my shoulder, half expecting to find the reptile a thing of my imagination."

"No; it was but too true. There stood the cobra—his eyes resting upon me. Still he swayed his flat head to and fro to the music; for when I awoke from my reverie—faint—whatever form of unconsciousness had taken possession of my senses—I yet found myself playing. What had happened to me? I myself was swaying to and fro. A feeling of dizziness was overcoming me—I felt very, very tired; the notes of the piece of music I had been playing before the snake appeared, were dancing before me—now flashing across the page—now glaring at me like ten thousand eyes. Then, and then only, I guessed the truth."

"I was becoming exhausted, and the moment exhaustion supervened I knew my last hour had come. Nothing could save me. The spell that held the snake at bay would be broken; the wicked head would be darted forward—the cruel fangs close on me—the slimy, deadly poison, loosed from its poison-bag, eat into my flesh."

"I dared not cry for help, for I knew not how the discordant note might exasperate the cobra. I would play on as long as strength were left me, and then—"

"I know not what I played—snatches of songs, sonatas, dances, in one wild jumble. I was too scared to begin or finish any air or set piece. At last I even burst into a song myself—for the moment I must have been mad. It was a French *chansonnette* with a laughing refrain—and I laughed—I shrieked hysterically to the music—I knew not what I was doing."

"Then suddenly I became quite still, for the marrow in my bones seemed to freeze within me. Something sparkled close beside me. I turned hurriedly. My cheek was touched by something sleek and cold, yet living."

"The snake had advanced towards the piano, drawn irresistibly nearer to the sounds it loved so well. Now it stood so close beside me that its head almost rested on my shoulder!"

"Oh, the horror of the moment! I do not know whether it is an ascertained fact that the human hair can stand on end; it may be but a fancy of the poet, without foundation in the laws of nature. Certain it is, my hair felt as though it were rising from my head. It must have been at this instant that this lock—the one nearest to the snake—turned white."

"For one moment I was perfectly calm. I listened—as if listening to someone other than myself—to the music I was playing. It was the 'Dead March,' of Chopin. Slowly the solemn tones rolled out. My fingers, from sheer exhaustion, almost refused to strike the keys; they were swollen and caused excessive pain. One note more. I must keep him off as long as I have the power left. I reeled on my seat—another chord—one last grand harmony. The two eyes beside me glowered like live coals. I fell forward—and—"

At the bare remembrance of the scene, Mrs. Douglas had fainted. We ran forward to help her, and her husband, who had been in an adjoining room with our host, hurriedly entered on hearing the scuffling of our feet, and assisted one of the ladies in reviving her. Before long she was herself again to all outward appearance. Major Douglas would not, however, hear of his wife relating the sequel to the story for fear of further excitement—a sequel as strange as the adventure itself.

The next day the major took up the tale at the point at which Mrs. Douglas had left it.

It appeared that he had not started on his shooting expedition more than an hour when he became conscious that he was being followed by two eyes. This he at first put down to the unromantic source of all ill, as some would have us think—the liver. Yet he was in robust health; the hearty exercise he was in the habit of taking should surely have prevented any evil from that source. Still, the eyes seemed fixed upon him; sometimes from a thicket, when he would get ready his rifle in expectation of big game. But when he neared the spot, not a sound, not a rustle, indicated the presence of even a bird. Once he declared he distinctly heard a strain of music. Then, somehow, from no distinct reason that he could assign, Major Douglas became nervous for his wife's safety, and sent back one of the beaters with all speed to the bungalow, returning himself in the direction of home at the same time. The man, with the almost incredible swiftness of a native runner, soon reached the house. He looked through the open window, took in the situation at a glance, glided noiselessly into the room at the very moment when Mrs. Douglas had fallen forward on the piano, and the reptile was about to bury its fangs in her flesh, seized the cobra, and, with a dexterous sweep of his keen-edged knife, cut the throat, almost severing the head from the trunk.

Whether Major Douglas and his wife were gifted with what is called "second-sight"—for each had the requisite amount of Scottish blood in his veins and to spare—I cannot tell. Whether it was that they both devoutly believed in the mysterious "sympathy-wave," and that from the belief sprang the supposed fact, I cannot determine. I tell you the story as it was related to me. Let wiser heads than mine wrangle over the problems contained in the theory of psychic force. After all, we can but return to the assertion of the Danish Prince to his old fellow-student of the College of Wittenberg—there may, indeed, be more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

## The Editor's Note Book.

THE state of Parliament and of parties gets more and more confused as the session advances, and so comparatively small a circumstance as the temporary indisposition of the Prime Minister leads to the demoralisation of his followers, and the almost complete collapse of public business. It is the fashion to abuse the House of Commons for this state of things; but I think the explanation is rather to be found in the system of elevating the Prime Minister for the time being into something like an irresponsible autocrat, until the shock of the next general election reminds him that he is but mortal after all.

AT one time Lord Beaconsfield, and at another Mr. Gladstone, is thus invested with a power which has no parallel in any other country in the world, to the complete destruction of the independence of Parliament, and to the grievous straining of our constitutional system. To such a pass have the quarrels and jealousies of party managers brought the political intelligence and conscience of the country.

WHILE public attention is fixed on the Soudan and on General Gordon's critical position at Khartoum, people seem inclined to overlook Cairo and the difficulties which are preparing for us there. The situation is simple enough, and may be summed up in one sentence. The Government of the Khedive has no power and no money. We have both, and it seems as certain as anything can be in these distracted days that an English Protectorate would restore order and solvency in a comparatively short time. Perhaps after we have heard of an insurrection and a massacre or two in Cairo and Alexandria this view of the case will begin to dawn upon the House of Commons, and even in process of time upon the Government.

IT is a pity that so distinguished an officer as Admiral Hewett should have taken a step which has led to his virtually receiving a reprimand from the Government. The proclamation of a reward for the person of Osman Digna may possibly be explained on the hypothesis, that the general vagueness and confusion which attend our position and proceedings in Egypt not unnaturally misled the admiral. And if people in authority on the spot are in doubt as to the character of the warfare in which we are engaged, it is not surprising that most people at home should fail to understand how it is that while we are with one hand hailing the Mahdi as Sultan of Kordofan, we should with the other be administering condign punishment to his lieutenant and followers in the neighbourhood of Suakin.

THE agitation for the retention of the plumed bonnet by the Highland regiments seems ridiculous to rigid economists and consistent philosophical Radicals, but in these matters—as well, happily, as in some others—the world is ruled by something besides strict logic, and imagination and sentiment are still powerful influences. Such things are intolerable to the Gradgrinds of the world, but statesmen ought to know that some respect for them is calculated to assist, rather than to hinder, the work of governments.

OF all the odd functions I have ever heard of, I think the unveiling of a monument to Samuel Pepys in the church of St. Olave, Hart Street, was one of the queerest. That Pepys's memory should be celebrated by a monument is, no doubt, quite right, but the mixture of service and public meeting by which the occasion was celebrated was not without incongruity. By his own confessions, which he never meant to meet the public eye, the author of the famous Diary was as persistent a follower of the world, the flesh, and all the rest of it, as has often been seen, and a very unlikely candidate for posthumous religious honours.

If anybody had set himself deliberately to discredit the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, he could not have done his work more effectually than it was done by the members of the Commission themselves when they decided to conduct their deliberations with closed doors. Nor is the reason which is alleged for this step calculated to restore confidence. It is alleged that secrecy is necessary, inasmuch as the evidence will necessarily seriously affect property in certain districts, and that publicity is consequently to be deprecated. Rightly or wrongly an impression will get abroad that secrecy in these cases means jobbery, and the report of the Commission will be received with a certain amount of doubt, if not of suspicion. On the whole, I cannot help thinking that it would have been better if the examination of the question had been entrusted to a body comprising fewer persons of eminence and more men of business and practical experience.

ONE of the few things connected with the Belt Trial which can be looked upon with satisfaction, is the admirable judgment of the Master of the Rolls in dismissing Mr. Lawes's appeal. The merits of the case, and the real points at issue, have been so obscured by the clouds of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness which have emanated from certain art circles and have been industriously increased by the efforts of the counsel for the defence, that a good wholesome breath of simple common-sense is a relief indeed. It is a pity that Lord Coleridge should not have addressed himself to this side of the case instead of surrendering his judgment to the dogmatism of the Royal Academy. Had he done so he would have probably saved Mr. Lawes and his friends a good deal of money, as well as having prevented the waste of much valuable public time. It may be hoped that after Sir Balliol Brett's emphatic utterances, no more will be heard of the persecution of Mr. Belt.

MR. CHARLES READE, some years ago, in his novel "Hard Cash," did good service in exposing the lax system under which powers can be obtained for the incarceration of alleged lunatics, and the same moral has been again pointed by the experiences of Mrs. Weldon. Most people will be inclined to share Baron Huddleston's astonishment at the existence of such a state of things.

ONE may, however, sympathise with Mrs. Weldon in the indignities to which she was exposed, without approving of a system which permits of the putting witnesses into the box for the sole purpose, apparently, of insulting them because she considers she has been ill-treated by her husband and General de Bathe. And, indeed, the very numerous witnesses whom Mrs. Weldon subpoenas in a speculative manner, although they know nothing whatever about her and her grievances, have, I think, just cause for complaint.

CONSTERNATION has been carried into many nurseries by a decision of Mr. Sheil at Hammersmith, that it is against the law to wheel perambulators along the pavement. Of course, if the strict view is to be taken, and the perambulator is to be banished to the roadway, its days are numbered. But I think that, if we had a full report of what actually took place before the magistrate, it would be found that the nursemaids implicated, were fined, not so much for wheeling their perambulators along the side-walk, as for wilfully creating an obstruction.

THE pavement was made, in the first instance, for pedestrians, and only in a minor degree for hand-barrows, go-carts, perambulators, and the like, and although there are hundreds of streets in the metropolis where such vehicles are not in the way, they are most certainly serious nuisances in crowded thoroughfares, more especially when their drivers, as is their gregarious custom, walk two or three abreast for the purpose of improving their minds by conversation. Circumstances alter cases, and before falling foul of Mr. Sheil's decision, as some of the papers have done, it is well to recollect that it may be useful to have such a law as that which he put in force, to serve, not necessarily for everyday use, but in case of need.

IT appears that when a police-constable sees a drunken gentleman in the company of suspected persons, whose movements are suspicious, it is no part of his duty to interfere for the protection of the portable property which the misguided drunken gentleman may have about him. His duty, as defined by the instructions of his superiors, is, when he sees suspected characters to watch them, and not to interfere until the drunken gentleman has been robbed or knocked on the head.

IT may be said that to put the power of interference in the hands of the constable, before any overt act is committed, would be dangerous, and so, if it were not safeguarded, no doubt it would be. But I cannot understand why the police should not be taught to exercise a discretion in this matter, and should not be ordered, while

exercising great care in the case of persons unknown to them, to interfere at once when known criminals are concerned.

MISS OCTAVIA HILL, whose opinion on these matters deserves the greatest respect, is strongly opposed to giving gratuitous meals to children in Board Schools, declaring that the food would practically be a rate in aid of idle or drunken parents.

Of course there is some truth in this, although it does not go much below the surface. A good many parents would undoubtedly take advantage of any assistance given to the children, but it might not be difficult to devise means of preventing such an abuse, and it must be remembered that the parents of many of the children who are forced into the Board Schools are absolutely incapable of providing their unfortunate little ones with sufficient food.

MISS HILL has done so much good in a common-sense way that one is sorry to see her adopting these hard-and-fast lines of political economy, which, however good in their way, are not equally applicable to all contingencies.

THERE is a homely truth about the adage, "Charity begins at home," which is too often overlooked by persons of benevolent but impulsive minds. The Rev. Dr. Pigou, vicar of Halifax, appeals in the *Times* for funds to provide dinners for the poor rag-pickers of Paris. No doubt these unfortunate people are much to be pitied, but, as we know that the charitable efforts of many zealous helpers of our own poor countrymen in the East End of London are almost paralysed for want of funds, it is clear that the duty of those who can afford to give assistance lies on this side of the Channel. Miss de Broen's Parisian soup-kitchens are no doubt well deserving of being supported by Parisians, but it will be time enough for Londoners to think about helping her when they have provided ample funds for such objects as the London Cottage Mission's weekly dinner to poor children, to name only one deserving case out of many dozens.

C. D.

## French Duellists.

AFTER the death of the detestable Count Larillière,\* there sprang up in Bordeaux a tribe of duellists, obstinately prepared to contest with each other the succession to that vacant post of infamy which the Count had for so long a time filled without a rival. Among these were two, more audacious and resolute than the rest, who eventually remained masters of the field, and who for five years rivalled each other in effrontery and temerity, with the view of obtaining the wished-for title of "first blade." One, an Italian by birth, recently settled at Bordeaux, was the Marquis de Lignano, and the other, his intimate associate and friend, M. Lucien Claveau. Both were extraordinarily skilful of fence, and each recognised in the other the only foeman really worthy of his steel. They shared the glory for the time, but each hoped some day to kill his rival, and so enjoy the much-coveted succession to the deceased Count. Meanwhile, they seemed to be on the most intimate and agreeable terms. Each used to congratulate the other, with much apparent cordiality, on the successful termination of the many sanguinary and generally fatal encounters which they had wantonly provoked and followed up to the bitter end. They were always to be seen together, and at last took to living in the same house, even occupying a sleeping-room in common, in which each had, of course, his separate bed.

One summer morning, long after their usual hour for rising, their man-servant, hearing nothing of either of his masters, began to feel rather uneasy. He tried the door, but found it was locked on the inside. At last, becoming alarmed at the continued silence, he proceeded to force the door. Entering the room on tiptoe, he was somewhat reassured when he saw, by the dim light which penetrated through the closed shutters, that both his masters were in bed, and to all appearance quietly asleep. He was about to retire cautiously when his foot struck against something which gave forth a ringing sound as it rolled along the floor. He had evidently kicked against a sword.

A frightful suspicion crossed the valet's mind. Without loss of a moment he threw open the shutters, and saw at a glance that the room was in a dreadful state of disorder. Clothes were strewn about, furniture was overturned, candlesticks, vases, and various knick-knacks scattered over the floor, while near each bed lay a sword, the bloody stains on which too plainly indicated that a desperate encounter, a horrible and deadly struggle, had taken place between these men, who were lying side by side like two brothers under the same roof.

At the sight of all this havoc the valet uttered a terrified cry, on hearing which the Marquis and Lucien, both of whom had seemed dead, rose up at the same instant in their beds. Both were ghastly pale; their blood-stained shirts were torn to rags, and each man appeared to be covered with ghastly wounds. Spite, however, of the pain they were enduring—spite, too, of their weakness, and of the burning fever which consumed them, they preserved their sitting posture, glaring at each other; enfeebled, it is true, but still unvanquished. They remained thus for several seconds. Suddenly Lucien Claveau, overcome by some painful impression, fell heavily back, and

gave vent to a loud sob. At this cry the Marquis bounded on his bed, as though he had been shot, a shrill, sinister laugh escaped from his thin ghost-like lips. "Oh, you are crying, are you," said he in a firm voice; "then you confess yourself vanquished, and I can now pronounce you a coward."

At the word "coward" it was Lucien's turn to spring up, and the valet, sole witness of this frightful scene, had to keep him from throwing himself upon the Marquis. "I, a coward! Ah, I have committed my share of crimes, been guilty of countless follies, rendered many people unhappy, but never has a living soul been entitled to say that Lucien Claveau was a coward, and feared to face danger, even if death should be the result. You, Marquis, are a far greater villain than I, for you are incapable of repentance, and impotent for good. A moment ago when I was looking at you, covered with wounds, I forgot my own sufferings and forgave you, and felt a real pity for you, which found vent in the first tears I have shed for years. And yet you taunt me, and still dare to laugh at all I am saying. You are incapable of understanding a heart that can repent and forgive. Well, know that I again hate and despise you. You have called me coward, and both must not remain alive. We are only a few paces from each other. Have you strength to hold a pistol?"

The Marquis made a movement and replied: "Ah, I understand, a duel with pistols, and then we shall have done with each other. Joseph," said he, addressing the servant, who was pale with affright. "Take the two pistols on the mantelpiece, load them, hand one to each of us, and then give the signal; or, better still, let us draw lots who shall blow the other's brains out."

"So be it," answered Claveau. "Joseph, you have heard. Load one of the pistols."

Joseph made a pretence of going to execute the order, but no sooner was he fairly outside the bedroom door than he quietly locked it, and ran for a doctor, into whose hands Lucien and the Marquis were compelled to resign themselves.

Lucien was conveyed by his friends to the home of a distant relative, a widow lady with several children. Assisted by her eldest daughter, a simple country girl, she attended him with so much care that Claveau recovered.

His heart was touched, and he spoke of marriage, promising a thorough reformation; and he did marry. To enable him to withdraw himself completely from his old associates, it was decided that he and his young wife should leave Bordeaux, if only for a time.

But just before they were to leave, chance brought them, in spite of all precautions, face to face with the Marquis de Lignano, who accosted Lucien, saying:

"I had heard that you were convalescent, but have always maintained the contrary, because, coward as I have called you, I did not believe you coward enough to hide behind a petticoat."

Lucien, merely replying "Never mind," passed on.

The Marquis followed, and again hissed his taunt into Lucien's ear.

The excitement consequent upon this meeting kept Lucien's wife awake all night, and next day she was too ill to leave her room. Her husband sat moodily by her bedside until the afternoon, when, finding she was asleep, he determined to go and exact revenge. Chafing with anger, he hastened to the café which Lignano frequented, rushed up the stairs, and, disregarding the salutations of his old acquaintances who advanced to greet him, made straight for the table at which his enemy was seated, who immediately rose.

"Well, here I am," said Lucien savagely, and hardly able to restrain himself from clutching Lignano by the throat.

"Pshaw!" said the Marquis contemptuously. "Go back to your petticoat; you are too great a coward for my notice."

Lucien, a man of great physical strength, at once seized him by the coat-collar with one hand, and by the skirts with the other, carried him to the open window and out on to the balcony, and, holding him over the street, said coldly:

"If you do not ask my pardon I shall let you drop."

The Marquis, in the grip of his powerful adversary, whom he knew to be thoroughly unrelenting, had nevertheless the audacity, or it may be the courage, to reply:

"If you are simply acting, and do not intend to let me drop, you are a coward."

At that moment an old servant of Lucien's, who had made his way upstairs and on to the balcony, whispered something into his master's ear, whereupon Lucien instantly carried the Marquis back into the apartment and released his hold of him. Hardly was the Marquis on his feet again before he sprang towards Lucien, and dealt him a sharp blow on the face. To the surprise of those present, Claveau offered no kind of response to this new insult, and the Marquis retired, saying:

"To-morrow, wherever you please."

The poor young wife, on awaking after Lucien's departure, had been seized with fainting-fits, and became delirious. Claveau held a brief conversation with two of his acquaintances, and then quitting the café in company with the old servant, drove with all speed home. In little more than half an hour he was at his wife's bedside; calmed by the sight of him, she slept. When she woke in the middle of the night, Claveau was still watching over her. After conversing affectionately with him for upwards of an hour, she gradually dozed off, and Claveau, so soon as he saw she was sound asleep, stealthily left the house, and proceeded on foot to Bordeaux to a rendezvous he had arranged with his two friends at the café the previous afternoon.

\* HOUSEHOLD WORDS, Vol. VI, p. 116, "A French Duellist."

He was first at the appointed spot, but had not long to wait, for his two seconds shortly after arrived, and following close upon them came the Marquis and his seconds, when the duel immediately commenced.

For several minutes the two men fought with remarkable ardour; they developed all their most cunning tricks, and each endeavoured, in accordance with the approved rules of fence, to spit the other upon his sword's point. While the engagement was thus proceeding and Lucien was pressing his adversary closely, he suddenly said to him:

"You gave me a blow yesterday with your fist; as yet I have not deigned to return it, but I intend doing so before I send you, as I shall shortly do, to your last home."

As Lucien spoke, the pair being in close conflict, he rapidly passed his sword under his left arm, and, at the same moment, dealt the Marquis a violent blow in the face. Then regaining hold of his weapon, he assumed a defensive position before Lignano had time to recover himself, for the blow he had received had sent him reeling to the ground. This daring feat, the most audacious, perhaps, that has ever occurred in a duel, astounded the seconds. The Marquis was beside himself, and, wild with rage, sprang with raised sword upon Lucien, who calmly and confidently awaited the onslaught.

"Monsieur le Marquis," said he, "we are now quits."

The Marquis renewed his attacks again and again, but always to find himself foiled. Presently, by a rapid movement, Lucien disarmed his foe, and then, thrusting his own sword downwards, pinned him by the right foot to the ground. After a few seconds, Lucien drew out his sword, and handed the Marquis his own weapon.

The seconds came forward. Lignano made vain efforts to continue to stand upon both feet.

"It is useless," said his seconds, "and it is quite impossible that this can go on."

Glaring savagely at his adversary, he replied: "It is not over yet. I have still the chance of putting a bullet through your head."

The pistols were loaded. The impetuous Marquis, regardless of the pain he was enduring, hobbled along until he arrived at the point where he was compelled to stop; he was then ten paces distant from Claveau, who had not advanced a single step, and who remained immovable while he received the Marquis's fire.

"It is now my turn," said he; and, advancing five paces, he took a deliberate aim.

"Claveau!" exclaimed one of his seconds, "this will never do; it is nothing less than murder."

Lucien turned. "Look here," he simply said, pointing to a hole in his shirt at the shoulder, from which blood was oozing. The next moment he fired. The Marquis fell with his face to the ground. When they raised him he was dead; the ball had pierced his forehead and entered the brain.

Lucien, after his wound, which proved to be slight, was dressed, hastened home to find that his wife, alarmed at his absence, had relapsed. All night she was in great danger. Next morning Lucien was arrested by the police, on information furnished by one of the Marquis's seconds. This new shock killed his wife. Lucien, in despair, threw himself upon her lifeless form, and was only removed with difficulty. Then, assuming an air of calmness, he said he was ready; and the next moment, seizing one of a pair of pistols which were always kept loaded on the top of a small cabinet, and placing it to his ear, he disposed with his own hand of the last of the Bordeaux duellists.

## Sagacious Dogs.

PERHAPS the best dog-story we ever heard—though, as there are such a number of best stories of this honest fellow, it may very well be an old one; but we cannot forbear telling it for the benefit of those who may not have met with it before. A surgeon found a poor dog with his leg broken. He took him home, set it, and in due time gave him his liberty. Off he ran. Some months afterwards the surgeon was awoke in the night by a dog barking loudly at his door. As the barking continued, and as the surgeon thought he recognised the voice, he got up and went downstairs. When he opened the door, there stood his former patient, wagging his tail, and by his side another dog—a friend whom he had brought—and who had also the misfortune to get his leg broken. There is another dog-story of a different kind, which we think very amusing. A poodle belonging to a gentleman in Cheshire, was in the habit of going to church with his master, and sitting with him in the pew, during the whole service. Sometimes the master did not come; but this did not prevent the poodle, who, always presenting himself in good time, entered the pew, and remained in it alone, departing with the rest of the congregation. One Sunday, the dam at the head of a lake in the neighbourhood gave way, and the whole road was inundated. The congregation was therefore reduced to a few individuals, who came from their dwellings close at hand. Nevertheless, by the time the clergyman had commenced reading the Psalms, he saw his friend the poodle come slowly up the aisle, dripping with water, having been obliged to swim above a quarter of a mile to get to church. He went into his pew as usual, and remained quietly there to the end of the service. This was told on the authority of the clergyman himself.

## The Naturalist.

### WILD FLOWERS.

THE "merry month of Spring" brings, even with our somewhat changed seasons, at least the promise of good things to the botanist, who has patiently, though not idly, waited through the "melancholy days" of November and December, when

The dead leaves strew the forest walk;  
And withered are the pale wild flowers;  
The frost hangs blackening on the stalk,  
The dewdrops fall in frozen showers

JANUARY brings but little to add to his store, but even this cold month is not entirely without floral interest. Chaucer's "Day's-eye" blooms everywhere, and almost at all times. It is a type of a large class, the composite flowers; those, that is, that are composed of a number of little flowers, enveloped in one outer covering. The Golden Gorse is also in bloom, for there is mostly a blossom here and there on its porcupine stems to gladden the village rustic's heart, who declares, as he claims his privilege, that "whenever the Gorse is out, there are pretty girls to be kissed."

FEBRUARY, and, in southern parts of England, even the latter end of January, brings us the

Early herald of the infant year,

the Snowdrop, and her elder sister, the tall Snowflake. Both Snowdrop and Snowflake are of the great division of Monocotyledons, amongst which are classed corn of all sorts and grasses. This order is easily distinguished by the parallel veining of the leaves, so different to that of such plants as the vine, the oak, or the nettle.

BUT it is in March that the botanist—the collector of flowers—and the mere lover of flowers just for their beauty's sake, bestir themselves, and feel that it is time to get all into working order. The botanist must look out his tools and et ceteras, to be ready for the many beautiful days this month often gives us in spite of its bad character. "March cometh in as a lion, and goeth out like a lamb," says the old proverb, but sometimes it "cometh in as one lion, and goeth out as two." Bitter east winds, nipping and paralysing the whole frame, prevail during the thirty-one days, and flower-buds keep their noses wisely within shelter, till balmy April woos them with its mingled sunshine and showers, and tempts them forth. Nevertheless, in some years, there is often a fortnight of deliciously mild spring-like weather in March, when the "heart leaps up" with a universal gladness, and flowers burst under the feet.

FOR these happy chances the lover of wild flowers must get everything ready to start afild the first of these fine spring-like days. He must provide himself with a tin collecting-box. This, if it is the regular botanist's collecting-box, is rather costly, especially if purchased at a naturalist's. One may avoid this by using an old "ice-cream biscuit" box, such as those made for Huntley and Palmer. This may be easily covered with dark American cloth, and fitted with straps, which can be carried over the shoulders. If this box is airtight, it answers every purpose of the more expensive ones. A strong trowel and a small iron spade are necessary; the first for small, short-rooted plants, the latter for larger ones. If a long excursion be contemplated, additional weight is a consideration. A batch of paper should be taken. The *Times* cut into quarters makes a very good substitute for the "Botanists' Absorbent Paper," which becomes expensive by dint of the quantity required. A light portfolio holds this, and such specimens as are easily shaken. A strong sheathed knife is very useful to get up the roots with, and in doing this it should be remembered that to be perfect, in a botanical sense, every specimen should be taken up entire, that is, carefully dug up by the roots, that the tender fibres may not be injured. Even this is not enough to ensure perfection. Unless the plant be a rare one, the collector should make choice amongst a number, selecting the most perfect and typical, as to roots and root-leaves, regular leaves, stem, flower-buds, full-grown flowers, and perfected seed-vessels. It is exceedingly difficult to identify or to compare almost identical plants, where there are only scraps to judge from. And when an anxious collector requests the aid of a scientific botanist to determine some doubtful specimen, he should endeavour to send it him prepared in true botanical form.

If the plant itself has a long straggling stem, it may be bent backwards and forwards once or twice, in order to bring it within the limits of the portfolio. Before arranging the specimens, trim off all withered leaves, clean the roots from sand and grit, or wash them if they were taken from a clay or mud soil. Get a couple of drying-boards about half an inch thick as outer boards; the inner boards need be only half the thickness; they must be all the same size, namely, a foot and a half long by one foot broad. Spread three or four sheets of drying-paper, if "absorbent," but of common newspaper twice as many, on one of the outer boards, and on the top sheet arrange the plants, according to the room they occupy; arrange them as if they



were growing, displaying as clearly as you can the characteristics of each plant, the form of its leaves, both the upper and under sides, the shape and habit of the buds, flowers, and seed-vessels, and its general appearance when growing. Lay another set of sheets over the specimens thus arranged, and a thin board, then more sheets and more plants, until four or five layers of specimens are arranged, when an outer board must be laid over all, and on this a weight. Large stones are often used, but a neater plan is to cover a couple of common bricks with green baize, sewing them up in it. They are much more convenient than stones, are more regular in their weight, and more cleanly.

THE drying papers should be changed frequently, the moist ones being removed and thoroughly dried before they are used again. To mount the specimens when they are quite dry—you can determine this if, when you bend a leaf, it breaks off in a brittle manner—have ready some sheets of white paper, the same size as the drying-boards. The better it is, the better the plants look. Lay the plant in its dried position on the sheet, and either gum it lightly here and there on the underside, or fasten narrow slips of paper over it in different parts to keep it in its place on the sheet.

THE arrangement of the various sheets depends upon the classification of the plants and their order and families. Some plants of a thick succulent nature, such as several of the Stonecrops and Samphire, are so tenacious of life that, unless previously dipped in boiling water, they will grow between the papers. In the case of fleshy, tuberous, and bulbous roots, it is necessary to halve them with a sharp thin knife, and merely dry the half left on the stalk.

DURING March the number of flowering plants increases. Foremost amongst them comes the Coltsfoot with its yellow blooms, the curse of the farmer; this, like the Daisy, is a composite plant. The common Butterbur is another pretty little leafless flower, throwing up its pale pink blossoms in March, to be followed later on by its large broad leaves, well known to village school-children as umbrella-plants. The Ground Ivy, so constantly used medicinally by the labouring classes, is another March flower, bright blue, with a graceful trailing stem and scalloped leaves. This is a plant capable of very pretty arrangement in the herbarium. The dear, sweet, familiar purple Violet also makes its appearance in this usually bleak east-windy month, and is never so welcome or so powerfully scented. We have repeatedly gathered seven different sorts of Violets in the village of Egmont, Notts, all growing near each other in the same soil, and on the same bank—the usual deep purple, a striped purple and white, a deep lavender, a muddy pink, the common white, a pale pink, tinged lavender, and a yellow violet, besides the distinct scentless Dog Violet. There seems to be something in that special neighbourhood, within a circuit of a few miles, especially favourable to the growth and variety of wild flowers. We know of no other spot in Great Britain where such an abundance and such an abundant variety of wild flowers, many of them almost unique and others very rare, are to be found as in a beautiful wood about four miles or so from Egmont. This is Wellow Wood, distant about five and a half miles from the Great Northern Railway. To a botanist this wood well repays the expense and trouble of a visit. There are more wild flowers of different kinds, and distinct varieties of the same kind, to be found there than in any other place we know of, of the same area.

IN May the wood, in parts, is literally a dense carpet of the blue Germander Speedwell, well known as Forget-me-not; and besides the blue, a pink and a white variety, and the very rare yellow Speedwell, which occurs, as far as we know, nowhere else in England. Hundreds of other lovely and interesting plants grow on the hills, in the valleys amongst the brushwood and fallen timber, along the little beck that run through the lower part of the wood, and in the swampy ground, whilst the meadows on the border are filled with flowers suited to the soil.

To give a slight notion of the wealth of botanical specimens to be culled in this wood alone we will mention some of them. Agrimony, pink and yellow, on the roadside skirting the wood. There also are found the Rest-harrow, pink and white Centaureys, including the lovely blue Corn-flower, the white and pink-tinted Yarrow, the Spear-plume Thistle, Musk Mallow, common Mallow, Honeysuckle, Cinquefoil, pink Persicaria, Stork's-bill, and Red-berried Bryony; whilst in the wood itself grow the large white Bindweed, Mullein, Tormentil, greater Willow-herb, Succory, blue Brooklime, Wood Vetch, greater Celandine, Shining Crane's-bill, Ragged Robin, Water Ragwort, yellow Dead Nettle, and several other Dead Nettles, Stitchwort, common Avena, yellow Water Iris, Spurge Laurel, Ground Ivy, Primrose, Cowslip, Hyacinths of two varieties, Orchids and Ophrys, Lady Smock, yellow Loosestrife, Sweet and Dog Violets, Arums, Pimpernel, Hairy Vetchling, Nightshade, Broom Aconite, Bugloss, pink and blue, several varieties of climbing and dwarf wild Roses, Foxgloves, Speedwells, Figworts, yellow and pink Rattles, the Wood-ruff and the Wood-sorrel, a lovely striped Vetch hanging in graceful festoons from branch to branch, wild Strawberries, Crab-blossom, Crowfoot, the well-known Burdock, the Scabious, the odoriferous Meadowsweet, the common and beautiful Hop, and many others which we have not the space to enumerate.

WE challenge any other portion of the United Kingdom to produce in so small a space such an infinite variety of wild flowers, or so great a variety in such abundance. Wellow Woods is *par excellence* the paradise of botanists, and, besides its wealth of wild flowers, is abundantly rich in mosses and ferns.

## Two American Generals.

THE ex-Confederate General Gordon used to tell an interesting story about two interviews he had with General Barlow. At Sharpsburg Barlow was apparently mortally wounded, and fell into Gordon's hands. Gordon took a liking to him, and asked if he could not do something for him. "I think not, General," said the young man; "I shall be buried here, no doubt. I do not expect to live. But you can do one thing for me; here is a package of letters from my wife, which I wish you to destroy before my eyes." Gordon, who was then a young man also, took the letters and was about to destroy them when Barlow, with a bubble at his throat, murmured: "Would you take the trouble to read me one of them first? Any one will do." Gordon opened one of the letters, and read it to the dying man—his last friendly words, perhaps, from home. Then the letters were destroyed. But the incident touched Gordon so that he made a special exertion to have Barlow sent through the lines, and to have his wife admitted to him. This being done, the two armies fell apart, and these two men saw each other no more. Gordon considered Barlow to be dead. Barlow had also seen that a General Gordon had been killed somewhere. They met again at a friendly table in Washington, but did not know each other through the changes of time. After some lapse Gordon said: "General Barlow, are you a relative of that Barlow who was killed at Antietam?" "No," said the general, "I am the same man. Are you any relative," enquired Barlow in turn, "of that General Gordon who was recently killed on the Confederate side?" "That was my cousin; I am John B. Gordon." Then at the request of the persons who overheard, Barlow told the tale amid tears and emotion on every side.

## The Fashions.

THE weather in "the roaring moon of daffodil," as the poet calls March, is the unknown quantity in our plans for spring dresses. It may rain, hail, blow, or snow throughout the whole month, or we may be choked with some of that precious dust, a bushel of which in March, the proverb tells us, is worth more than a king's ransom. It is always wise to buy slowly in spring, not rush upon cold colours suddenly, but to wait and look round first at the shops. The less a woman has to spend the more deliberately should she buy, so that this intermediate time may be spent in doing up the half-worn dresses, "making auld claes look maist as well as new," as Burns put it.

BEGIN with the skirt-hems, where damp or mud may have made the hems look shabby. If the skirt be pleated or kilted, it is well to unpick it, damp and iron out the marks; but before pulling to pieces be careful that the colour has not faded in any place, for, if so, the dress will look worse than better when taken to pieces. Reversing the folds is not always successful. Turn up a fresh hem so as to take an inch or more off the length. Make a thick quilling of some other material to go round the hem; it makes the dress look fresh; and, better reason still, it makes the feet look small. Satin is rather extravagant to put upon a half-worn dress, but there are good serges, French twills, tweeds, etc., in bright colours that look exceedingly well. A navy-blue dress with deep red—the fashionable shade—looks remarkably well. More of the red can be introduced in other parts of the costume, as bordering to a tunic, and for cuffs. A full habit-shirt of red will conceal worn button-holes, and be more becoming to the figure than a plain dress. A brown dress will take red, or very deep gold, according to taste. Plaids can also be introduced upon plain dresses, or plain materials upon plaids, always making sure that the fancy pattern has a large proportion of the colour of the plaid.

THE fulness at the back of the skirt is now supplemented by a large pouffe, or double puff, which is put on the back of the basque, not on the skirt below; this altogether dispenses with padding underneath, or one of those detestable cane things, which the wearers are so deluded as to style "dress-improvers."

MANY of the bodices are made with three points behind, two of which are seen, and the third concealed by the pouffes alluded to, or a large bow of the silk, surah, or satin, which makes a part of the dress. Woollen materials are unsuitable for sash bows, but they will drape or make a large puff very well. The short jackets of deep red cloth are being made for house wear as well as for the street. Serge is an economical material, as there is no waste in cutting it out. For house wear these bodices come in usefully to wear with old skirts of black cashmere, satin, velveteen, or brocade. For street wear, ladies who have no fear



of catarrh or rheumatism before their eyes, will wear these red cloth bodices in the street all through this month and next, but with the addition of fur trimmings. If intended to be displayed late in the year, marabout trimming is preferable to fur. The fur must be a contrasting colour—brown, grey, black, etc., and the same remark applies to the marabout trimming, which in this deep red is scarcely suitable for a rough material like cloth or serge, being rather too dainty.

RED cloth worked up with fancy materials requires skill and good taste. The Princess of Wales has just had a new walking costume which is a model of skilful blending. The bodice is altogether of red cloth, with basque border of natural otter, in the pale yellow brown which harmonises so well with crimson. A collar, cuffs, and trimming down the front of the same fur, makes literally a border, as it goes all round without a break. The underskirt has a thick quilting, similar to the bodice; the skirt itself being of a plaid material, red ground with narrow brown and gold lines crossing and recrossing each other. The tunic, which is red cloth also, is draped low on each hip, and the back, instead of loose puffs, is draped like the front, but in very ample folds, and meets the front at the right side, caught with a large gimp ornament.

ANOTHER dress for the same illustrious lady is chiefly of plaid, with very little plain material, only waistcoat, lappels, and turned-back cuffs. The prevailing colour in the plaid is peacock-blue, with a faint brown check. The trimming material is of plain peacock-blue cloth. On cold days the Princess wears a pelisse, or dolman, of slate-grey brocade, trimmed with grey marabout, and lined with gold colour. With this costume is worn a grey bonnet with large cluster of marigolds in two shades of deep gold colour. With the red dress a bonnet of deep red velvet, cased in large rows, is worn, and the bunch of ostrich feathers is of three shades of red, the deepest being almost black. The Princess seems to have quite adopted the bonnet with a front a little open, and framing the face, in which she has been photographed several times during the last few months.

MATERIALS intended either for dresses or mantles, have patterns on the largest scale possible for cutting out with a view to the proportions of the human figure. These huge designs are favoured by the very skilful dressmakers, as affording opportunities for the display of their accomplishments. In the hands of an inferior modiste most terrible are the results of trying to deal with large brocades.

LAST year flowers were the chief designs, and trails of vine, maple, ivy, etc., slightly exaggerated, supplied the motives of the patterns. To change these graceful designs for fruit is not an improvement, but we cannot control that impersonal queen—Fashion. Plums, peaches, grapes, etc., are all introduced in brocades, but there is no slavish adherence to natural colours, as grey cherries, chaudron apples, coral grapes, and terra-cotta plums, are all to be seen in brocades. Wearers of the Blue Ribbon will be shocked to hear that the newest colour is called rum, and that ladies are heard openly exhorting each other to take to rum—velvet. Or a town mouse writes to a country mouse somewhat to this effect, "Whatever you get this year, be sure you include rum. You cannot be seen anywhere without it, and though some people insist on veiling it with black lace, I, for my part, prefer to have it *au naturel*."

THICK silk cord round the basques, collars, pockets, cuffs, etc., of dresses and pelisses has come again into use; and the gimp ornaments for looping up tunics are made of coils of silk cord.

THE only novelty in skirt-making is knife-pleating, which makes a little change from box-pleats. The material is kilted by hand or by machine, as is found most suitable for the material employed, and fastened as before with a tape on the wrong side; but each pleat must stand on edge, instead of being sewed to lie flat. Skirts made entirely knife-pleated from waist to hem, called accordion skirts, will be very light for summer wear, as no lining is required, and the lowest tape on the wrong side will be only a little below the knee.

ON the same principle as the knife-pleats are fans inserted in skirts of dresses between folds or quilts. A second material is generally used for the fans, which spring from about the knee. Satin covered with lace is used for fans, which are tacked in knife-pleats.

THE tendency of fashion in children's dresses of late years has been to exaggerate certain details, no longer preserving that correct balance of proportion in each part which reduced the making of frocks, pinafores, and under-garments to rules. For instance, the waist of a frock, where the sash-band fits, is to be found down somewhere near the knees, instead of upon the body. Sash bows have increased in width, until what was formerly called a scarf is now what is required for a little girl's adornment. The growth in size of little girls' bonnets has been mushroom like, for there was no intermediate increase from small to middle size, but a great leap to "grannies" all in one season. As to hats, either very wide-leaved shapes or little turbans were worn last year, but if the former, the plumes of feathers which nodded over the front were on a liberal scale, and this fashion will prevail during the coming season. But the greatest exaggeration of the present day is the large collar which has become *de rigueur* for

outdoor costume. Coarse tatting has been revived, done with écoré thread for these collars. Irish crochet is a collar of a similar character. Both these collars are finished round the edge with a row of little tassels made of flaxen thread, and these are knotted into the points, or scallops, like fringe on a chair-cover. Guipure embroidery is also much used. A bold pattern is traced on linen, outlined with button-stitch, and the ground cut away. Wonderful imitations of this work, machine wrought, can be bought very cheap, and as they are strong, likely to bear frequent washing, one set will supply a nursery, and most likely outlast the fashion.

So much more attention is now given to the form and trimming of children's frocks than was the case some years ago, that dressmakers are obliged to provide fresh sets of patterns every season for school-room and nursery, as they do for drawing-room and promenade. Bodices with full habit-shirt fronts, or with vests, are made for children, but except for very dressy occasions, one material only is employed. On a tiny figure two colours, two shades, or two or three different materials, give a look of deformity, and serve no good purpose.

THE newest buttons, buckles, or ornaments for looping up skirts, are made of wood, beautifully carved. Some are coloured to simulate ivory, others are like lava, and a few in malachite in vivid greens. The designs are mostly heraldic: griffins, unicorns, lions—*passant*, *rampant*, *couchant*—and birds. The strangeness of these ornaments is their origin, as they are Parisian, and no one would expect the French republicans to study heraldry, or choose these particular designs.

NARROW velvet ribbon has really come back to fashion, but only in the modern colours, which consort with new materials. It is run in several rows upon flounces, or on kilted skirts just above the hem; broader widths are used for rosettes to loop drapery, made with a few loops, and several long pendent ends.

## Household Gardening.

LAST week we gave what we thought timely instruction for preparing soil for seeds, pointing out also the best modes of sowing them in the open garden. It will not be inappropriate now, nor unseasonable, to name a few hardy flowers, the seed of which, if sown now, and the plants make satisfactory progress, will render the garden attractive and sweet during the ensuing summer.

### FRAGRANT ANNUALS.

Not many hardy annuals, the flowers of which are suitable for bouquets and vases, are highly perfumed, yet there are some, and these are indispensable in all gardens where flowers are grown. There are many, however, which eminently deserve notice because of their beauty, even if they are only slightly sweet, or even possess no fragrance. But first to the few that are scented.

### MIGNONETTE.

Of all fragrant and popular garden flowers that may be raised in any quantity by sowing seed in the open ground this remains the favourite. For a long time only one variety was cultivated, but now there are several.

For growing in large masses and cutting in large handfuls or basketfuls, the old variety may be grown because the seed is so cheap, while the flowers are as sweet as any; but the spikes are not so large, nor the colour so clear as some others. Sow, as directed last week, in a sheltered position, but reserve some seed for sowing again in the course of three weeks, for maintaining a long succession of flowers.

For sowing in small quantities in gardens, also in window-boxes and flower-pots, some of the choicer varieties may be preferred, the seed of which can be purchased in small packets, varying in price from three-pence to one shilling each. Of these, one of the most effective is Miles's Spiral, which, in rich soil, produces gigantic spikes of cream-coloured flowers deliciously scented. A dark-flowered sort, also very robust, is the Crimson Pyramidal, which has reddish flowers. A particularly sweet kind is Garraway's White, the lightest in colour of all, but the spikes not so large as the preceding; while, last year, a new French variety, Golden Queen, with yellowish flowers, was introduced to British gardens. This is distinct and attractive, but only a portion of the plants appear to come quite true to character. There are other forms of Mignonette, but we have named sufficient for the majority of readers.

### SOWING IN BOXES.

Boxes of Mignonette are always enjoyable on window-sills, and the present is the time for preparing them. The boxes should be six inches deep; the length and width being determined by the space they are desired to occupy, and a few holes, half an inch wide, should be bored in them for the purpose of drainage.

The best compost for Mignonette is two-thirds fresh and rather strong loam, and one-third of decayed manure, two or three handfuls of sifted lime rubbish being well mixed in the soil for each box. But although that is the best preparation, very good results may be had in

common garden soil, provided it is fertile, or made so by the addition of an admixture of bone meal, say a tumblerful of meal to a gallon of soil.

Before placing the soil in the boxes, put in a layer of good manure, pressing it down quite firmly to a depth of two inches. The soil also must be made firm, but not pressed together when wet; it should be moist enough for the particles to adhere readily, and that is all.

Fill the boxes to within an inch of the top, and make the surface quite firm, level, and smooth. If the soil is at all dry, water it well; but if distinctly moist it will need no water. Scatter the seeds evenly and about an eighth of an inch apart all over the surface, pressing them down gently; then dust a little sifted soil over them, just sufficient to place the seeds out of sight, and no more; and finally lay a few squares of whitewashed glass across the tops of the boxes; clear glass would admit the sun too much if the days were bright, drying the surface, and preventing the free germination of the seed. When the seedlings appear prop up the glass slightly, and eventually, when the plants are half an inch high, remove it. They will need thinning out, probably, but of this more anon, and if judiciously watered, fine healthy masses of delightfully fragrant spikes will be produced. Many persons fail in growing Mignonette in boxes, but if our instructions are followed exactly, success will be achieved.

#### SWEET PEAS.

Where there is room for growing them either against walls or fences, or in the open garden and supported with sticks, these beautiful butterfly-like flowers, with their refreshing perfume, must never be forgotten.

There can be no better time for sowing than the present. Fork the soil over deeply and add manure liberally, if needed, as in poor soil the plants soon cease flowering. If a row of these Peas be desired, make a drill an inch deep and four inches wide, running the foot along it to make the bottom quite smooth and level; scatter in the peas half an inch apart all over it; draw the soil over them neatly, and the work is done. If the plants are required in clumps and patches, sow a dozen or two of seeds in each, covering as directed, and the plants will shortly appear. It will be well to dust them with soot occasionally, as this will check the attacks of slugs, and at the same time act beneficially as a manure. The scarlet, white, and dark purple varieties of this flower are the most effective, but some of the painted or variegated flowers are pretty, and they look the best grown in mixture.

#### SWEET SULTAN.

Of this not by any means commonly-seen flower there are three varieties, having respectively yellow, purple, and white flowers, and they are named in the order of merit. The plants grow a foot high, and the flower-heads, an inch or two in diameter, have a brush-like appearance, on account of their numerous anthers, and have quite a honey-like perfume.

Those possessing a frame had better sow the seed thinly in pots or boxes of light soil early in April, and transplant the seedlings about the middle of May; failing such convenience, sowing had better be deferred in the open ground until the last week in April, or even a week longer if the weather be not fine. Flowers of the Sweet Sultan continue fresh a very long time when cut, and last season were in much repute for dinner-table decoration.

#### SWEET ALYSSUM.

This dwarf white-flowering annual will grow almost anywhere, whenever the seed is scattered in the open ground. The flowers are not individually imposing, but are produced in such numbers as to form almost a sheet of white, and their peculiar fragrance is enjoyed by many, but not by all. Those who do not know the plant, and have room for a few patches, may give it a trial.

#### SWEET STOCKS.

As combining beauty with fragrance, no flowers surpass the dwarf double German Ten Week Stocks. Their massive spikes of rosette-like flowers, in a dozen or more different shades of colour, are admired by all, and the plants are grown in millions.

The seed may be sown now in frames, as advised for the Sweet Sultan, or in a few weeks' time in the open air. On this simple method of raising plants a reminder will be given, as it were a pity the sowing should be overlooked, for nothing can compensate for the absence of these flowers from gardens in summer.

#### NIGHT SCENTED STOCKS.

At the first glance these appear to have little resemblance to the Stocks above-mentioned, with which most persons are familiar, still a closer examination reveals their affinity. The former is, botanically, *Matthiola annua*, the latter *Matthiola bicornis*. It is a dwarf simple hardy annual with pinkish buff-coloured flowers, which are delightfully scented in the evening, but not during the day. The seed may be sown the same as Mignonette, where the plants are required to flower, and a few patches near a window, or the side of a walk, render a garden enjoyable during the cool evening following a sultry day.

#### SWEET-SCENTED TOBACCO.

We are not alluding now to the "fragrant weed" with which everybody is familiar, and which has to be burned before its virtues are evolved; but to a sweet and pretty flower not yet known by the multitude, yet which most persons may grow in their gardens.

The tobacco of commerce is made from the leaves of *Nicotiana*

*tabacum*; the sweet-flowered Tobacco, now under notice, is *Nicotiana affinis*. The plants require to be raised under glass by sowing the seed thinly, then establishing in small pots, and planting out towards the end of May.

They grow about two feet high, and bear a profusion of greenish-white trumpet-shaped flowers, an inch or two in diameter, which close during the day, but expand beautifully in the evening, and are delicately scented. This comparatively new and very distinct species is worthy of a place in all gardens alike by its novelty and attractiveness.

## Windsor Castle.

THE very prettiest legend about Windsor is connected with the little garden at the foot of its proud tower, from which twelve counties can be seen in clear weather. A young Scotch prince, sent to France to be out of the way of his dangerous uncle, the Duke of Albany, was captured at sea, and sent to Windsor, where he remained a prisoner for eighteen years. In his poem, "The King's Quaire," the prince has described how he fell in love with Lady Jane Beaufort, as she walked in the garden, unconscious of the admiration of the young prisoner. The garden, he says, had an arbour in the corner, and was railed in with wands and close-knit hawthorn bushes; and in the midst of the arbour was "a sharp, green, sweet juniper." Suddenly the prisoner's eyes fell on

The fairest or the freshest young flower  
That ever I saw methought before that hour,  
For which sudden abate anon astart  
The blood of all my body to my heart.

Then the enraptured prince describes the dress of the maiden; her golden hair fretted with pearls and rubies, emeralds and sapphires; on her head a chaplet of plumes, red, white, and blue, mixed with quaking spangles; about her neck a fine gold chain, with a ruby in the shape of a heart:

That as a spark of fire so wantonly  
Seemed burning upon her white throat.

But suddenly the fair fresh face passed under the boughs out of sight, and then began the lover's torments, and his day darkened into night. Altogether, a prettier love-story is not to be found in all the Castle history. James eventually married this incomparable lady, niece of the cardinal, and daughter of the Earl of Somerset, and took her back with him to Scotland. The accomplished prince was assassinated at Perth in 1437.

At the old deanery door took place the parting between Richard II. and his young queen, Isabella, then only eleven years old. Froissart says, when the canons had chanted very sweetly, the king having made his offering, he took the queen in his arms and kissed her twelve or thirteen times, saying sorrowfully:

"Adieu, madam, until we meet again."  
Then the queen began to weep, saying:

"Alas, my lord, will you leave me here?"

The king's eyes filled with tears, and he said:

"By no means, Mamie; but I will go first, and you, *ma chère*, shall come afterwards."

After that the king and queen partook of wine and comfits at the deanery, with their court. Then the king stooped down and lifted the queen in his arms, and kissed her at least ten times, saying:

"Adieu, *ma chère*, until we meet again;" and placing her on the ground, kissed her again.

"By our Lady," adds the chronicler, "I never saw so great a lord make so much of, or show such affection to, a lady, as did King Richard to his queen. Great pity it was they separated, for they never saw each other more."

Soon afterwards came the death-struggle of Pontefract, and the child-wife became a widow.

It was in King George's Chapel that, in 1813, the body of King Charles I. was discovered. Charles II. had pretended to search for it, but probably did not wish to find it, or to incur the cost of a sumptuous monument. The corpse had been carried to the grave in 1648, in a snow-storm, and the dead monarch obtained secretly the name of "the white king" among his adherents, from the fact of the snow that day settling upon the pall. There was no service read over the body, as the Puritan governor forbade Bishop Prescott to use the Church of England prayers. On the coffin being opened, the face was found dark and discoloured, the forehead and mouth had little of their muscular substance remaining, the cartilage of the nose was gone, but the left eye, though open and full at the first exposure, vanished almost immediately. The shape of the face was long, the nearly black hair was thick at the back of the head; the beard was a reddish-brown. On examining the head, the muscles of the neck showed contraction, and the fourth cervical vertebra had been cut through transversely, leaving the severed surfaces smooth and even. The appearance was such as a blow from a heavy axe would have produced. In this chapel sleep many kings and queens, Jane Seymour among them, and Henry VIII., by his own desire, "near his true and loving wife, Queen Jane." The gigantic tomb, with six hundred and thirty-four statues and forty-four "historics," which the tyrant ordered, were never put up. His former subjects had better things to think of.

## Odds and Ends.

A CLERGYMAN in Illinois having heard that a portion of the country was without "the stated preaching of the Gospel"—in fact, had had no minister in those parts within the memory of the oldest inhabitant—resolved to give a "service" on the Lord's Day. Notice was posted up at the cross-roads that preaching might be expected next Sunday in the school-house. Men came from all directions across the prairie, some on foot, some on horseback, some in waggons, but all with gun in hand, in hopes of meeting game on the way, and thus combining piety with profit. Passing over the preliminaries of a meeting thus strange and novel to most of the comers, we find the preacher holding forth on the duty of "observing the Sabbath," when all at once a dog outside set up a terrible yell, as hounds do in sight of the deer, for a noble stag had thrust his antlers in sight through the opening wood. All at once, as the deer was seen through the windows, there was a rush for the shot-guns and rifles, stacked in a corner, and in less than no time the room was cleared of all save an old man with crutches and the preacher. As long as the old man sat still the preacher went on with his discourse. But the fever of excitement extended even to the lame man, who suddenly gathered up his crutches and made for the door. "Well," said the parson, out of patience, "this is too much; it is all in vain!" "Oh no," said the lame man, as he jerked himself to the door—"oh no; I think they'll catch him!" And catch him they did.

DR. MÜLLER, the head physician of the Prussian general staff, was allowed to go to Japan in order to assist in the arrangement of the Japanese Military Academy. When the hour came for his presentation to the Mikado, he naturally clothed himself in full uniform. The court officials informed him that he could not be permitted to enter the awful presence unless he complied with Japanese usage, and pulled off his boots. Dr. Müller refused to comply. There was much debate over the difficulty, the court chamberlain insisting that the physician must unboot himself, and he declaring that he would not enter without his boots. At last Dr. Müller hit upon the ingenious notion of casting all the responsibility of the situation upon the Emperor Wilhelm. "My master, the German Kaiser," said he, "commanded me to present myself before the august Emperor of Japan in full Prussian uniform. Now, the boots constitute an important part of the Prussian uniform, and I dare not appear as his representative without these important accessories." The chamberlain went to the Mikado with this explanation, and the result was that Dr. Müller marched into the audience-chamber in his boots. His was the first shoe-leather which had ever desecrated the floor of the Mikado Palace in Tokio.

SOCRATES, at an extreme old age, learned to play on musical instruments. Cato, at eighty years of age, began to study the Greek language. Plutarch, when between seventy and eighty, commenced to study Latin. Boccaccio was thirty years of age when he commenced his studies in light literature, yet he became one of the greatest masters of the Tuscan dialect, Dante and Plutarch being the other two. Sir Henry Spellman neglected the sciences in his youth, but commenced the study of them when he was between fifty and sixty years of age. After this time he became a most learned antiquarian and lawyer. Dr. Johnson applied himself to the Dutch language but a few years before his death.

THE mania of the autograph fiend reached its climax in the case of a former clerk in the Massachusetts state library, who cut from ancient documents and colonial charters, signatures of eminent men and Indians who died two hundred years ago. Singular that a man should get together a collection of autographs he would be afraid to show anybody. But then it is so much safer to ask for the autograph of a dead Indian than a live one. Not that the live Indian wouldn't willingly and cheerfully make his mark for you, but he would be liable to make it on top of your head with his little hatchet.

A REALLY good housekeeper is almost always unhappy. While she does so much for the comfort of others, she nearly ruins her own health and life. It is because she cannot be easy and comfortable when there is the least disorder or dirt to be seen. A fine musician is always pained and made miserable at a slight discord that is not noticed by less trained ears, and a fine housekeeper is just as unhappy as she can be at a little dust or disorder which the ordinary mortal does not see.

A GENTLEMAN residing near Bogton drew the attention of the town council to a slough in the road as a nuisance, but no notice was taken of it. One day he found, to his amusement, that two councillors had walked into it by accident, and were floundering about in the mire, when he addressed them thus: "Gentlemen of the Town Council of Bogton, I have often petitioned to your honourable body against this slough, but I never had any attention paid to my petition. I now come forth to express my delight to see you at last moving in the matter."

A TWO-FOOT rule was given to a labourer in a Clyde boat-yard to measure an iron plate. The labourer, after much time, returned. "Now, Mick," asked the plater, "what size is the plate?" "Well," replied Mick with a grin of satisfaction, "it's the length of your rule and two thumbs over, with this piece of brick, and the breadth of my hand, and my arm from here to there, bar a finger."

IT rather annoys the lady holding the pug-dog in her lap in an omnibus to hear a learned-looking gentleman remark to a friend: "Do you know the female orang-outang at the Zoo has formed an attachment for a small dog and fondles it constantly?"

THERE is a story of a wise monarch not contained in written histories. Two of his court damsels had a dispute as to precedence. The king looked kindly at them and said, "Let the oldest go first," and the damsels embraced and went in together with entwined arms.

"LANDS are measured in rods, leagues, and so forth," said the teacher. "Now, what is a surveyor?" "A land-leaguer," shouted one of the boys.

A LADY politician asks: "Is it a crime to be a woman?" It certainly is when there is a great necessity for dressing in a hurry.

SAMUEL FOOTE, the dramatist and wit, once made a jest which cost him dear. It was after he had opened the Haymarket Theatre on his own account, and was doing well in the way of money-making. One evening, as he was walking alone down a street in the neighbourhood of Oxford Road, he was accosted by a man, who very politely asked him if he would be so kind as to direct him to Newgate Prison. Now it was utterly impossible for Foote to return a civil answer if he saw an opportunity for a jest, and few men could find material for a jest as readily as could he. He straightway answered the man: "My good fellow, you have only to rob the first man you meet, and you'll find your way there easily." Unfortunately for Foote, it chanced that this man was a notorious footpad, who was on his way to visit, if possible, a pal who was in limbo. "My dear man," said the highwayman, who had originally not a thought of evil towards the gentleman whom he had honestly interrogated, "I'll try the experiment on you, as that happens to be my profession. And now, sir, you know the alternative. There's a pair of bullets in this pistol, and they're for that witty brain of yours if you don't give up what little you possess of value about your person instantaneously." Foote delivered. He could do nothing else, for he knew that the man was in earnest. Robbed of his watch and purse, and robbed of his jest! It would be hard to tell which occasioned him the most chagrin!

THE following is an extract from the will of John Hylett Stow, proved in 1781: "I hereby direct my executors to lay out five guineas in the purchase of a picture of the viper biting the benevolent hand of the person who saved him from perishing in the snow, if the same can be bought for the money; and that they do, in memory of me, present it to —, a king's counsel, whereby he may have frequent opportunities of contemplating it, and by a comparison between that and his own virtue, be able to form a certain judgment which is best and most profitable—a grateful remembrance of past friendship and almost paternal regard, or ingratitude and insolence."

"GAZE upon that pure, beautiful evening star, and swear to be true while its light shall shine! Swear, my love! Swear by Venus!" exclaimed a youth in impassioned accents. "How stupid you are!" answered the Girton girl. "That is not Venus. The right ascension of Venus this month is 15h. 9m.; her delineation is 17 degrees, 25 minutes south, and her diameter is 10'2."

"ARE you not ashamed of yourself to fight with a boy so much smaller than yourself? I really can't understand it," said a gentleman to a big boy who was imposing on a small one. "So you can't understand it?" retorted the young ruffian impudently. "No, I can't." "Well, then, why do you meddle with things you don't understand?"

A MAN in a London train was heard to groan so frightfully that the passengers took pity on him, and one of them gave him a drink out of a whisky-flask. "Do you feel better?" asked the giver. "I do," said he who had groaned. "What ailed you?" "Ailed me?" "Yes; what made you groan so?" "Groan! Great land of freedom! I was singing!"

"How is this, Minnie?" asked one girl of another. "You have asked all these folks to your party that you scarcely speak to and left out some of your most intimate friends." "Oh, that's all right; I'm practising cooking, and I'm going to make the sweets for the party myself. I don't want to kill any of my friends."

A CLERGYMAN thought he would raise his own pork. So he bought five pigs and fattened them. Now that they are fit to kill, he says they seem so much like his own children that he hasn't the heart to kill them. The pigs are in good luck, but it's rather hard on the children.

AN AMERICAN has patented a device by which the front wheels of two bicycles may be so joined as to permit the machines to be driven tandem by two riders. The atmosphere is in a very chilly condition when some American is not trying to do good.

DID you ever notice the warning, "Paint," posted on the door that you did not test the matter with your finger just to find out if it wasn't dry enough to take down the warning? You probably never did. It would be contrary to human nature.

"MY case is just here," said a gentleman to a lawyer. "The plaintiff will swear that I hit him. I will swear that I did not. Now what can you lawyers make out of that if we go to trial?" "A hundred pounds easy," was the reply.

ROBINSON (after a meeting at the club): "It is awfully late, Brown. What will you say to your wife?" Brown (in a whisper): "Oh, I shan't say much, you know; 'Good-morning, dear,' or something of that sort. She'll say the rest."

A BOOKBINDER said to his wife at their wedding. "It seems that now we are bound together, two volumes in one, with clasps." "Yes," observed one of the guests, "one side highly ornamental Turkey morocco, and the other plain calf."

TWO Irishmen travelling on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad came to a mile post, when one of them said: "Tread aisy, Pat; here lies a man who was 108 years old. His name was Miles, from Baltimore."

"BOYS," said Admiral Truncheon, when his fleet closed in combat with the Dutch fleet under Admiral de Winter, "you see a severe winter approaching, and I advise you to keep up a good fire."

A HEALTH journal says that you ought to take three-quarters of an hour for your dinner. It is well also to add a few vegetables and a piece of meat.

A LITTLE girl hearing it remarked that all people had once been children, artlessly enquired: "Who took care of the babies?"

ÆSTHETIC girls never giggle. They merely express their delight by a dreamy, far-away, north-pole smile.

PAYING dividends on watered stock is now called "El Mahdi," because it is "false profit."

IT does not matter how well the gardener tries to do, he is always slipping.

WHEN were eggs first laid in England?—In the time of Hen. I., of course.

Don't you think the bride is foolish not to marry the best man?

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### ANSWERS.

**ALPHA.**—Macmillan & Co. publish "Waterton's Wanderings," with biographical introduction. Mr. Waterton made four journeys to British Guiana, devoting himself chiefly to ornithology, which to the end of his life was his favourite branch of Natural History. He was born 1782; died 1865.

**ARTISAN.**—1. Baker's, High Holborn, is a good shop. 2. A pocket magnifying-glass would be useful. Try any optician.

**CONSTANT READER.**—"F. L." kindly informs you that the words you quoted in *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 145, are entitled "Happy Memories," are set to music by Cristabel, and published by Reid Bros., London.

**CULTIVATOR.**—Our present common flowers were for the most part introduced into England from the reign of Henry VII. to that of Elizabeth. The art of preserving flowers in sand was discovered in 1633. A very great number have been introduced from America, Australia, The Cape, etc., during the present century.

**DORA.**—1. Scarborough lilies, well cultivated, flower every year after the bulbs attain the requisite strength, and rank amongst the most beautiful of autumn window and greenhouse plants. The flowers should be removed as soon as they fade. Particulars of management will shortly be given. 2. For particulars respecting price of music, etc., apply to Mr. Robinson, New and Secondhand Music Library, 95, St. Martin's Lane, Charing Cross.

**FLORENCE.**—1. There is a village named after St. Florent on the Loire, between Angers and Nantes in Anjou. He is said to have cleared the country of dragons, and subsequently to have converted the inhabitants to Christianity. 2. We do not know of any saint of that name. You should consult the Roman Calendar.

**HOUSEWIFE OLD STYLE.**—1. You will find the following pudding a nice change from pastry, and it is wholesome for children. Stew rhubarb with sugar and water, taking care to have plenty of juice. Cut the crumb of a stale tin-loaf in slices about half an inch thick and put in a pie-dish, leaving room for the bread to swell, with alternate layers of rhubarb, until the dish is full. Then put in as much of the juice as you can without causing the bread to rise. When it is soaked up, put in the rest of the juice, cover with a plate, and let the pudding stand until the next day. When required for use turn out and pour over it a good custard or cream. The excellence of this pudding depends on there being plenty of syrup to soak the bread thoroughly. This pudding is improved by the addition of a little apple, and the evaporated rings answer well; they must, however, be cooked separately, as if boiled in sugar, they would harden. 2. For directions how to remove grease spots from your dress, see *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 151, under the head, "Spring Cleaning."

**LETHE.**—1. "Graphe Paranonon," according to Greek law, was the impeachment of one who proposed a measure at variance with the principles of the constitution. 2. We know of no better books for your purpose than the "Natural Science Primers."

**M. A. B.**—"G. M." kindly writes that you will find the article on "Petroleum for Fruit Trees," in the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1883.

**MAGGIE F.**—1. We can only forward the copy to the correspondent who originally asked for it. 2. Please quote first verse of the poem you want.

**MARBELLA.**—Society in Madras is now mixed, and not confined, as in old days, to the military and civilians. It is the custom for the new arrivals to call on the residents, who return calls or not as they desire. As to the climate, there are three months of tolerable comfort—November, December, January; but the other nine months the temperature is 84°. On the coast there are sea-breezes, but as they are hot, there cannot be much refreshment in them.

**M. S. M.**—In an early issue we hope to refer to the subject of your letter. At present it will suffice for you to know that the stems should be cut off your bulbous plants immediately the flowers fade, and the foliage must be kept fresh and green as long as possible by keeping the roots moist, while at the same time the plants cannot have too much sun and air.

**MURIEL.**—1. Egerton Burnett has no agent; his "Royal Devonshire Serge" is supplied direct from Wellington, Somerset. 2. Leave only your husband's cards unless there is any special reason for adding your own. 3. You might try "Vaseline," or "Vaseline Hair Tonic."

**NORFOLK.**—The 1st of April is, as you say, called "All Fools' Day," but the rise of this singular kind of anniversary is not known. In "Brand's Popular Antiquities"—a book you should, if possible, consult before commencing your essay—we read: "There is nothing hardly that will bear a clearer demonstration than that the primitive Christians, by way of conciliating the Pagans to a better worship, humoured their prejudices by yielding to a conformity of names, and even of customs, where they did not essentially interfere with the fundamentals of the Gospel."

doctrine. This was done in order to quiet their possession, and to secure their tenure, an admirable expedient, and extremely fit in those barbarous times, to prevent the people from returning to their old religion. Among these, in imitation of the Roman Saturnalia, was the Feast of Fools, when part of the jollity of the season was a burlesque election of a mock Pope, mock cardinals, and mock bishops, attended with a thousand ridiculous ceremonies. . . . The continuance of customs, especially droll ones, which suit the taste of the multitude, after the original cause of them has ceased, is a great, but no uncommon absurdity." 2. One of the most favourite London jokes was to send greenhorns to the Tower "to see the lions washed." As an old writer says:

But 'tis a thing to be disputed,  
Which is the greatest fool reputed—  
The man that innocently went,  
Or he that him design'dly sent.

**THISBE.**—There is a song called "Laddie," beginning, "My laddie is someone's darling," by Ciro Pinsuti; words by H. L. D'Arcy Jaxone.

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 154.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## The Stone-cutter's Story,

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

THE portrait of a very fine face, you say, sir? Yes, indeed, it is; and, what is more, it is the face of a very fine fellow, though he was only a fellow-workman of mine. He has a history, too, that young man has. Will I tell it you, sir? Well, it is a story that I never have told, with all my love of story-telling; but the time and place being now so far off, I think it could do no one any harm if I did tell it you.

About twenty years ago—I was a hale young fellow of six-and-thirty then—we were making a railway in the Limousin. When I say "we," I mean Rollingstock, Ballast, and Co. I was only a master stone-cutter, but we got into the way of saying "we" when we should say "the firm." It was a short branch, about fourteen miles long, joining an important town to the main line from Paris; but it was a difficult job, owing to the nature of the country, which was all broken up into narrow steep valleys by spurs of rocky hills, which ran sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another. We had to bridge over six of these valleys, and I was at work in the widest and deepest, where the bridge, when it was finished, was reckoned a marvel of engineering. This young man, whose portrait you noticed hanging over my fireplace, was working with me, next in command, as you might say; he was a far cleverer workman, but he had not had quite so much experience as I had. His name was Cyprien Delbez. He was a Frenchman; we had a good many of them on the works. I had been so much about that I understood their lingo well, though I am quite out of it now; and as Delbez lodged with me in the little cottage I had run up for myself close to the works, he had picked up a good bit of English from me, and my wife, and my boy. I was very fond of him; in fact, I may say I loved him as well as if he had been my kith and kin, and I admired him and looked up to him into the bargain. His portrait tells you how handsome he was, and there was a look in his eyes, which the photograph brings out very well, which seems to draw you at once. It was that, no doubt, made you notice it among all my other portraits. He was very tall and well built, with an easy, graceful way of carrying himself, for he had served as a soldier, and had not forgotten his drill. He was a bit of a dandy—every good-looking young Frenchman is—and he had a knowing way of wearing his broad felt hat that was very becoming to his dark Southern face. I think I said what a good workman he was, and he was always studying to improve himself in his craft, for I dare say you know, sir, that in the higher branches of stone-cutting a good bit of mathematical knowledge is required. Mr. Lindsell, the agent who was managing the work for Rollingstock and Ballast, took a great deal of notice of Delbez, and lent him books and encouraged him in every way, for he was a nice, kind-hearted man. I had worked under him ever since I had been quite a lad, and had travelled all over the world with him.

Mr. Lindsell had now come to live with his family at Lantrac, a good-sized town about three miles from the valley I was working in. This valley was called Planche Torte. It was a lovely spot, the sides were almost precipitous in places, but where the railway was to run across, they sloped down more gently. There were chestnut-trees growing in all directions, with heaps of shrubs and tall ferns which clustered round the rocks. At the bottom ran a broad, shallow stream along a craggy bed, there were numbers of little falls, and here and there a deep pool, worn out by the water as it eddied round a rock. Far up the valley, where the stream entered, there was a great waterfall of about a hundred and twenty feet, in three leaps, as it were. Here there was a most curious thing to be seen. At the bottom of the first leap, which was perhaps ten or fifteen feet deep, there lay a pile of fallen rocks on a tongue of land, which divided the stream as it fell, and it flowed on in two parts—that to the right completed the fall, while that to the left found a terrace-like bed along the hillside and ran quietly on under the overhanging rocks as if it had no connection with the noisy, brawling torrent below. The only paths in the valley were a few sheep-tracks, and the rough road along which the carts brought us our stone from a quarry nearby; besides which we had made a sort of way to my house and to some other similar houses on the hillside. We crossed the stream by some great flat stepping-stones. Altogether it was a very beautiful place, though I am a poor hand at describing it.

There were a good many English people at Lantrac, who had come on account of the making of the railway, and large parties of ladies often came up to Planche Torte with the engineers to picnic,

and to see the falls and enjoy a day among the wonderful wild scenery and pretty growing things, for the place was full of flowers.

One day—it was in the middle of May—Mr. Lindsell came on to the works with several ladies. One of them I knew very well; she was his niece, Miss Beatrice Lindsell. My wife had been a servant in her father's house for years before we were married. Miss Lindsell was a very handsome young lady, she was tall and finely-formed, with a beautiful forehead, from which her bright chestnut hair grew back in soft waves. Her eyes—I always notice people's eyes—were dark blue, large, with a powerful look in them. I dare say this may seem an odd way of describing her eyes, still "powerful" is the word they always brought into my mind, though, of course, a more educated man would have found a better. Her nose was just a little bit *retroussé*, and her mouth and chin were most exquisite. Her whole face had the frankest, most genial expression I have ever seen on man, woman, or child, and her manner was quite true to her looks.

Mr. Lindsell was showing his friends about the works, and telling them how the railway was to cross the valley. When they came to the place where Delbez and I were working, they stood still, and we both stopped our chisels.

"Ah, Talbot," said Miss Lindsell to me, "how are you, and how do you like living in this lonely place?"

I told her I had got quite used to it, for it was more convenient for us than being down in Lantrac.

"And don't you feel a little bit homesick now and then?" she asked.

"Well, no, miss," I said, "for you see I have brought my home with me."

Then she asked after my wife and little Joey, who was never very strong; and when I had pointed her out the roof of our little house, which we could see among the chestnut-trees on the opposite slope, she said she would come some day and pay us a visit. Then she began to ask questions about the bridge, for she was a young lady who took a deal of interest in engineering. Mr. Lindsell told her how high it would be, and how many arches it would take, and so on. She looked at the stones we were cutting, and asked why they were all numbered, and what we wanted that large plan for. Mr. Lindsell smiled and said:

"You had better ask Delbez here about the stone-cutting; he can tell you more than I should; he is a master of his craft."

Miss Lindsell turned to Delbez, who was standing by, Frenchman fashion, with his broad hat in his hand, and asked him, in very fluent French, a great many questions about his work. I dare say Mr. Lindsell could have told her all she wanted to know, but he didn't, and he didn't refer her to me either, because, you see, he was so pleased with Delbez that he liked to bring him forward. Cyprien described everything she asked him about very well, and she seemed very much interested. The other two ladies strolled on, and a man called off Mr. Lindsell's attention.

"Well," said Miss Lindsell at last, "thank you for all you have told me. I did not know that there was so much science in just cutting stones; I fancied bridges were built with much less trouble."

Cyprien explained to her that this bridge was all the more difficult to build because it crossed the valley in what we call a skew direction.

"I hope I have not given you a great deal of trouble, and wasted a great deal of your time with my talking," she said pleasantly.

"Oh no, mademoiselle," he answered, and indeed he looked very much gratified and pleased to be able to tell her so much.

His eyes rested on her with an admiring look. I did not wonder at it, for she was looking so lovely and so eager that no man could have looked on her with indifference, however cold his nature might be, while Delbez was a regular Southerner, with warm blood and quick feelings. Presently Mr. Lindsell called her, as he was ready to go on, and she bade us good-morning, saying she should take a great deal of interest in our bridge, and hoped it would be finished before she went back to England. We watched her go, and when we turned again to our work Delbez said:

"She is not much like the other English ladies who have been here, is she?"

"No," I said, "there are not many ladies anywhere like Miss Beatrice; she is so open and free with everyone, and yet no one would think of taking a liberty with her. She seems to be just what a queen should be, and then she is so beautiful."

"Yes," he said in rather a dreamy way, "she is very beautiful; her face reminds me of the pictures you see in churches over the altars."

I felt inclined to go on talking about Miss Lindsell, for I was glad to see her again, but Delbez did not answer me; for one thing the chisels made noise enough to drown our voices, besides which our work generally took all our attention; still, Delbez was unusually quiet all that day, for he was generally a chatty fellow, getting a joke out of everything.



About three days after, just as we were leaving off work at eleven to eat our lunch, which we brought with us to save some trouble, we saw Miss Lindsell coming down the hill, with no companion but a big dog. She came straight to us and said: "I am on my way to see your wife, Talbot; is she in?" I said yes she was, and that she would be very glad to see Miss Lindsell. How pleased she had been, poor thing! when I told her that she would have a visit from an old friend, and how she had talked of nothing else ever since, for she was longing for some home-news, and for the sight of a face she knew well.

"Ah, you see, Talbot," laughed Miss Lindsell, "your wife is not quite so easy to transplant as you are; she still feels as if she belongs to us at home."

I just said what I have always felt, that when you lead a very roving life like mine has been, here for a few years, and there for a few months; now under one sky, now under another; you learn to take root easily, and you soon shake yourself free from old associations; while for the womenkind it was different, they stayed at home more, and felt changes more in consequence.

"And you, monsieur," she said to Delbez; she called him "monsieur" because she knew that Frenchmen always expect such little marks of politeness, "have you also travelled about?"

"No, mademoiselle," he said; "I belong to this country. I was born at Lantrac, and have never left the department."

"Then you must know this country very well," she said, "this beautiful country."

Cyprien smiled; his idea of a beautiful country was the idea of all French peasants. Not romantic scenery, which they only call *sauvage*, but a broad plain, with fertile slopes, where the necessities of life come very easily, and the luxuries are not far off. He tried to explain to her that he could not see any beauty in a land of wild rock and stream, where nothing but chestnut-trees took root kindly.

"Well," she said gaily, "I cannot agree with you; to me this country is beautiful, and this valley superb; it will be my favourite walk as long as I am at Lantrac. And now, Talbot, tell me the easiest way to get to your house; it looks quite inaccessible up there among the trees."

I was pointing out to her where she must cross the brook and how she had best climb the opposite hill, when suddenly we heard a crash, and looking round I saw that her dog had overturned Cyprien's basket, and was making off with what was to have been his lunch. His wine-bottle lay smashed in a thousand pieces among the stones, and his dessert of cherries were covered with dust and dirt.

Miss Lindsell looked horrified, but Cyprien burst out laughing, and I could not help smiling, partly at the roguish way in which the dog was bolting Cyprien's lunch, and partly at the way in which Miss Lindsell scolded him for his trick.

"Oh, Captain," she said, "you naughty, naughty dog! You greedy creature—you sly thing! How could you go and take this man's dinner? For shame, for shame, naughty dog! I am so sorry," she went on to Delbez—"so very, very sorry."

But Cyprien went on laughing, and said his walk had given him an appetite, perhaps he thought he had come out to lunch. She had her purse in her hand now, and taking out a five-franc piece, she said:

"I am afraid you won't be able to buy anything to eat here, but please take this, for the damage the dog has done."

Delbez stopped laughing, and drew a step back.

"No, thank you, mademoiselle," he said; "no, thank you." He looked as if he did not like her to offer him money.

"Oh, do," she said, "seeing your bottle is broken, and all your eatables gone; I really wish you to."

"I assure you, mademoiselle," he said still more proudly, "that I will not take the money; and besides," he went on, changing his tone as she drew back her hand, "it is not such a serious affair as all that. I lodge at Talbot's, and I will go up now and get some more bread, if mademoiselle will allow me to show her the way."

She thanked him very pleasantly, saying that it looked such a break-neck way that she should be glad of a guide. She called Captain and scolded him once again, and they set off towards my house. Cyprien seemed a little embarrassed, but her easy manner soon put him at his ease—she had that way with her—she treated every one just as if they were her equals, and yet I always felt as if she were a princess. As I ate my lunch I watched them go, Captain walking behind, looking very much ashamed of himself. Miss Lindsell stopped several times, and I could see by their gestures that she was asking Cyprien questions about all she saw. They crossed the brook on the large flat stepping-stones, and began the winding ascent among the trees. It was rough going, and a narrow path. Cyprien went first, and I saw him turn sometimes to help her; every now and then they were hidden by the bushes, and

ferns, and tall jutting rocks, but each time I saw them they seemed to be talking busily, and I caught the sound of Miss Lindsell's voice borne on the soft wind. To you it may seem a very uninteresting kind of thing to dwell on, but I feel as if I should like to shut my eyes and watch all that morning go by me in fancy again. I asked Cyprien afterwards what she had found to talk to him about, and he said that it was chiefly about the things they passed, and he added: "She seemed to love all the flowers and green things as if they were alive; and she watched the insects flitting about in the sunshine, and she stopped to listen to the birds. I think she is herself a good bit like the flowers and the sunlight, and the things that make summer pleasant."

After this we often saw Miss Lindsell; sometimes she came with her uncle, and sometimes alone. She often went to see my wife, now she knew the way—to cheer her up, she said. She always had a pleasant word for us as she went by with her hands full of flowers. I don't exactly know when I first noticed how Delbez used to watch for these visits, he always seemed to be on the look-out, glancing continually up the hill all day long if she did not come; but, anyhow, it dawned upon me that he did watch for her, and that the great event of his day was her coming. In fact, I began to suspect that Delbez had let himself, to put it quite plainly, fall very much in love with Miss Lindsell. Not from anything he ever said, for though my wife often talked about her at supper, he didn't join in the conversation. He listened eagerly, that was all. I very well remember the day when I was convinced in my own mind that I had guessed right. Miss Lindsell came past with her uncle; she had her hands full of large white daisies and dark green moss, or rather I should say she had filled her little basket with them, and held the overflowings in her hands.

She left her uncle, and came towards us; the wind swept by, and carried two or three of her daisies on to a heap of stones near us. She began to tell us that she was making a collection of butterflies, and she said to me:

"There is a very rare butterfly seen sometimes on the cytissus about here, which I should like to have. I certainly sha'n't find it in England, it is hardly ever seen there. I am going to give your little boy a butterfly-net, and shall show him a picture of the butterfly; then if he can get me one quite uninjured I will give him ten francs."

My little boy was just ten, but he wasn't much given to scrambling about over the rocks. His chief amusement was to climb up to the slow stream that ran near our house, and there sail his little boat, and work a bit of a water-wheel that Cyprien had made for him. I told her this, but she answered in her impetuous way:

"Never mind, I will bring the things to-morrow. We are going to have a picnic at the upper end of the valley, and I will come and find Joey late in the afternoon."

She went away nodding and smiling. I had looked at Delbez once or twice while she was by. Poor fellow! his face plainly told me I was right in my fears for him. He watched her with an expression of such adoration and love that I cannot attempt to say what it was like. I had to go and speak to Mr. Lindsell just then, and when I came back to where we were working, Delbez was putting something very carefully into the pocket-book he always carried. I said:

"What's your treasure, my boy?"

He looked up with a start as I came behind him. He did not know that I saw three daisies between the leaves, and he put me off with some answer or another. From that day I watched him with very great pity. Perhaps he oughtn't to have allowed such a feeling to spring up in him; perhaps he had fought against it and been beaten. However it was, I can only tell you that if ever a woman was worshipped by a man, Miss Lindsell was worshipped by poor Cyprien.

The next day was Saturday, and as we kept to English habits about half-holidays, Cyprien and I were at home in the afternoon. We had seen the picnic-party pass by in the morning. There were a great many ladies and gentlemen. Miss Lindsell had on a dress of very pale blue, with some dark crimson flowers at her neck and waist. You may wonder at my remembering such a thing as that, but I thought so much of all that concerned her then that I can see the whole scene exactly over again.

On Saturday afternoons, as a rule, Delbez used to smarten himself up and walk down to Lantrac, to see his relations, and he often spent Sunday there as well. His father and mother were dead, but he had an old aunt in the town who made a great fuss with him, and a married brother. His sister-in-law had two nice-looking sisters, and I used to think that they all wished to arrange a marriage for Cyprien with one of them.

However, this particular Saturday, though he dressed himself with more than usual care, he did not go to the town, but lit his cigarette and climbed up to the higher stream. No doubt from

there he saw Miss Lindsell coming. She did not come alone ; a lady and gentleman walked with her to the door, and promised to come for her in half an hour. Soon after she had sat down, in came Cyprien, looking so handsome, with a glow of pleasure all over his face. Oh, sir, I could not make you understand how much I loved that man. I never had a brother, but he was all to me that a brother could have been, and now it seemed to me that I loved him ten times more than ever I had done, because of the pity I felt for this love that had taken possession of him. I couldn't make out what it could lead to. It looked equally sad whether he kept it to himself or whether he betrayed it. Miss Lindsell had got a book about butterflies in her hand, and was amusing little Joey very much by what she told him about them. She showed him the butterfly she wanted him to look for, and told him where he would probably find it.

"You know," she said, "I should enjoy looking for it myself, but it is usually seen in the early morning, so I can't manage it."

She showed him how to manage the butterfly-net, and promised him ten francs for a good specimen.

All the time Cyprien was standing near watching her with the greatest attention, though he only partly understood what she was saying, as she was speaking English. She looked up, and catching his earnest gaze, she said pleasantly :

"You look interested, M. Cyprien; should you like to know what it is all about?"

As their eyes met, I could not help looking from one to the other. His were so passionate and full of love—do not think of him, sir, as if he had been an Englishman, but make some allowance for his Southern nature—his look was so rapt and so adoring, that if hers had been less pure and innocent she must have read his secret then and there ; but though she did not learn it just then, I think she must have begun to suspect it soon after, for there is something in a woman's nature that does not leave her long in doubt when she is loved, though, of course, their position being so different, and the improbability of a workman presuming to love a born lady, made her slower to read the signs of this man's heart. He drew nearer to her when she spoke to him, and holding the back of her chair with one hand, he bent a little over the book with her, while she went all over again what she had been saying to Joey, but this time in French. As she spoke, he bent lower and lower till her head almost rested against his shoulder, and her breath must have been on his cheek.

To me it seemed that he was not listening to her words, only to the sound of her voice, which drew him like a spell. Suddenly she said, "You understand all I am telling you, do you not?" and turned her face towards him. He was so near her that by moving she must touch him. Her arm rested for a moment against his, and their eyes met close, with only a few inches between them. She drew back startled from his ardent gaze, though I doubt if she realised the truth then. She tried to go on about the insects, but I could see she was embarrassed, which was something quite new for me to observe in her. In a few minutes more her friends came back for her, and she left us.

Delbez took up the butterfly-net and examined it. I said :

"Well, Joey, do you mean to try and get your ten francs?"

"I don't care if he doesn't," said my wife ; "fond as I am of Miss Beatrice, I couldn't bear to live with my heart in my mouth until Joey had caught this creature, which I certainly should do while he was scrambling about over the rocks to get it."

I knew that after the mother had said this that Joey would not put her to much anxiety on his account ; but I also knew that, if the butterfly were to be caught far or near, Miss Lindsell would have it, for Delbez would get it for her.

A day or two after this I met with rather a serious accident : a block of stone slipped on to my foot, and it was nothing less than a miracle that my foot was not crushed to atoms. As it was, I had to lie up, and I didn't get the right use of it for some time ; so not being able to go to the works at all, Delbez replaced me there, and I did not see much of him except in the evenings.

Joey did not exert himself much about Miss Lindsell's butterfly ; he used to watch the heather and cytius by his favourite brook, but though he saw one once or twice, he did not manage to catch it. I used to hear Cyprien go out every morning soon after sunrise ; he did not tell me what it was about, but I made a good guess. I asked him several times if he had seen Miss Lindsell ; he always said, "No, she had not been near the place."

He was growing much more reserved and quiet than he used to be ; sometimes he would come and have a good laugh with me, but he spent most of his leisure time wandering about the hills with Joey's neglected butterfly-net. As to his relations in Lantrac, he scarcely ever went to see them.

One Sunday, his old aunt, Madame Sicard, made a great effort, and walked over to Planche Torte. She had heard of my accident, and I suppose she thought it was a good opportunity of coming to enquire into the absence of her favourite nephew. I could hear her

talking to my wife and Cyprien as I lay in bed in the next room. She was very fat, and the long walk had made her very hot.

"What heat!" she began ; "I have been walking in a veritable frying-pan ; the dust suffocates one, and I have swallowed a good portion—more than my share, I bet. And so the poor Maitre Joseph has met with an accident—it is a terrible trade, a stone-cutter's. I knew a poor man who was crushed in a quarry by a block of stone falling on him, but he was a quarryman—it is more dangerous than that. Ah, madame, your lemonade is very good. Ah!" and she took another deep draught.

She gave a great many counsels about the treatment I ought to have, and the *tisanes* I ought to drink to keep off fever, and then she began on the subject nearest her heart.

"Why have you deserted us, *mon fils*? It is three weeks since you have been near us. To-day I prepared your favourite dishes—I made quite a dinner. I thought you would be sure to come. I did not go to the mass, but when I had finished my cooking I sat myself on the chair outside the door. Three times I thought I saw you turn the corner by the *octroi*; three times I watched a tall man coming along, and I said, 'It is he,' 'It is not he,' 'Is it my Cyprien?' and it was not. The dinner was quite spoilt before we ate it, and I had no appetite for disappointment. Last night, too, we looked for you, there was a dance—a beautiful dance—at the Café Plaisance; all the town was there, even M. Rombon, the fat butcher ; your sister-in-law thought you would certainly come to dance with Yronne and Margot." There she stopped, out of breath, and drank some more lemonade. Cyprien said he was sorry he had disappointed them all, "especially about the dinner," he said, laughing ; as to the ball, he was too tired in the evenings to be good for much dancing—Yronne and Margot would find better partners than him.

"Ah, *mon cher*," she said, "do not work too hard ; you are slaving early and late—you will kill yourself," and she went on making a great fuss, till Cyprien appeased her by offering to escort her home, to her great delight. He came back, however, early in the evening.

It was a sad thing to think that he was growing not to care to spend his time with the people who loved him so much. His mind seemed centred on this new emotion—this adoration of Miss Beatrice—which quite lifted him above all his old associations. The expression of his face even was gradually changing, and getting more refined ; sadder, a great deal sadder, but more handsome for all its sadness.

I do not know exactly how long it was after Miss Lindsell's visit when she had left the butterfly-net that Cyprien came dashing into my room, radiant with pleasure. I couldn't think what had happened to him.

"Joe, old fellow," he called out, "look at what my good fortune has sent me!" and he showed me a beautiful butterfly which he must have caught with great care, for it was quite uninjured.

He would scarcely let me look at it, for fear I should breathe on it and blow off its soft feathers. He put it into a little box and carried it off with him to work. I had never seen anyone look so happy as he did at having got something she had asked for.

When he came home at night I asked him if Miss Lindsell had been seen, and if he had had a chance of giving her his butterfly. He had not, and he seemed a little damped.

Day after day for quite a fortnight it was the same thing. Miss Lindsell did not come near Planche Torte, which I thought was strange of her, because she must have heard of my accident. I had not seen Mr. Lindsell either for some time. Sudden business had called him to England two days after I was hurt, and he was not expected back for another week at least.

By degrees I got a little better, and was able to hobble out with a stick and get some fresh air, and sit on the seat we had made under a chestnut tree by the door.

One Sunday, Cyprien and I were sitting there together. The day was oppressively hot ; it was the end of June, and we had had no rain for weeks ; the stream at the bottom of the valley was almost parched up ; there was not a breath of wind, and the leaves of the trees and the flowers hung heavily in the heat ; over the tops of the hills there were low dark clouds lying motionless against the dazzling sky.

Cyprien was reading a book of Victor Hugo's poetry—"Legende des Siècles," I think it was called. I know I could not understand it, but he enjoyed it very much. He had been trying to make me admire the story of Daniel in the lions' den as it is told there, but I could not see very much beauty in it ; it seemed to me fantastical to imagine the beasts reasoning about Daniel, and not killing him because of this or that. I like the Bible story better. Of course Delbez hadn't read his Bible, so I got mine, and began reading him the story there.

Presently I saw him start, and following the direction of his eyes, I saw Miss Lindsell coming down the slope towards the brook. I

could not go to meet her, and I suppose Delbez was too conscious, so I went on reading until she had climbed our hill, and then we both rose and went towards her.

"Oh, Talbot," she said at once, "I am so sorry to see you so lame! I should have been up to see you before, only that Mrs. Lindsell has been very ill, and I have been nursing her closely, and have never had time to take any walks." She looked rather worn and pale, I thought. She sat down by me, and asked me all the particulars of my accident, and said over and over again that she had often wished to come and see me, but had not been able. "And," she added, "I wanted, too, to see if Joey had earned his ten francs. I hope he has."

I told her that Joey was too fond of dabbling and paddling in the brook to give much attention to anything else. He had seen the butterfly she wanted, and had been quick enough to catch it, but— And then I looked at Cyprien, thinking he would like to tell her himself that he had found one. She guessed at once, and said:

"Joey has not, but you have, M. Cyprien. That is kind of you. I am so much obliged. Do go and fetch it to show me."

She seemed quite to have forgotten the moment's embarrassment he had caused her, for she spoke to him as frankly as ever.

Cyprien did not want to be asked twice to fetch his treasure, but was back with it in an instant.

"I have been waiting to give it you for three weeks," he said; and when she thanked him again he added: "There is nothing to thank me for; it was a great pleasure to me to get it for you."

But dear me! when the lid came off the box it was plain to see that the butterfly was quite spoilt. One of its delicate wings was broken off, and it was all messed with knocking about for so long in his pocket. You see he wasn't used to dealing with such things, and he had never thought that each time he had carried it out in hopes of giving it to her it had grown so much less worth giving. You should have seen the look of disappointment on the poor fellow's face. Miss Lindsell, too, looked disappointed for a moment, but when he said very wofully, "Oh, mademoiselle, it is spoilt. I thought I was giving you quite a treasure, and it is only a decayed insect," she smiled pleasantly at him and answered:

"I value your kindness just the same, and think that with a little trouble I can make the butterfly look very well in my collection."

"Oh no," he said; "you wanted a perfect one, and a perfect one you shall have; you will let me do this one thing for you, will you not?" and he emptied the unfortunate box on to the ground and crushed the remains of the insect under his feet.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "that was a little too hasty; suppose you do not find another."

"Oh, I shall find another," he said; "I shall look until I do; it is quite enough for me to know you want it."

She thanked him quite simply, and then began to tell us that she had started her collection of butterflies after reading the life of a poor Scotch shoemaker, who had done wonderful things in the way of collecting birds and insects, and such things. I dare say she told us the story just then to turn Cyprien's thoughts from his failure. She told it very well, and I listened eagerly; as for Cyprien, it was just the same with him whenever she was speaking—he never turned his eyes from her face. She had not finished her story when a squall of wind broke at the upper end of the valley and came rushing down upon us, followed by a rumble of thunder, that came nearer and nearer. We had not noticed that the black clouds had rolled upwards, and gathered thickly until they hung like a curtain over the hill-tops. My wife came hurrying from a visit she had been paying to our nearest English neighbours, with Joey after her. We followed her quickly into the house, and the storm was upon us.

I do not know if you have ever seen how fast these storms gather and break in the narrow valleys in the centre of France. There is no long threatening of tempest as in England; certainly dark clouds may hang about for a few hours, but after the first gust of wind has whirled the dust high into the air, there is barely a moment to seek a shelter. The storm that evening was one of the worst I ever saw. We could scarcely see across the house, except when a vivid flash of lightning lit up every corner; the thunder was incessant, and what with the echo of it, and the roaring of the wind down the ravine, and the dashing of the rain and hail, the noise was deafening. We could not have heard each other speak, even if we had not been awed into silence by the storm.

Joey buried his face in his mother's lap, and she, who was herself frightened, sat close to me in the darkest corner of the room, and laid her head on my shoulder. Miss Lindsell drew back into another corner, and covered her eyes with both her hands. I do not think she was afraid, but it was impossible to face that awful blaze. Cyprien, however, scarcely seemed to notice what was going on; he sat near us, opposite to Miss Lindsell, with his eyes as usual drinking in her wonderful beauty and gracefulness.

She had said to me as we came in: "My aunt knows where I am; she will not be uneasy."

For two hours the storm raged, and then it suddenly ceased. It was near upon seven o'clock, and Miss Lindsell was anxious to get back to Lantrae. I could not possibly go with her, so, though I felt a little reluctant about it, there was nothing for it but to let Delbez go with her across the darkening valley. I sent Joey as well, thinking the child's presence would be enough to keep him back from any imprudence, for from his face and manner I almost feared that he might betray himself.

Miss Lindsell said:

"It is a shame to take you out on such an evening, and just at supper-time too; however, we are sure to meet some one coming for me. My aunt will have sent as soon as the rain ceased."

"Oh, mademoiselle," Delbez exclaimed, "do not think it is a trouble for me to do anything for you, it is my greatest pleasure."

I watched them from the door for a minute, but you could not see far down the slope among the trees, and the evening air felt chilly after the rain, so I turned into the house again.

Not long afterwards Joey came running in.

"Why, Joey," I cried, "you have not met Miss Lindsell's servant already?"

"Oh no, father," he said, "I'll tell you how it is: the brook at the bottom is so swollen that we could not see the stepping-stones—it looks dreadful. All muddy and rushing along, it would have come nearly to my waist. Cyprien said it wasn't safe for me to try and cross. I believe I should have been carried away."

"And Miss Lindsell?" I asked. "What did she do?"

"Well, she was in a great way, until Cyprien said that if she would let him carry her over he would take care she should get across safely, so she let him. I watched them across; he did not slip once, he seemed to know just where the stepping-stones were. Oh, father, I was frightened, for the water looked so wild and angry."

The time went on—nine o'clock struck, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, and Cyprien did not come in; I could not go off to bed without seeing him. At last, nearly at midnight, I heard his step outside, and I opened the door for him. What my feelings had been during those hours of waiting I cannot tell you, because I really do not know what I dreaded; I felt as if something was happening or going to happen, and I longed to see Delbez in the house again.

"Where did you leave Miss Lindsell?" I asked, scarcely waiting for him to come in.

"On the high-road, hours ago," he answered; "we met the carriage almost directly."

"You have not been to Lantrae, have you?" I asked.

As he came into the light of the lamp I saw that he looked very strange; his face was pale, and his eyes had a far-off kind of look, as if he was watching something in the distance. He took no notice of my question, but began walking up and down the room; he seemed to forget I was there at all.

"My love—my darling!" he began in a soft, low voice; "though I shall never dare to tell you how I love you, though I am only a poor, low-born peasant with hard hands and rough ways, no one will ever love you as much as I do. And I have held you in my arms to-night; you have trusted yourself to me; your breath was on my neck, and I felt your bosom heaving and your heart beating close to mine; the wind blew a lock of your hair across my face!"

He paused a moment, but I could not speak, I was so amazed at him, and besides, he seemed not to know that he was thinking aloud. He went on:

"Ah, you must know I love you, you must have read it in my eyes a thousand times; my heart must have told it to yours this evening. How could you have been so near me and not have felt that my whole being was saying, 'I love you—I love you!' And when you gave me your hand, thanking me, did you not feel 'I love you' in the kiss I pressed upon it? I feel the touch of your cool fingers still against my lips—I shall feel them till I die."

He paused again, and I said, partly from pity for him, and partly because I wanted to remind him I was there:

"My poor boy—my poor boy!"

He came and stood by me.

"Why do you pity me?" he asked almost fiercely. "I want no man's sympathy, I am far more to be envied. She is the most beautiful woman on earth—the most beautiful woman that ever a man loved, and I have been fortunate enough to see her and love her; there is nothing for pity in that. If ever I felt any pity for myself—but I could not, I could not!—I should think of her clinging to me to-night, I should shut my eyes and clasp her in my arms; I should never feel unhappy while I could look back on that. How could I ever forget it? No, I shall never forget the smallest, lightest word I have heard her speak. I shall never forget a look or a movement of hers."

Then he turned away abruptly and went upstairs, but late on in

the night I heard him pacing backwards and forwards above me, and very early he woke me going downstairs and out through the door.

I do not know what made me get up, dress as quickly as possible, and follow him out, though I could scarcely limp along with my stick. It was a sort of longing to be with him. I could not see him at first; he was climbing about the side of the hill with his butterfly-net. When I called to him, he came to me, and we went and walked slowly along the bank of the upper brook. We could not see the torrent below because of the trees and brushwood on the steep sides of the hill; but in a little time we came to a place where an old landslip had cleared out a peep into the bottom of the valley. We stood to look down. For some distance below us the rocky bank shelved outwards, covered with tufts of flowering things and ferns; then it broke away abruptly, and from the margin about a dozen feet below us you could drop a stone to the very bottom, where, beside the bed of the torrent, the grass grew up round the fallen rocks. I was glad to sit down and rest. Cyprien seemed quite himself again, and I hoped he had forgotten the wild words of the night before. "The water is not so high as it was last night," he said; but still it was a wonderful sight, as it raged foaming along. We stood watching for some time. Presently Cyprien called out: "Look, look! do you see that butterfly? That is the sort she wants." And, sure enough, hovering along close to us, was the beautiful insect. It was nearly black, with dashes of gold on its broad wings, which flashed in the sun. It lighted near-by, and he stole towards it with his net outspread. However, it rose again, and, what with his caution and the restless ways of such insects, I watched him go backwards and forwards after it for a good ten minutes, within a few yards of me. Then the butterfly flew downwards and settled on a clump of broom below us. Cyprien seized the trunk of a slender tree, and swung himself off the broad ledge on which we were standing to the rocky slope beneath.

"Don't," I cried, "it isn't worth the risk; and you'll never catch it there."

"I'm all right," he shouted back, "don't fear for me."

And certainly I knew him to be uncommonly sure-footed and agile. Nevertheless, I came forward and watched him nervously. He could not quite reach the butterfly from where he stood, so he stretched his foot to the next bit of jutting rock, and with one hand firmly holding by a shrub, he reached out his net again. Again the butterfly was too quick for him. He jumped another stride farther, and now he was sure of his booty.

"I have it!" he shouted, and at the same moment I heard a horrible crash, and a cry of dismay. I do not know whether his footing had given way, or if the plant he was holding to had come up, its roots being loosened by the rain; I only know that I saw him fall, struggling and clutching as he fell; for a second he held by a great fern, but his whole weight was on it, and before he could get a footing it broke.

I never can think of that moment without a cold sweat breaking over me, and my mouth parches up just as it did when I stood there, quite powerless to help him in that awful moment. I shrieked like a woman again and again, and then—I don't know how I did it with my lame foot, but this I did, and never seemed to feel that I was lame—I rushed back to our path, and was down at the foot of the rocks in no time, not heeding the rough going. He lay there motionless and bleeding, but not dead, for he was groaning fearfully. His head was knocked about and cut, and I cannot tell you what the rest of his injuries were. I did what I could for him, tearing my shirt in strips to bind up the cuts on his head.

At last he seemed to be coming to himself, for he opened his eyes, and tried to speak to me. I had to lean close down to him before I could hear what he said; it was, "Send for her." But there was no one to send for anything, and I could not leave him.

It may have been about an hour that I stayed there before I heard some of our men coming to work. Oh, how I shouted, and, at last, they heard me, and came to us. One of them—a Frenchman—I sent to Lantrac, giving him at the same time a line in pencil to Miss Lindsell. I wrote:

"Delbez has met with an accident, and is dying—he asks for you."

I was obliged to take the paper for this little note out of Cyprien's pocket-book, for I had nothing to write on; as I opened it to tear a leaf out, three dry daisies fluttered out and fell on his breast. I gathered them up and put them back, remembering how they had got there. The other men soon contrived a stretcher on which they carried the poor fellow up the hill to my house, and one of them helped me along. When I got in I found him lying on my bed on the ground-floor, seemingly unconscious, but groaning at intervals, and my wife busying herself attending to him. I sat down by the bed. I was quite overcome, body and mind, by what I had gone through, and the time slipped by as if I was in a dream. Every

moment I seemed to see him falling, and clutching, and falling, and I heard the clatter of stones that fell before him into the precipice. The doctor came and went; he told us Cyprien might linger for a few hours, and that, as no skill could save him, he would not torment him by meddling with his injuries. At last I heard a step which I knew to be Miss Lindsell's. My wife went to meet her and brought her into the room. She looked very sad and pale as she went straight to the bed and stood beside it.

"M. Cyprien," she said, bending softly over him; "M. Cyprien, you sent for me, and I have come."

He opened his eyes languidly, and a faint smile seemed to come into them, and his fingers closed over hers. He drew her forwards—he was trying to say something. My wife went silently out of the room, but I was fixed in my place. No sound seemed to come from his lips, and Miss Lindsell stooped lower, that she might not lose any word he might whisper. Poor fellow! he tried again and again, but the power of speech had left him altogether. Then with one last despairing effort, he raised his arms, and flinging them round her, drew her close down to him, her face against his. She did not shrink from his passionate embrace, but laid her lips tenderly on his. I buried my face in my hands and tried not to sob aloud, while the tears fell through my fingers. There was a long silence; then the clinging arms loosed their hold, the head sank back, and I looked up to see Miss Lindsell gently freeing herself from his clasp. I watched her lay his hands crosswise on his lifeless breast, and then she turned and went away without a word, as if she forgot that there was anything but death left in Planche Torte.

## The East Wind.

THE dim fog moves to greet the coming morn,  
Then glideth gently towards the flushing west,  
That folds it softly to its waking breast.  
The shivering birds, 'mid nestlings newly born,  
Quiver and shake; then rustling, all forlorn,  
The pale-green leaves curl up, half closing, lest  
They'd die at birth. Swift o'er the blue hills' crest  
The sky grows clear, before the east wind's scorn,  
The sun burns brightly, scorching with its power  
The thin new buds until they open out,  
And gaily blooms in haste each wee spring flower;  
Till once more, with a weird, triumphant thrust,  
The wild breeze blows, and rain-clouds sadly lower,  
And cold and nipping frost lies white about.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book VI.

#### CHAPTER IV.

AMONG the passengers who landed at Gravesend from the "Orient" was a short, commonplace-looking man, with a shrunken yellow face and a pompous manner. He went to the best hotel, and gave autocratic orders, and generally comported himself as one accustomed to rule and dictate.

Obsequious waiters bowed before him, and conducted him to a private sitting-room already ordered, requested his instructions as to dinner, and presented offerings in the shape of newspapers and magazines to while away the time until that meal should be ready.

"I am expecting a visitor," said the pompous individual. "You will show him here directly he arrives."

The waiter bowed and assured him that his wishes should be attended to. The gentleman then wheeled the most comfortable chair he could find up to the fire, placed another for his feet, selected a newspaper for perusal, lit a cigar, in lordly defiance of rules, and prepared to pass the interval of waiting as agreeably as circumstances would permit.

His solitude was not of long continuance. A knock at the door was speedily followed by the appearance of his expected visitor.

For an instant the two men surveyed each other critically, as if taking mental notes of each other's capabilities.

Then the occupant of the chairs removed his cigar from his mouth, nodded carelessly, and remarked:

"Count Savona, I presume?"

"At your service, sir," said the stranger, with a polite bow that seemed to convey a rebuke against the boorishness of his reception.

"Take a chair," said the Englishman. "I'm John Marsden, as, no doubt, you guess. Now may I ask why you've thought proper to drag me over all these thousands of miles of sea and land? It nearly cost me my life, I assure you. Tiger-cats may be very pretty things to look at and play with, but they're the devil with their claws."

"So I presume," said the count with a quiet smile. "I am a wise man, Mr. Marsden, and leave such playthings to those who like scratches better than purring. However, since you are here, let us to business. You may be very sure I have not asked you to come to England for nothing. What would you say if I informed you that there was a nice little property with a comfortable rent-roll at your disposal—dependent only on a very simple condition?"

The sallow face flushed suddenly.

"What do you mean?" asked John Marsden.

"Just what I say. The property comes to your wife. I have taken the trouble to trace it out—no small trouble or difficulty, I assure you. It is fortunate that you did not come to open warfare, because you have an opportunity now for being magnanimous. She knows nothing yet. You have only to throw yourself at her feet, or let her throw herself at yours, to forget and forgive the past, and step into the position of an English landowner."

The cigar had dropped from John Marsden's lips. He looked stupefied.

"I—I can't believe it," he muttered.

The count shrugged his shoulders.

"Odd that people always find it harder to believe good fortune than bad. It's quite true, I assure you. I advised you to come home because it is better policy to make up your quarrel with your wife before she learns that she is an heiress. It looks so disinterested now. A month hence it won't."

"But—but," stammered John Marsden foolishly, "I don't think she will make it up. I've insulted her, quarrelled with her—I've never sent her a penny since you told me about her goings-on with that fellow Grant, and now how the deuce can I go to her, and expect her to be friends? She'll never come back."

"Ah," said the count with his chill smile, "there steps in the beauty of your English law. Madame the wife may quarrel as she pleases with monsieur the husband, but when monsieur the husband desires that she shall live under his roof, madame cannot help herself, unless— Well, your wife is not a woman to avail herself of that outlet, or she would have done it before now. Do you know how she has supported herself these three years?"

"No," said John Marsden sulkily.

"By writing. She is quite a celebrated authoress now. You don't know what a gold mine you have found."

"Where is she now?"

"At Vaux Abbey, with her friends the Dunbars. Oh, I assure you her conduct has been quite irreproachable. When your telegram came, refusing to receive her in India, she was with her father. After the first shock was over she recognised and accepted her position without a murmur, turned her wits to work, and took to writing; stuck to it, persevered at it, won recognition despite the difficulty, and has fairly floated herself now. She's a wonderful woman, my friend. I'm inclined to think you threw her away a little too easily."

"You seem to know a great deal about her," said John Marsden, looking at the count suspiciously.

"I do. You are not jealous, are you? I make it my business to know everything about any one in whom I am interested."

"And why has my wife the honour of arousing your interest?"

Savona smiled coldly.

"That is not the point at issue. We need not discuss it."

"And you are sure this fellow Grant was in love with her?"

"As sure as that I live."

"And she with him?"

"Certainly. But only virtuously, platonically in love. The sort of thing one reads of in novels—long blindness, sudden awaking, temptation, self-conquest, renunciation. It only depends on you to keep back the third volume from the inevitable happy issue."

"On me?"

"Certainly," said the count with an irrepressible sneer. "Take back your own property and guard it better in future. There are few men with a handsomer wife, none with a cleverer one. Ivor Grant knows her value better than you."

"Curse Ivor Grant!"

"With all my heart. He is very unfortunate—in war as well as in love. You know he volunteered in the Mexican service after he left England."

"You told me so. Is he not dead yet?"

"Severely wounded, I believe. Has a Quixotic attendant—a simple sort of fellow whom he rescued from starvation, or something. The said body-guard struck up a friendship with my man—also a

beggar rescued from crime—my hold the strongest, you see, safety *versus* gratitude. Through my man I learn all about Grant's man. Simple but efficacious!"

"You seem to have a fancy for worming yourself into people's private affairs," said John Marsden suspiciously.

"Perhaps I have," said the count with his evil smile. "Everyone to his taste, my friend. Yours seems to run in the way of 'tiger-cats'; mine, family secrets. It is surprising what a number I've unearthed in my time. However, we are drifting away from the main point. You would like, no doubt, to hear about this strange windfall. It is quite a romance, I assure you."

"Will it take long? Because we might just as well dine, and discuss it afterwards."

"With all my heart. There are a lot of papers to be gone into. No doubt we shall feel more comfortable after dinner. You have ordered it, I suppose?"

"Yes; soup, fish, and cutlets. Will that suit you?"

"Admirably. I abhor the English fashion of heavy, solid meals. To order a dinner is as much an art as to write a poem. Unfortunately the 'orderers' seem as rare as the poets."

The entrance of the waiter at this juncture interrupted the conversation, and confined it to generalities.

Count Savona did ample justice to the repast, but Marsden looked anxious and disturbed, and ate but little.

"Have you seen my wife lately?" he asked, as the door closed at last on the waiter.

"No. Your wife is no great friend of mine," answered the count. "Captain Grant took care of that. Were I to present myself to her, she would not receive me. I am sorry for it. I admired her. She was an interesting study."

"She!" sneered John Marsden. "In what way?"

"In all. Perhaps, like most husbands, you resent the fact that your wife should be an object of interest to any other man. That is such an odd idea. The mere fact of marriage doesn't sink a woman's individuality, doesn't blind others to her beauty or her charm. Yet you husbands think it ought to. There are some women, my friend, easier to win than to hold."

"I never bothered my head about them," muttered John Marsden sulkily.

"You should about one," said the count; "she was worth it."

"She was just like the rest," he answered curtly. "Fussing about her children, and full of fads and fancies. She never could get on with the people I did, and I'm sure in India none of our set liked her."

"Doesn't say much for your set then," said Savona, slowly draining his glass. "As for her love for her children, be thankful, my friend, that she had children. I wouldn't give much for your chances now if she hadn't. Listen," and he set the glass down on the table, and leant forward in sudden earnestness. "A girl marries, knowing little or nothing of life, and with all the dreams and fancies of youth blossoming like flowers in the garden of her soul; so she goes to the man whom fate, or fancy, or expediency has chosen for her. So Beryl Foster went to you. When I met her—a woman—with the history of a past, and the coming struggle of a future, written in her face, I said to myself, 'She has suffered, but she has never loved. Yet she is a woman any man in this world might be proud to call his wife.'"

"May I ask the purport of all this?" asked John Marsden impatiently.

"The purport," said Savona, sinking his voice to deeper earnestness, "is that I want you to save her, not drive her to desperation. She is of the stuff that makes martyrs. Honour, and duty, and all that, are more to her than her own personal peace and happiness. Her children have been the loadstar of her life as yet. You are their father, and though she doesn't love you, yet that claim is the strongest of any you could put forward. You must put it forward, or you will lose her. She loved them better than anything on earth—better even than the man who would have died to give her an hour's happiness. Some women are so. We can't understand it, but it is well for us that they are. It is their way, and the one help and safeguard that keeps them pure and true, even to what is vile and base. You look surprised. You would not have thought me capable of sentiment? Ah, you are not the first man whom I have puzzled. I am telling you what your wife is, in order that you may win her back and make her happier. It won't be an easy matter, but you must promise me to do it."

"Why, may I ask?"

The softness, the sentiment, all vanished from Savona's face like a cloud swept aside. The old, hard, mocking devilry was in his eyes and in his voice as he threw himself back in his chair, and looked at his companion.

"Why—because if you are a man at all, revenge should be sweet to you! Why—because it lies in your power to deal your rival a worse blow than Fortune has done. Why—because to claim



your wife and keep her under your authority, is the surest vengeance you can take on Ivor Grant—for she it is who is the holder of his lost possessions, and the mistress of Grantham Court!"

CHAPTER V. "ONE MUST THINK—SOMETIMES."

As those strange words fell from Beryl Marsden's lips, her friend turned very pale, and all that jesting manner fell from her like a cloak.

"What do you mean?" she asked breathlessly, and sank down on the floor beside her, and gazed at her face with wide and frightened eyes.

"I hardly know myself," said Beryl hurriedly, "save that it was not—fancy. I saw the figure in the north corridor."

"Good Heavens, Beryl! Are you sure?"

"Quite sure," she said calmly. "I wish I were not. I rushed up the stairs, but my foot slipped, and I fell down. When I got up again it had disappeared."

"And what was it like?" asked Madge fearfully. "You—you are sure you are not tricking me, Beryl?"

"My dear, do I look as if I were? Illusion or reality, or whatever it may be, I certainly saw the figure you described—that of a monk in monkish dress, crossing the corridor. The only thing—"

"What! do go on," cried Madge impatiently.

"The only thing that puzzles me," said Beryl, speaking very low and earnestly, "is that the figure looked too substantial, too real, to be a ghost, if such things as ghosts exist at all, and the eyes," she shuddered, and covered her own, as if to shut out some loathsome sight, "the eyes were so evil, so diabolical, I can't get them out of my mind. They seem to be looking at me wherever I turn."

"You are unnerved, unstrung," said Madge soothingly; "you work too hard, dear, and too long. I shall have to forbid your writing at night altogether. It is very bad for the nerves."

Beryl smiled faintly.

"I don't think I have any. I have never been troubled with that feminine complaint. But, Madge," she continued, laying her hand on her friend's arm, and speaking with strangely solemn voice, "I feel sure that something is going to happen to me—some great change, or sorrow."

"Not that, I hope," cried Madge with sudden energy. "Oh, Beryl, not that! You have had enough to last all your life. Surely there can be nothing more for you."

"Perhaps my cup isn't yet full," said Beryl sadly. "When troubles come they 'come not single spies,' you know. I can vouch for that. And—and why is John coming back?"

"Heaven knows!" cried Madge impetuously. "Not to worry you, I hope. Do you—shall you see him?"

"If he wishes it."

"But he has behaved so abominably," remonstrated her friend.

"Have I been faultless?" asked Beryl gently. "Oh, my dear, one's measure of duty must not be weighed by what one receives; the course lies plain and open enough. If it were not so hard," she added with a tired little sigh, "I should be quite certain it was not right. It is always so easy to do wrong, you know."

"Why, oh, why did you marry that man?" cried Madge Dunbar suddenly. "It was just throwing yourself away. You never could have cared for him."

"That is my punishment, I suppose," answered Beryl in the same low, restrained voice. "I allowed myself to be persuaded. I did not think seriously enough of what I was doing. Oh," she cried with a sudden sob, "if I had only known—if I had only known!"

Madge was silent, though her own tears were falling in sympathy with a grief too often bravely suppressed not to shock and surprise her now by its sudden outbreak.

"If the children had been left," continued Beryl, "it would not have been so hard. They always comforted me. At my saddest and weariest moments they seemed to give me hope, to beat back the waves of sorrow and regret. And they loved me so. What is like a child's love? You can't buy it, you can't change it, you can't mistrust it; it is yours—all yours, though you were ever so vile and shameful. Sometimes," she added with a recklessness born of sudden despair and sudden weakness, "I ask myself why I did not take the one chance of happiness left me. What is the world to me, or any human being in the world, save just the one man who loves me and the one man I love? I shouldn't care for poverty or misery, or anything else, with him by my side. Ah, Madge, there are so many things in the world, but there isn't much love! And, after all, what is the best life without it? Coldness, emptiness, bitterness—what mine is fast becoming!"

"Don't speak like that; it nearly breaks my heart," cried Madge, dashing the tears from her sunny eyes with brave effort, "and it is so unlike you. Years ago, when we were only girls, I looked up to you as something so brave, and strong, and true. And your trials

have only proved it. It is terribly hard—it must be; and I can't help wondering often and often why you should be tried like this; but if you begin to give way now, Beryl, it won't make things any better, only very, very much worse."

"I know," she said hopelessly. "Few women, perhaps, have ever analysed themselves so mercilessly as I have done. I know where my weakness lies, and its origin and its cause. But now I seem to have reached a point beyond which I cannot go. My strength fails me there."

"And that is——"

"I cannot return to my husband. My whole heart, my whole nature, recoil from it. What he has been to me, or what he made of my life, touched only myself up to a certain point. But he tried me too hard when he threw at my life that hateful insult, when, without a word of extenuation, a shadow of proof, he cast me aside to sink or swim as best I might. I think the iron entered into my soul then, Madge, and it has gone deeper and deeper every day."

Madge Dunbar was silent. What could she say? What words could speak either sympathy or consolation in such a moment as this?

"But you said you would see him," she faltered at last; "and if he is sorry—if he wishes you to come back, what then?"

Beryl shuddered.

"Heaven help me then!" she moaned. "But he won't require so hard a thing from me. He will surely have a little mercy at last."

"I wish—oh, I wish I could help you," cried Madge desperately. "It is a hard case, indeed. I wonder why life is all thorns and briars for some people."

"That is just one of its puzzles," said Beryl with a sad little smile. "We can't solve it, try as we may."

"I can't understand why your husband is coming home now," continued Madge Dunbar perplexedly; "and after all that Indian scandal too. You will have some respite, though. He won't know where you are. If he goes to the rectory, no one can tell him, as you have never been there since your father's death."

Beryl sighed wearily.

"He will find me soon enough if he wants me," she said, rising and putting her hand to her head in a bewildered sort of way. "I am so tired, dear; I think I must go to bed now."

"You are sure you are not afraid to be alone?" enquired Madge, glancing timidly round the room. "I will sleep with you if you like."

"Afraid! My dear, no. I hardly suppose the ghost will forsake his own quarters to favour me with a visit. After all," she added with a little shiver, "no ghost could alarm me more than that ghost which haunts my lonely hours so often—the ghost of my own dead self. Oh, Madge, Madge, how long ago was it that I was a girl—a girl, loving and believing in life, and rejoicing in its every hour? It seems centuries!"

Madge put her arms round her tenderly. She did not speak. Perhaps some womanly sympathy told her that it was better not—that words could only jar on the trembling, unstrung creature, whom a moment of self-abandonment had left so weak.

"You are a happy woman," continued Beryl. "They say that all have our chance of happiness—once. You seized yours in time. I did not know when mine lay at my hand. Ah, what has come to me?" she added with sudden impatience, as she untwined the clinging arms, and moved over to the mantelpiece, pausing there to lean against it in her favourite attitude. "I grow foolish and weak, I think. After all—after all, life is a short thing at best. Why can't one live through it without—without breaking one's heart?"

A sob caught the words and stayed them, though there were no tears in the dark eyes that rested on the dancing firelight.

"I think imagination is the greatest foe to happiness," she went on presently. "It pictures things in false colours—it makes life look what it never is. When—when I was a girl I never believed in love—the love one reads of—the love that makes men cowards and women sinners. It always seemed to me as if one must be able to keep oneself under control if one only tried. As if a feeling could not be unreasoning, blind, mad, miserable, taking root in one's very soul and life; and now," the tears fell again hot and heavy on the clasped white hands on which the beautiful, proud head was bowed, "now what am I to myself—what must I seem to you? I have no strength, no self-respect, no power to be happy, even if I might. No, not even for an hour, one single little hour of all the many that come and go. Heaven help us women when we love! It is worse than madness. It is putting your whole life, and all your power and peace of mind, into the keeping of another; you can't reason with it, you can't alter it, you can only suffer for it; and I am so tired of suffering now."

"Oh, Beryl!" She could say no more. It was so new and pitiful a sight to see that calm, proud self-control broken like this.

"Don't pity me. It only makes me worse. And I suppose I

deserve my punishment. Someone says that a woman always loves best the one human creature who gives her the greatest amount of suffering. Do you think that is so? Because, in that case, how I should love—John!”

“I think you should not dwell on it so much,” said Madge gently. “Meeting troubles halfway doesn’t help one through them.”

“I am not myself to-night,” said Beryl, lifting her white face, and pushing the thick, dusky hair from her brow. “I have been nervous, emotional, tragic—all the things I most detest.”

The shadow of a smile, at once sad and bitter, was about her lips. She put her hands on her friend’s shoulders, and looked down at the pretty, troubled face.

“Don’t think of what I have said. I shall be all right to-morrow when I have had a sleep. One always looks at things so differently in the morning light, you know. And now good-night. Cosmo will be wondering what has become of you.”

“You will try not to think any more,” urged Madge. “It can do no good, you know; it won’t alter anything that has been, it can’t avert anything that is to be.”

“Oh, wise philosopher,” said Beryl with sudden mockery, “I shall lay that counsel to heart.”

Was she laying it to heart, lying there in the desolate night with sleepless eyes that saw only the phantoms of past years; was she laying it to heart when, overcome with a passion of unreasoning anguish, she buried her face in her pillows to stifle the stormy sobs that could not be repressed?

“Life is so long,” she cried; “so long when one isn’t happy, and one must think—sometimes!”

#### CHAPTER VI. HUSBAND AND WIFE.

“SOMEONE to see me?” said Beryl Marsden in a bewildered way as she looked up from her writing. “What name, James?”

“The gentleman would not give his name, ma’am.”

Gentleman! Her heart gave a quick throb. One mad, wild hope seemed to start into life with its startled beating, and show her what a little thing might still make her glad.

But the hope did not last a second. She seemed to recognise how vain and valueless it was, and to push it aside and rise from her table just her ordinary calm, proud self. But her hand was trembling like a leaf.

“I will come,” she said, and it seemed to her that her voice sounded faint and faraway—almost as if someone else were speaking and she listening.

She never knew how she reached the library. Only in some strange, inexplicable fashion she was there, looking at her husband’s face, and wondering why he seemed so shamed and uncomfortable in her presence.

“You—you did not expect me,” he stammered. “Of course not. I did not let you know. It was a sudden thing, and I was not sure of my movements. I—”

He stopped abruptly. Before that calm, proud gaze, his eyes sank abashed. This was no penitent or erring woman, it seemed to him, but rather an accuser before whom all subterfuge and pleas looked pitiful, and poor, and mean as he himself.

Still she did not speak, and the silence made him nervous.

“Won’t you say anything? Hang it all, Beryl, there have been faults on both sides, and if I’m willing to forgive and forget, you might do the same. After all, you’re my wife—nothing can alter that, and though we haven’t hit it off very well hitherto, still we’re both older and wiser now; and—”

Her voice interrupted him.

“May I ask the drift of all these remarks?”

“The drift?” he muttered stupidly. “Well, can’t you see what I mean? I’m sorry I treated you as I did. You didn’t deserve it, I know, but I was in trouble at the time, and worried to death, and it’s not a pleasant thing for a man to hear that his wife is carrying on with some other fellow, and you can’t deny there was something more than friendship between you and Captain Grant, and—”

Again he paused. He had met her eyes, and their cold contempt, their scornful rejection of his excuses, silenced the words on his lips.

“I always thought,” she said, speaking slowly and distinctly, so that each word seemed to fall on his ear with cutting force; “I always thought that it was a husband’s duty to shield and protect his wife. You—you threw me heartlessly into the midst of temptation, and when I claimed your aid, cut me adrift as though I had been the vilest woman living. Do you think,” she went on, her voice losing its calmness, and vibrating with the intensity of passionate emotion; “do you think a woman’s heart can bear to be starved of love always? Do you think she can always be strong enough to beat back longings for sympathy, kindness, trust? What was my life after my children died, and—Heaven help me!—whom have I to thank

for their death? If you had had a heart at all, you might have felt for me then; but you did not; you never cared for what I suffered, you only called it sentiment. And I had one friend, one true, brave, steadfast soul on whom I could rely. If he was weak enough to love me, at least it was a love that could not dishonour any woman, for he always placed me and my happiness above all thought of himself. And I struggled so to do right. I did not think you would even thank me for it, I did not think you would understand; but at least I thought you would believe. But you did nothing except throw me back on myself when I was most tried and most weak, nothing save hurl insult and shame at my life without hearing one word of defence. If I had done the worst, if I had gone to the ruin you bade me, you would only have had yourself to blame.”

“I know,” he said gloomily. “But you forget what I heard.”

“And who told you?” she cried with sudden fierceness. “A spy, a traitor—a mean cur who hates me, and is Ivor Grant’s bitterest foe. A man who was a stranger to yourself, and yet whom you chose to believe against your wife. You believed him, you cast me from you, and now, after three years, you come to ask my forgiveness. What is your object?”

The question was so unexpected that it took him off his guard. He began to bluster and fume as he had been wont to do when his wife had seemed to him only a superior form of slave, to rule, and thwart, and govern as the fancy seized him.

She listened with a smile of suppressed contempt.

“It is too late for that now, John,” she said calmly. “I used to obey you readily enough when I deemed it my duty. You forget that it was you who cast me off.”

“I had every right.”

“Then,” she said very quietly, “if you have deemed me guilty for three years, why are you suddenly convinced now of my innocence? I have brought no proofs. I stand before you now as I stood then. Forgive me if I say the change is too startling to appear altogether disinterested.”

His sallow face turned a sickly white.

“Hang it all!” he muttered to himself, “these clever women are the very deuce. They make one look such a fool. I—well, you may believe it or not, as you like,” he said sulkily, “I did want to be friends with you again, and I’m sick of India, and I thought we’d settle down in England, and let bygones be bygones, you know. You see you are my wife still—nothing can alter that.”

“No,” she said hopelessly, “nothing can alter that.”

“And being my wife,” he went on with a sort of malicious triumph, “why it’s only natural I should want to have you with me again. Not that I wish to force your inclinations,” he added hurriedly, remembering Savona’s warning. “But I know you’re a sensible woman, and if I’m willing to overlook the past, why shouldn’t you meet me halfway? Why,” he went on, warming to the subject, and feeling a glow of conscious rectitude that showed him the full magnanimity of his conduct in the present instance; “why, Beryl, there are not many husbands, take them all in all, who’d do as much. A man can’t feel exactly pleased when the woman who’s sworn to love and obey him—”

“You have left out—honour,” she interposed quietly. “Pray quote those marriage-vows correctly, as you are about it.”

“Honour and obey him, then,” he went on doggedly, “takes it into her head to carry on a flirtation with another man. She’s her husband’s property, and she’s bound to respect his wishes.”

“And you think I carried on a flirtation with Ivor Grant?”

“Of course I do. Come, you can’t deny it yourself.”

An odd little tuneless laugh escaped her lips.

A flirtation! She to be accused of “carrying on a flirtation” with this man whom she had revered and honoured with her whole soul, whose memory had been her safeguard in those desolate years, who had been so true and steadfast a friend, whose love for her shone beacon-like above all the storms and trials that beset her! She thought of the loyal heart, the brave and kindly nature; she thought of that long devotion, about her and around her, that had shown itself in a hundred self-controlled ways; she thought of all this, and looked into her heart also, and read its suffering, and its passion, and its woe, and then remembered that this was a “flirtation.”

No wonder she laughed aloud in very bitterness of soul. She knew, standing where she stood, and looking back at the past as she looked, that what to her was a tragedy deep and painful, was yet only to other eyes a common melodrama, a poor, ordinary, pitiful thing enough, at which they could scoff and mock, while her own heart was slowly breaking in the struggle.

The laugh died off her lips. She turned cold, and bitter, and contemptuous once again.

“And you are going to forgive me my ‘flirtation’? You have travelled all these miles to tell me so? How can I thank you?”

His dull eyes looked at her, amazed by this sudden change. He could not comprehend her. The woman who had been the slave of his caprices was very different to this calm, scornful, queenly

creature whose eyes seemed to read the pitiful pretences of his narrow soul, to gauge the shallow depths of his nature, and see him for what he was, the weak tool of a stronger and more designing mind.

"Perhaps," she went on presently, "the same kind friend who informed you of my misdemeanours has also thought proper to inform you of my repentance—to suggest that it was a fitting opportunity for reconciliation. Am I right?"

"I don't know what you're driving at," he said sulkily. "Most women in your position would be glad enough to have a chance of reinstating themselves in the eyes of the world."

"Would they?" she said calmly. "But then, you see, the world is so little to me; the world of which you form a part, nothing."

"You are frank," he growled savagely. "The world ought always to be something to a woman, unless she's too bad to care for the opinion of her own sex, or the contempt of mine."

"The contempt of yours would be very hard to bear," she said with her quiet smile; "but it is quite possible to avoid it. I have not found it trouble me much these past three years."

"Oh, of course you think you're very clever and independent, and all that," he scoffed, with an ever-deepening sense of irritation. "But book-writing is no great matter; everyone does it nowadays, and you can't live by it."

"I think I can," she answered in the same quiet, level tone. "I have had to do it for some time past; you appear to forget that."

He looked rather shamefaced.

"Come, come, don't let us begin to quarrel again. I've not behaved well, but you must make allowances. Say you'll be friends, and we'll try and make a better thing of our lives in the future than we've done in the past."

He held out his hand, but involuntarily she shrank away. He saw the gesture, and his eyes grew evil and cruel.

"You must come," he said in a low, repressed voice, "if I wish."

She turned and looked at him as a stag brought to bay might look at its hunter.

"Don't say that," she cried almost fiercely. "Don't try me too far. Give me time—just a little time. I'm not strong, I'm not myself. I want to grow reconciled to the fact, to face it out as a duty, not as—a sin."

"A sin!" he echoed. "What do you mean?"

She shrank still farther away. All her self-command had gone. She was only a frightened, trembling, hunted thing fighting for shelter, for safety, for life—or something dearer still.

"I don't love you," she cried, holding out her hands as if to ward him off. "I never did. I cannot go back to you as your wife—I cannot. Oh, don't ask me—don't ask me!"

For a moment he stood gazing at her as if stunned. Then he laughed aloud.

"Upon my word," he said, "you ought to go upon the stage. It would suit you better than writing books."

The taunt roused her. She drew herself up, and leaning against the table, looked at him defiantly.

"You have never been pitiful or generous to me all my life," she said. "Why should I expect it now? I only ask for—for time."

"You used to have strong notions of duty once," he said with a sneer. "What has become of them all?"

"Perhaps you killed them—perhaps they lie in my children's grave," she said with a faint sob. "There seems such a gulf between what my life was then and what it is now."

"The sooner you get over all that sentiment and nonsense the better," he said brusquely. "It can't do you any good, and it can't alter facts. I only want you to live under my roof. You shall have liberty enough, I promise you, in every other way. It's surely better than sponging on the charity of other people."

What was the change that came over the white face and swaying figure? He could not tell. He could not even be quite sure that there had been a change, so quickly it passed, so impossible it was to define.

"You—you are sure that is all," she said. "No pretence at affection, or—interest; only duty—bare duty; that will content you?"

"Most certainly it will. I'm not a sentimental fool like you."

"Then," she said, laying her hand on her heart as if to stifle some pain that hurt her there, "I will do what you wish."

"That's a sensible woman at last," he said cheerfully. "You shall go your own way, and do just as you please, and act just as you like. Upon my soul, I think it's a far better arrangement than our first compact. We didn't hit it off at all well then."

"No," she said quietly.

Her lips were dry, it seemed hard to speak, and the pain in her breast grew sharper and sharper, like a living creature gnawing its way to her heart.

Something in her look frightened him, callous and selfish as he was.

"Are you ill?" he said. "Can I do anything?"

"No, no," she cried, sinking back on the sofa; "only leave me. I—I told you I was not strong. I can't bear so much as I used to do."

"Good-bye, then," he said, in a strained, bewildered sort of way; "I'm glad you've turned sensible at last. I'll write and let you know my arrangements."

The door closed. She was alone. Her cheek fell against the crimson cushion, and lay there as if carved in stone. Her eyes wandered over the room, noting familiar objects with a strange sense of unfamiliarity. The suffocating pressure at her breast seemed to throb like fire, and yet to weigh like lead. She half rose, and pressed her hands to her heart as if to keep down the pain. But it rose and rose; it was at her throat now, struggling with her breath, strangling her, fighting with her.

"Don't, don't," she moaned, "you hurt me. I can't give way—I daren't give way; I must bear it just as I have borne—the—rest."

She struggled to her feet now. Along the oaken hall came the sound of steps, the echo of voices. Children's steps, children's voices, such as had once made the music of her own life.

The look of agony in her eyes was terrible to see. Involuntarily she threw up her arms, and sank down on her knees by the couch.

"Don't come here," she whispered, shuddering from head to foot. "And oh, don't laugh—don't laugh; it will drive me mad!"

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Unchanging Love.

THE green leaves slowly change to brown,  
Then comes a breeze and shakes them down.  
The year is changing—do you fear  
Lest I should change as does the year?

Life changes too; youth's springtime flies;  
We look on life with other eyes;  
Yet through the year shines on the sun,  
And unchanged sees the swift months run.

And Love, the Sun of Life, lives on  
When youth and manhood too are gone;  
It fears not death, for it can brave  
The unknown terrors of the grave.

Attempt to number every star,  
To still the waves that leap the bar,  
To drag the sun from out the sky—  
Till then at least love will not die!

## Our Family Portraits.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

COULD we but summon up the necessary moral courage, and banish from our homes all that is not either useful or beautiful; could we but steel our hearts and ruthlessly slay that worst enemy of the beautiful—association; what a fall there would be of uncouth household gods, unpleasing to our beauty-loving eyes, yet sacred to the conservative instincts of foolish, clinging hearts!

Why has Mrs. Jones ranged in severe order that half-circle of gloomy silhouettes, each mounted on an uncompromising square of staring white cardboard, over the mantelshelf in her bright little parlour? Even because that high nose and long chin, supported by a black "stock," represents a Jones of the past; no less a personage than "Grandpapa Jones." The tip-tilted nose and frills are intended to set forth the ancient charms of "Grandmamma Jones," and the nondescript noses, curved upper lips, and bob curls, recall to the retrospect minds of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, a series of tender maiden aunts.

"My dear grandmother," I have heard Jones say, "had the family picture-gallery hung in the order in which you at present see them above her parlour mantelshelf; they shall hang where they now are as long as Mrs. Jones and I live!" this with a defiant glance at his daughter Selina, who is "advanced."

On the hobs in Mrs. Brown's parlour stand a pair of grim cast-iron dogs, which are continually getting knocked off with harrowing din into the ash-pan.

"Why do you not do away with those ugly things?" I asked on one occasion, as the irate Brown was fishing up a black-leaded Cerberus with the tongue.

"How can I?" he replied savagely. "My mother-in-law would

never forgive me; they were a present from her to Jemima on our wedding-day."

Mrs. Brown's hall is, moreover, made unlovely by the apparition of a stuffed crane with a wry neck, and of a pair of superannated gulls, but these mementoes Brown clings to; they were unfortunately shot by his uncle, and presented to him when a boy.

But how shall I attempt to enumerate the countless objects "to memory dear," yet offensive to the artistic eye, which destroy the otherwise harmonious furnishings of the homes I visit? There is the cushion which occupies the place of honour on the couch, its dingy lap-dog, with shadowless beady eye, reclining on a still more faded crimson stool; the alabaster vase, with group of imperishable wax flowers, protected by its glass shade; above all, the tapestry picture, representing Mary Queen of Scots ever meeting her doom, ruddy-cheeked and stolidly indifferent.

From my own hearthstone, however, I let my eyes rove with supreme satisfaction over my surroundings. From ceiling to floor the colour scheme has been successfully carried out: nothing jars upon the gratified senses, if I only keep my regard persistently turned away from the niches at each side of the bright, tastefully-tilled hearth. Here, if I gaze, a deep sense of gloom settles on my spirits, my contentment is ruefully disturbed, for those niches have been reluctantly dedicated to my husband's household gods, in the shape of life-sized portraits of his maternal grandfather and grandmother. I say "portraits," but I have always declined to accept them as such, preferring to believe them to be the cruel practical joke of some dyspeptic artist. Why should my husband's grandparents be so hopelessly plebeian in appearance, when he is a man of such distinguished appearance? And if, as he declares, his grandfather did not succumb to liver-complaint, why has the artist painted that broad, fat face with such a decided tinge of orange-chronie? Where was his artistic taste when he allowed that heavy old lady to sit for her portrait in a headdress like a night-cap, with that odious band of green ribbon tied in a formal bow on the crown, and a full-blown rose in her hand? I could bear these works of art better but for that rose and the old gentleman's horn snuff-box.

"But," you ask, "why have them hung in such conspicuous places in your sitting-room?"

Thereby hangs a tale, which, for the relief of my overcharged feelings, I will tell you.

When John and I were first engaged, and he took me to see his parents, I was only just seventeen. We were not married until I was twenty-one, and during the intervening time I frequently visited his home, and grew to love the dear old lady his mother, and many a long chat we used to have on the subjects we both liked best—our John's virtues and our future—as I sat at her feet in the snug little parlour overlooking the park. Immediately opposite the windows, in the full glare of the daylight, hung those dreadful portraits. I used to look at them furtively, and wonder, with a half-suspicion of the truth, whom they represented. To make enquiries, I felt would be injudicious, as surely the possession of such monstrosities could not be other than embarrassing to the possessor, until it chanced that John and I found ourselves alone in the parlour, with a gathering twilight casting an uncertain glamour over the family portraits.

"John," I whispered, laying a timid hand on his arm, and glancing shyly at the portraits, "were those relations of yours?"

"The oil paintings? Certainly, my love; they are my mother's parents."

"Were they really like that, John?" I asked again, somewhat anxiously.

"I cannot say, my dear; I never saw them in life, but my mother values the portraits. She must see a likeness."

"Oh!" I ejaculated, looking awfully at the cap with its oppressive green ribbons.

John laughed. "I am afraid you do not admire my ancestors?" he said.

I replied by a question: "Do you not think, John, that they would have looked better had they been done a few sizes smaller? And," I continued with hesitation, "I cannot say I like those things in their hands."

John burst into a roar of laughter, which I thought unkind, because I had not meant to say anything funny, and after that he often teased me about the family portraits.

A year after our marriage, John's father died, and the kind old lady only survived her husband a few months. Of course John, being an only child, came into everything, and we had a sale of the household furniture; but the old clock and the portraits had to come here.

Now the clock is a beautiful old thing, with a bell like music, and quite sets off the hall; but the presence of those portraits in my nice sitting-room made me positively wretched. After they were hung up, I sat down and had a good cry, and I know John felt for me.

"Just like the Yorkshire giants one sees painted outside penny shows," I sobbed.

"But what am I to do with them, Ella? You would not have me dispose of my ancestors?" he very justly argued. And I was not such a brute as to contradict him.

They had hung there like great blots upon the fair page of my early married life for about a couple of years, when John's only surviving aunt, a childless widow of considerable means, came to visit us. She had not been many minutes in the room before she exclaimed with rapture: "Oh, John, I see you have got the dear old portraits! How fortunate you are!" She went and stood before them, gazing at them pensively for some time.

My heart gave a great bound. A hope was dawning in my breast, but for the present I remained silent. That very night, when Aunt Jane had retired to rest, I opened the campaign I had been planning.

"John," I began, "Aunt Jane is very much attached to those portraits. Now you know, my love, that I never knew your grandparents, therefore I can have no regard for them personally, and they are not ornamental."

I paused, and looked at John to observe the effect of my remarks. He was covering his moustache with his hand, but I detected a twinkle in his eyes, though he studiously gazed into the fire. I took courage to proceed:

"If you were to make her a present of them, how delighted she would be! And you know, John, it is your duty to pay her some attention; she is our Johnnie's godmother, and—"

"Oh, Mrs. Caudle!" interrupted John, shaking his finger at me and laughing outright.

"Dear John, you will do it; I know you will!" I exclaimed joyfully.

"Do you really suppose that Aunt Jane would drag those cumbersome things all the way to Wales with her?" replied John.

"Try her—promise that you will try her!" I cried.

"Well, she may have them and welcome, as far as I am concerned," was John's rejoinder.

And the result was, that when Aunt Jane left us three weeks later, I had the supreme satisfaction of seeing a large packing-case, containing the family portraits, being hoisted on to the roof of the cab, and whirled out of sight amid the profuse thanks of the delighted old lady. When I went back to my sitting-room, I clasped my hands with a sigh of relief, and immediately hung up a pair of sweetly pretty brackets, placing on them artistic Grecian vases, and I was happy.

John and I were beginning to grow quite a staid married couple, and the family portraits were shades of the past, when we received the intelligence of Aunt Jane's death from sheer old age. We had always kept up friendly relations with her, exchanging occasional letters, and she had remembered Johnnie handsomely in her will. My husband was made executor, and, without a thought to the portraits, he entrusted a solicitor to realise, and his aunt's household furniture, along with some troublesome property, were put to the hammer.

We were not out of mourning for dear old Aunt Jane when John and I took a trip up to London. John had to go on business, and, as I required a change, he took me with him. This was actually my first visit to the great metropolis, so John took me about as much as he could.

One afternoon we wandered through Wardour Street, making the best use of our eyes, when I suddenly found myself blankly staring at a familiar object, which was suspended outside a broker's shop door. I involuntarily tightened my hold of John's arm, and he, following the direction of my eyes, halted abruptly with fascinated gaze. We were looking at the portrait of a heavy old lady, with a cap and green ribbons, a full-blown rose in her hand.

In a moment John had dashed into the shop, leaving me standing bewildered in the street. I followed. John had the Jew dealer by the collar.

"Where did you get that portrait?" he asked breathlessly, following up his question by a shake.

"The shentleman had better take his hand off my collar," replied the Jew, with a glint in his cunning eyes. "I have got it in lawful commershe, and there is the fellow to it."

We looked where his dirty finger indicated, and there, on the floor, amongst a strange variety of ancient lumber, stood my husband's grandfather, horn snuff-box in hand.

The wicked old knave of a Jew perceived at once his advantage. Here was a purchaser at any cost, and after much haggling, John paid down an exorbitant sum, and we left the shop, in possession of the portraits.

They were placed with their faces to the wall at the hotel until our holiday came to an end, and our luggage was augmented on our homeward journey by an immense flat packing-case.

The day after our return I mournfully took down my brackets, and without a word of complaint—for what is the use of struggling against fate?—I helped John to hang the portraits in their old place, and they have hung there ever since.

# Aunt Clare's "Old Story."

(A STORY IN TWO WEEKLY PARTS.)

## CHAPTER I.

WE thought it had been such a prosaic life; we, her grand nephews and nieces, had only known her an old woman, a quiet, most sweet old lady, just a woman whose placid exterior seemed to say that the vessel of her long life had been sailing over seas of naught but summer sailing.

We had made a mistake—one very often does in one's light judgment of our near-by neighbours of whom we feel so sure of certain knowledge.

"Her ladyship" was the dignified head of an old house, and her son was representing the county. All around the home of her adoption, and all around from the territory of Hayleigh Chase where her family had been known from time immemorial, people had come to swell the long state of her funeral train.

Her eldest son and I, her great-nephew, curate of Hayleigh, were co-executors under her will.

The matter of her will is naught here. To speak about its details would bring forward so many names and so many doings of late times, that I should only cause confusion to fall over her "story."

Some papers lay rolled up and stitched together in an old drawer, the one locked drawer of my aunt's bureau.

She called me her executor. I make myself her editor by untying the roll of papers and giving them to such as like to read. Thus the tale ran:

## AN OLD STORY.

I have just tied my papers together and by a freak of childish humour put this title to them, and now I write this one sentence on top of the first page. To think that Clare Hayman should see fit to call her life a story!

My sixteenth birthday! I had looked forward to the day as to a day of much mark, and it was ending with just nothing at all to remember it by, beyond the fact that I could write myself down as one year nearer womanhood. Coveted womanhood! I did not know what was this glorious vision which I was stretching forward to grasp.

We lived in an out-of-the-way village place, but, as my father was Squire Hayman, a sort of local greatness belonged to us. I suppose it was from some ignorant over-importance of my childish notions on this status of ours, that my feminine imagination wandered out to vague and more splendid greatnesses of the world—the world to which I, in my womanhood, might be introduced.

But the world—London—was a long way off, for those were the days of stage-coaches, of a rare strange invention called "gas," by which candles were said to be outshone, of short waists to one's frocks, of sandalled shoon, of "crops" for girlish heads.

The clear, light May evening was lingering long over the far fields and the pale green swelling distances that we called "the hilla." Our woods were there, lifting their fresh greenness up to the daffodil sky that, cloudless and so light, seemed to tremble at the coy advances of the summer twilight.

I was by no means poetising, but rather was unromantically sitting on a stile, and swinging my feet.

I was sixteen, and I was scarcely satisfied, now that I had attained that long-wished-for culmination of maturity. However, if unsatisfied, I was not by nature or habit ill-tempered, and the swinging of my feet, begun in a sort of half-fretfulness, went on with a wild sort of increasing bravado.

"Better luck next time," said I aloud. There were only the evening birds and the open buds of snowy thorn-flowers about me, so what did it matter, if I did utter those four words aloud? If aunt had heard them, I should have been reprimanded for vulgarity. However, she did not hear—no one heard.

"Aunt" was a decided fact in my life; she took care of her brother, the squire, and of his two children, Miles and myself. A most exemplary woman she was; I always knew this, but—but—why did my mother die and leave me for Aunt Clare to shape into young-ladyhood?

Father had promised me a ball when I was sixteen, and—there! some tiresome cousin or other had died, and this, my birthday, was his funeral day. In my impetuous revolt I slapped with my open palm the thick band of the black silk sash that went round my waist.

Such a faraway melancholy was it, such a vanity of mourning was I in!—there had been to me that morning one moment of sweet content, as I stood and surveyed myself in aunt's cheval-glass. My new grey mousseline-de-laine frock was of the latest fashion, the waist so near to my armpits, my gigot sleeves so well bunched out, the small tucks and plaitings at the bottom of the skirt so exactly

like a fashion-book. For five minutes I was quite glad; being obliged to go into mourning, I was also obliged to have this new frock.

Long before the sweet May evening had come I had forgotten my vain gladness, there was a very decided anger in the slap which I gave to the offending black sash. I was conscious of the sure fact that had it not been for this untimely-dying cousin, I should have been arrayed in snowy virgin-white, bowing my acceptances to the gay sprigs of the county gentry for stately minuet and—and—that new seraphic dance, which aunt insisted upon ignoring, the waltz.

And my swinging feet clapped together their polished sides of prunella in angry petulance of rebellion.

I jumped down from my stile and ran along by the hedgside. I had seen some half-dozen yards off the first pink-tipped bud among the hedge-rose bushes.

Alas! I was tall, but the bud, the scarlet cluster of buds, was taller, if one may so speak; an effort would be needed if I meant to attain to the gathering of their new young beauty.

An effort suited my humour. My hat—a gipsy-hat they called it—had got loose and hung round my neck. One second fixed it in its place upon my somewhat ruffled crop, and with very decided energy my fingers tied the broad white ribbon which went over its crown down beneath my chin. My arms were free, and I stretched aloft. No use stretching—not a bit of it; the tip of my longest finger was at least three inches off the lowest tip of pink bud.

To jump was the next thing, of course. Also of course, to jump, and to strain and stretch, meant that I was wantonly setting too heavy a trial upon delicate fabrics. I won the roses, but—my sandals! The dainty ribbon, which nurse was eternally renewing, burst with a little crack.

"Bother!" cried I aloud; "why cannot they invent something that won't break!"

Habits of life are all-powerful—which truism means that as the words and the tone flew out on to the soft spring air, I flushed red and hot as I always did when aunt reprimanded me for vulgarity.

Surely, I often thought, I must be innately vulgar, for I did and said so many things of which aunt's propriety disapproved.

I threw the bunch of rosebuds on to the grass, and kneeling, tried with hurried, impulsive, trembling fingers to push out of sight, within my shoe, those unhappy, helpless-looking, broken sandals.

"It was all bad—all horribly bad!" my heart was exclaiming. My heart and I were somewhat given to impulsiveness; I could easily laugh, perhaps I could easily cry; I know that some angry tears just then made my nose tickle.

I brushed my hand across my eyes, and in doing this, lifted my head.

Who was that?

From beneath the poke of my gipsy-hat I looked forth, and saw a gentleman in riding-dress upon the pathway which led across the field from the stile where I had just been sitting.

I knew everyone in the village—almost every man, woman, or child in the dozen or so of villages about us. This was a stranger.

In the moment when I made this decision he had come from the path towards me.

In those days even squires' daughters were behind the city for fashion, but I knew at once that this stranger was habited in the most correct, most courtly style. His cinnamon-coloured coat fitted like a skin, such a high-rolled collar was not to be seen in Hayleigh village—no, nor in Marling town. The multitudinous folds of his cravat, and the peep one got of the cambric of his shirt-frill, were of daintiest texture. High boots, soiled with dust, and a small-brimmed beaver hat, finished his apparelling.

He stood before me with the stock of his riding-whip held across him in his two hands.

"Are you hurt?" he asked. "You have met with some accident—your cry made me turn round. I did not see you until then."

Of course not, I was half in the hedge. However, that was not what I said. My tongue was sufficiently polite to say:

"Oh no. I am obliged. I am not hurt; it's only this horrid sandal broken."

"A small damage that; but—are you sure? I thought——"

I coloured fiery red. What business had he to think I was crying? My rude answer will show the sort of hot-headed being I was.

"You thought I was crying!" I burst out. "I was not doing anything of the kind. As if I should cry for such nonsense."

He shamed me utterly, for he never even smiled at my babyish outburst, and I rose and stood abashed before him. For a second or so no words were said. I think he was surprised to see me rise into so tall a measure of womanliness, when kneeling I had made so paltry and childish a show of temper.

However, as I learnt more surely afterwards, the stranger was a true gentleman, and his next words set me at my ease, for they entirely ignored me and my behaviour.

"I have lost my way," he began. "No; that is scarcely the exact



truth, for I feel sure I am going in the right direction, though I may be at some distance yet from my destination. My horse fell lame at Bardene—Bardene was the first village out of Marling town, and six miles from us—and instead of going back to hire another, I am walking. Am I now far from Hayleigh—from Hayleigh Rectory?"

"No, not if you go the right way," laughed I. "You will be more than half an hour if you go as you were going, but the shortest way is down the lane and across the alder meadow and the spinney. Beyond that there is one field, and if you go out of it by the white gate there is Hayleigh Cross just exactly opposite you."

"Hayleigh Cross—does that mean also Hayleigh Rectory? I am an outside barbarian, remember."

"Very much a barbarian, I should say!" and again I laughed. "It does mean very much the same, seeing the cross is in the middle of the road and the church and the rectory face it."

His eyes were answering my laugh. It was very odd, but we seemed not at all strangers by this time. We were turning towards the stile, I to lead, he to be led.

"My roses!" I suddenly exclaimed.

The stranger looked enquiringly at me.

"Yes! Rosebuds, at least. The first, too! I cannot lose them. I suppose I let them fall when—when—"

"When the sun got into your eyes—when you had to push his beams out of them; when—when—you looked up and we had to be polite to each other?"

"Just so," I ran away, calling out: "If you are polite enough to wait while I find my rosebuds, I will show you the way. I am going home."

Then I went back to where I had stood but those few moments before, peering down into the long-growing grasses for my cluster of rosebuds. Looking for them, my mind was full of them, and the stranger fell out of my thoughts.

"Here they are!" said a voice at my elbow, and, turning, I saw them in the stranger's hands, he just in the act of rising from picking them up. "Now you will show me the way?" he asked.

We went on, over the stile and along the lane, together, he playing with my rosebuds and talking, I somehow not daring to ask him for them. It seemed childish to attach any importance to such slight things, for, as we talked, some odd chance led this new friend of mine to talk of rather grave things. He was not an old man—nay, he was young; but a man of, say, twenty-five seems to be in age far away from a girl who is on that very day but sixteen.

In my mind I remember quite well all the things he said, but I do not care to write them down—to remember is enough. I know that the low gables of The Chase (my home) were in sight; I know that the turn of the lane had been passed at which one came in sight of the gates with our "greyhound pursuivant" on each high supporting-post, and that still I walked along empty-handed, while he (the stranger) held my poor bunch of fading buds.

Perhaps we had ended one bend of our talk—somewhat carelessly he said:

"These are no good now, are they? Do you want them?"

I believe he had been leading me into gravity, now with inborn wilfulness I threw this gay, defiant sort of speech at him.

"Certainly not," I cried. "Do you think I want them now that you have twisted them out of all shape? Look! they are as limp as—"

"Limp? Just so, we'll throw them away."

"No, you won't," I retorted. "Roses are roses, and these are the first. You were moralising just now about we country-folks being less superficial than city-folks, you think we are perforce 'naturally elevated into habits of more sincerity.'" I was quoting himself. "I liked my roses ten minutes ago, and I like them now. Give them to me, will you?" I was laughing, but yet at the same time I felt myself grow tall and even stately as I took upon myself to utter this wish like a command.

"Suppose I say 'no'? Will you weep an intensity of woe? Will you dash the sunbeams again out of your eyes?"

This last came with a look of laughter in what I had thought very grave brown eyes, with a sudden stop in his leisurely, summer-evening tread.

"Not exactly," said I proudly. "Do you wish to see that folly over again?"

"No, no; and yet, yes. Rainy sunshine is beautiful—more beautiful than a torrid glare."

"I do not understand," I interrupted, not quite truthfully. "Please to understand that I am not given to crying for rubbish like that!"

"Methinks," he answered after a moment, musingly, "it is for rubbish that tears lightly come. So at least I have heard. Women bear great woes and have no tears for them."

"Was that to me? or spoken over my youthful head?" I answered glibly, being so young and so wishful to vaunt my growth

out of that youth. "I believe that quite certainly," I declared; "I am sure I—women—do hide great sorrows."

He looked quietly at me.

"What do you know? What can—"

"I know a great deal," I cried with babyish impetuosity. "I have to bear a great deal; there's aunt every day, and to-day worse than ever, and—and—everything just horrid to-day! If I cried from morning till night it would make no difference!"

And I trod firmly on some steps in advance of him.

"What is wrong?" said he.

"Nothing."

But still, before we parted and I went by myself up the curving drive of The Chase, I had actually made this stranger aware of the great fact of my being sixteen that day, and of the accompanying great fact of the ball which was to have been, and which was not.

The drive up to my home was long. Under the soft evening, I, well-ruled Clare Hayman, took surely into my mind the consciousness that I had overstepped aunt's laws of maidenly propriety.

However, concealment was not in my nature, and if this guiding of a stranger was a peccadillo, I could not alter what was over and done. I told aunt at once, and had my reprimand well over before my father came home.

He was driving post, and would be at The Chase by midnight.

## CHAPTER II.

I DID not see my father that night—was it to be expected that aunt would allow me to be out of bed at midnight?

I never could understand how he and she should be so unmistakably alike in outward appearance, and yet so utterly dissimilar. On the following morning the file of servants had to break rank for me to enter the dining-room. Aunt's face, as she stood with folded hands, tall and precise, at the head of the breakfast-table, expressed lofty disapproval of me and my tardiness; my father stood also, like her, tall, lean, grey-headed, quite as erect, quite as stately, but carrying that in his dear old face which prompted me to nod a "good-morning" to him as I skimmed past the maids and men, and took my seat.

Prayers were over, and father and I began a race with the same object. I slipped one hand within his arm, and began:

"Have you heard the adventure? I want to know—tell me who—"

"Clare, my daughter," his kind tones running alongside of my hurry, "there is to be a court-martial, I am to be judge. What possessed you, my dear?"

"Possessed me!" repeated I; "that is just it, father. I know everything there is to say, aunt said it last night."

Aunt put on her spectacles and looked at me with those encrusted white bunchy curls of hers flanking the gold-rimmed glasses. The look spoke volumes, no need for words. Mine was a barely perceptible pause. I went on:

"I confess everything, I confessed everything last night; but—what else could I do? If some creature asks another creature the way, is it polite to turn dumb? Father, you would have done the same yourself. I should have been a heathen not to show him the way!" And herewith I drew up my father's chair to his special corner of the table.

"That's true, child. But," he cleared his throat, "young ladies must not—"

"Miles, you have brought it on yourself. You would keep her at home instead of sending her to school. Look at Lady Basset's daughters! are they like Clare? Girls are certain to be ruined if they ride across country like their fathers and brothers—now you see! A pretty story to be told at the rectory!"

"Well, I shall see the rector this morning, and I shall hear," answered he, doing his best to pacify aunt. "The doctor cannot keep a secret, and I shall hear all about his visitor. He was not expected, I know, for Barlowe only on Tuesday laughed with me over the scarcity of news and doings."

A letter was a letter in those days, and newspapers were small and few.

"That is certainly Dr. Barlowe's own fault then," Aunt Clare incisively put in, "for there might be an unlimited number of franks at his disposal if he chose. His own brother and his wife's brother both members, and yet 'no news!' Give me Dr. Barlowe's opportunities!"

Aunt majestically swayed her head, and the tea by this time having been "drawing" for the number of minutes she specified as requisite, she lifted the teapot and began her morning's duty. A glance from her keen eyes into mine, and a moving of her glance from me to my plate at the side of the table, conveyed her command that I was to begin breakfast.

"Did you see Miles, father?" I asked presently. Miles was my only brother, and was in London, at Charterhouse.

"Yes, I made a point of it, and went to a City inn so that he might run in to me. He breakfasted with me yesterday morning. Really the lad is a fine lad—more like his mother than thou art, Clare, but with the Hayman strength too. We'll hope so, we'll hope so."

"H'm—ha!" jerked aunt, swallowing nearly the whole of a cup of tea at once. "Clare at school, and Miles getting strength in the air of his own fields, might have been a better ordering than—"

"Tush, tush, Clare!" said my father testily. "I'll have no boy of mine tied to a woman's apron-strings. I was at Charterhouse, and my father was there before me—Miles has cut his name in the bench below his grandfather's and mine. The lad's doing well!—well!"

"I am glad to hear it—very glad. I wish I could be as confident about his sister. I am thankful now that the ball had to be put off. I should be ashamed to have the county go away from The Chase with the idea that any Mistress Hayman could be a hoyden!"

"Come, come; my little girl is no hoyden; at least, if she is so, a 'hoyden' may be a very good thing. Clare, my maid, put on thy muffle and come round the croft with me; the May wind is tricky." He went towards the door, but spoke to aunt as he turned the shining brass handle. "Have a cover laid, in case I bring Barlowe back with me. I suppose the larder will stand a visitor?" His eyes twinkled, and he ran his fingers up through his shining, thick, white hair.

"Visitors will always find Squire Hayman's table in fit order; his sister is not superficial in her ruling of his house." This lofty-mannered answer was decorously and imposingly uttered by Aunt Clare, as she gave herself her customary final half-cup of tea. "Go with your father, Clare. I wish no politeness which is not voluntary."

It was not convenient to either father or me to hear this grandiose humility, and we left aunt to herself.

Dr. Barlowe and my father were busy with magisterial duties that day at Harling. I had my hours and half-hours of study—liking this by no means half-heartedly, for I think it was in my nature to love anything which led to a grasp of the world's doings. I was like Aunt Clare in that. I wonder whether she had been like me in her girlhood?

She bade me walk with her into the village, for it was her visiting day. She never visited the cottages at haphazard times, but had a rule for that, as she had for most other things. This part of my day was, I am afraid, not so pleasant to me as the part wherein I was free amongst my books, for I liked to talk to the village wives, and could scarcely make an interest when I only stood by and heard them talked to.

But all this was over by four o'clock, and aunt and I went home to dress and be ready for my father when he should come home. Dinner was always at five o'clock. Aunt kept her brother's house up to all points of propriety and etiquette, and to dine at five was then the mode. So she and I sat, in the chintz parlour, with a fire in the grate and the window open, for all the summer sunshine and May warmth to come in to us.

Aunt worked at her frame assiduously; I, with my gay embroidery, did not get on so fast. One cannot work much when the summer is so gay and young. I am afraid I looked out over the garden and as far down the long avenue of elms as I could. Father might come in that way—the front way, or else, if he brought Dr. Barlowe home, he would come in at another gate.

The clock struck five.

Aunt pushed aside her work, and folding her mittened hands, waited. No one should wait for her.

Waiting was not the question, for there came immediately the sound of my father's genial, hospitable voice, and the quick passing of certainly more than one pair of feet over the stone hall.

The door opened, and Dr. Barlowe, short, stout, rather rubicund, came in, with his easy, not to say shambling gait.

"This young ignoramus is for apologising for our riding-dress, madam," said he; "but the town does not know the ways of the country—eh? Magistrates who toil for their country's good are allowed to ignore the fantasies of the toilet. But I must introduce this Signor Punctilio. He goes by the name of Peter Farre, my sister's son. Nephew, be acquainted with these ladies, Mistress Hayman and her niece."

Aunt made a severe curtsy; I made my best, which "best" was, I fear, far from good. I was, in truth, a bit discomfited, for this stranger was my stranger. An instinctive horror possessed me at the idea of Sir Peter Farre's son looking upon me as a "hoyden."

However, the next fact brought me back to self-possession, for—he had gravely gone through the same ceremony with aunt—I found the tips of my fingers lightly held by the new visitor, while

his closely-curling brown head was bowed low over the linked hands. For a second I felt the sweep of a soft moustache over my fingertips, then, as I drew back with coy propriety, he too drawing back with a courtly deference, our eyes met.

Neither laughed. I think, nevertheless, a laugh was singing about our hearts.

How lightly, how easily, did this new comer rule the situation.

"Madam," said he, speaking through aunt to me, "fortune is indeed kind to me to-day. I not only make new friends, but I am able to acknowledge a debt I incurred last night. Your niece rendered me a most kindly service—you will have heard?"

"I did hear—yes. We are fortunate in my niece's forwardness having met with so gallant a construction as you honour her by putting upon it." Aunt's stateliness was gracious.

Never did I so worship Baines before. Baines was butler. He opened the door at this most opportune moment.

"Uncle," said Mr. Farre, "I shall ignore your cloth in our relationship, and claim the stranger guest's privilege. May I lead you to dinner, madam?" With the studied courtesy of those days he again bowed before aunt.

The rector and I followed.

"A sad dog, Miss Clare—a sad dog, this nephew of mine. Too much of a courtier for us village folks—eh?"

"Aunt would not agree with you, Dr. Barlowe," answered I.

"Ah, we must talk; we old men must talk. What else are we good for except we look on and talk?"

It was Dr. Barlowe's way to make a show of shallowness.

"Suppose you were to be taken at your word, and allowed to do nothing but talk," I ran on heedlessly, "how would you like it?"

"Vastly well—vastly well, young madam. Eh, squire, what say you? It's time we old ones took our ease and let the young ones work. The stupidity, the arrant knavery of those yokels to-day wasting three hours over their litigious madness, and then, after all, going in for some stuff they call arbitration! I, like a man who'll fight out his cause like a man! I'll give it up. Let them get new blood on the bench, something fit to comprehend these new notions. A British farmer arbitrate when it's a question of trespass!—arbitrate, indeed!"

Then some hot soup came temptingly under the good doctor's nose, and he subsided. In consequence, other subjects came forward, and aunt and I—yes, even I, though I was but what aunt was pleased to call a "chit"—found ourselves not only listening but making remarks upon such matters as came to interest us. Yes, I am sure I had quite as much to say as she had.

(To be continued.)

## The Editor's Note Book.

AMONG the other bad fashions—and there are a good many of them—which have grown up in Parliament of late years is that of framing a policy to accord with, or to take the sting from, some telling epigram. Thus when Sir Wilfrid Lawson said that the Government policy in the Soudan ought to be "rescue and retire," Mr. Gladstone jumped at it with eagerness, and declared that that was what he had meant all along. Now Mr. Labouchere, with equal brilliancy, flouts the Government with the assertion that what the Government means is to "ravage and remain."

It is to be hoped that the sensitiveness of the Premier's mind will not, in deprecation of this epigram, again dissolve any coherent plan which the collective wisdom of the Cabinet may be slowly crystallising. Governments, and, for the matter of that, Oppositions, which have intelligible policies and decided views about carrying them into effect, need not trouble themselves about epigrams even as electioneering weapons.

WHATEVER may be thought of the desirability of keeping open the road from Suakin to Berber, or of marching a force for the relief of Khartoum, it is more than probable that the climate will very soon relieve the Government from the necessity of coming to a definite decision on the subject. Campaigning in the deserts of the Soudan during the summer is out of the question, and it is even doubtful whether it would be possible to keep European soldiers, except for a very brief space of time, in Suakin itself.

THE House of Lords, by a majority of six in a thin house, has decided that the Wellington statue is not to be re-erected in the neighbourhood of Hyde Park Corner, and, as at present decided, that thing of beauty is to be a joy for ever to the soldiers at Aldershot. Why the Dukes of Buccleuch and Rutland should be supposed to take any special interest in the matter I do not know, but Lord Dorchester,

in the course of the discussion, expressed himself as being extremely anxious that this important matter should not be settled in the absence of those noble lords.

THE authorities in America appear to have just discovered, what has been well known to the rest of the world for a long time, that a vast quantity of abominable stuff, purporting to be butter and cheese, is produced by the ingenuity of manufacturers in the States. Americans were very angry some little time ago because the importation of certain forms of pig meat was prohibited in Germany, but recent revelations as to the conduct of the American provision trade show clearly that the Government of the Emperor knew very well what it was about.

AN occasional correspondent, writing to the *Times*, gives a description of the foreign cattle market at Deptford, which will be read with interest by housekeepers, though I do not think that many of them will agree with the writer when he says, "As to the effect that the closing of Deptford would bring about in the price of meat, I doubt if the opinion of a farmer could be implicitly relied upon. I should prefer to take the opinion of a London butcher." Possibly nobody would be inclined to rely implicitly upon the opinion of the representative of any one of the interests concerned, but, bearing in mind the extraordinary difference in the prices at which the farmer sells to the butcher and the butcher to the public, the butcher's evidence would, undoubtedly, be received with considerable suspicion.

LORD SHAFTESBURY has taken up the question of over-pressure in elementary schools, and there can be no reasonable doubt, if only from the sort of apology which his lordship found it necessary to make for Mr. Mundella, that the remarks which I made a week or two ago in regard to that Right Honourable gentleman's attitude in the matter were by no means too strong.

LORD SHAFTESBURY'S speech was backed up by the direct evidence of people of experience such as Dr. Forbes Winslow; Mr. C. J. Dawson, the President of the National Union of Elementary Teachers; Sir E. H. Currie and Miss Muller now, and Mrs. Surr, late, of the London School Board. It is impossible to doubt that a case has been made out which calls for a much more serious answer than can be contained in the usual glib official commonplaces, or irrelevant references to "the Registrar's reports of the last fifteen years."

MR. LAWES has applied to the Court of Bankruptcy to relieve him, so far as it may be done under the new Act, of the liabilities he has incurred in the course of his extensive experiences of the Law Courts, but threatens, through Messrs. Lewis and Lewis, to continue the conflict to its last stage.

AS matters stand now Mr. Belt will get neither damages or costs, and is probably reflecting on the injustice of a system which allows a man to be dragged from court to court by an impecunious opponent, and then to have the pleasure of paying the whole of his costs out of his own pocket. Surely it would not be a very great hardship if appellants were required to give security for costs.

FROM the point of view of "artistic merit," Mr. Lawes's tactics may be perfectly correct. Looked at in any other light they seem to leave a good deal to be desired.

IT is stated in the *Times* that the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill is not to be proceeded with this session, but that it is intended to submit a resolution "affirming the principles of the Bill." Such a course seems to be absurd, as well as a cruel waste of time. The principles of the Bill have been affirmed over and over again, and, if the question is to come before Parliament at all, it ought to be brought in as a matter of business, and not as an abstract resolution which will certainly be carried, and will, as certainly, have no effect upon the position of the matter one way or the other.

THE principal objection to Mr. Warton's proposed Patent Medicine Bill was that it tarred with the same brush good and bad alike. No doubt a number of patent medicines are simply rubbish, while a few are even deleterious; but many are distinctly useful and beneficial, and are not unfrequently prescribed by medical men. Nor does it seem reasonable to ask that a medicine which contains perhaps an infinitesimal and harmless amount of poison, should be labelled as poisonous, and so be practically put out of the market.

MORE to the purpose is the complaint that ignorant people are apt to look upon the Government stamp, not merely as a tax, but as an absolute State guarantee of the virtues of the medicine which it accompanies. It is of course impossible altogether to provide against the stupidity of some people, but it might be well to add to the stamp something equivalent to the French *Sans garantie du Gouvernement*.

THE Postmaster General tells us that intemperance and betting are responsible for almost everything that goes wrong with the Post Office staff, and that these two evils are absolutely the cause of the cases of breach of discipline which lead either to dismissal or prosecution. Mr. Fawcett says that in making this statement he does not exaggerate, but it is obvious that he does. Intemperance and betting are no doubt fruitful sources of ruin and misery, but there are a good many other easy roads by which weak human nature can travel to perdition, and I for one do not think that the millennium might be confidently expected even if racing of all sorts were to be abolished to-morrow, and we were all to take to drinking lemonade the day after.

BESIDES, what about the very large number of young women who are now employed by the Post Office? Do none of them ever commit breaches of discipline which lead to dismissal? And if they do, are we to assume that the culprits have been guilty of drinking and gambling, both vices which are not common among young women?

IN this connection, note may be made of a couple of sentences in an excellent leading article in the *Times* of March 27th on the drink question. The writer said: "The crimes ascribed to drink are frequently due to the badness of the drink. The fluids retailed to the poor are in too many cases concoctions which madden the brain and ruin the digestion, even when taken in quantities which would be perfectly harmless were the liquor genuine." It is a great pity that Sir Wilfrid Lawson and his friends will not recognise this simple truth. More real practical good would be done by the passing of a well-considered and stringent Adulteration Act than by the declamation of any number of teetotalers, Blue Ribbons and all.

A NUMBER of the old wooden houses in Wych Street, Strand, have been pulled down during the last week or so, and it is stated that mercantile offices are to be erected on the site thus cleared. This simply means that more compensation will have to be paid when the long-required improvement is made which will sweep away all the buildings between the north side of Wych Street and the south side of the Strand, and the longer the business is postponed the worse it will be for the ratepayers.

THAT Coroners' juries do not always pay strict attention to the laws of evidence in framing their verdicts is notorious, and a Wandsworth jury last week afforded as good an illustration of this truth as has been given for some time. A man was seen to shoot himself on Clapham Common, and, as he was not identified, it was impossible for anybody to tell the Coroner's jury anything about his antecedents, his circumstances, or the state of his mind. Nevertheless, the jury, arguing, it may be supposed, from first principles, found that the unfortunate suicide had put an end to his life "whilst temporarily insane."

C. D.

## Careless Work.

IF the writer lays down his pen or pencil in a different place every time, and inadvertently covers it with a sheet of paper, or puts it mechanically where it may not be seen, he may suffer ten times more in the composition of a single letter than if for the three or four seconds necessary he put his whole mind in laying that pen in one particular place. He will reach for it just when he desires to chain a new thought to the paper. He does not find it. He is annoyed, impatient, fretful. He searches for it, trying, meanwhile, to keep the coveted newly-born expression in mind. He finds the missing article at last; but his calmness, so necessary for the freest flow of thought, has gone, and the thread of his idea is broken. The work may be imperfect and marred in consequence. He has lost a certain portion both of time and strength. There may be in the course of the day a great deal so lost from the habit of despising this particular moment of small things, and the result foots up a formidable column. There is reason to believe that loss ensues from the doing of any act mechanically, no matter how trivial. Perhaps any so-called trivial deed should have the full force of mind brought to bear upon it. It may even be worth one's while to put the whole mind, though but for an almost unappreciable length of time, on the placing of a tool in its proper place. This done, and in a short time the mental habit regulates itself into a certainty. As in one thing so in all. The profit, besides, lies in the fact that where mental force is so concentrated, the effort ceases to become irksome. A sense of pleasure comes from the exercise of any act done with precision, accuracy, and minute attention to detail. One may realise pleasure in the proper formation of the letters in the handwriting. The scrawl is an irksome task to the scrawler and the reader of the scrawl. The letter dashed off in such haste and impatience that it is deciphered with doubt and difficulty, brought pain to the writer in the act, and it brings unnecessary pain, fatigue, and loss of time to its reader. Does it not profit to act up to the old adage, "Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well?"

## The Family Doctor

### REST.

ONE of Nature's most potent remedial agencies is rest. It is a matter of universal experience that a certain amount of rest is necessary—as necessary as food—to ensure a healthy state of mind or body. But in disease, rest must be often specially provided for, in order to preserve the strength of the individual, and so give nature an opportunity of restoring the lost balance. We shall first consider the subject as it applies to our ordinary life, and then pass on to its application in cases of actual disease.

A WORD on sleep. No definite rules can be laid down as to the number of hours of sleep requisite for health. This depends on the individual's age, constitution, and occupation. We all know the rough old adage, "Six hours sleep for a man, seven for a woman, and eight for a fool." But, as a matter of fact, those whose brains are in active exercise, whose nervous systems are delicate and excitable, need as much sleep as they can possibly get, and in these cases, the deferring of this possibility often involves such grave issues, as peace or perturbation, good or bad work, even sanity or insanity. In reading the lives of distinguished people, one is constantly struck with their power of sleep. Not that they invariably sleep long, but they are in such perfect poise, that sleep comes when and where it is required. When they can do nothing else they can sleep. Probably with high-strung temperaments, it is often this happy adjustment which saves them from nervous exhaustion and confirmed invalidism.

EVERYBODY must discover for himself whether or not supper suits him, and if so, what supper is most wholesome for his constitution. As a general rule, this meal should be simple and light. But what suits some, is decidedly objectionable to others. For instance, after coffee, some people cannot sleep a wink; on others it has no effect; on others, again, an absolutely opposite one. Let each observe his own feelings in the matter, and be guided by what he finds wholesome for himself, rather than by mere fashion or fancy. These details require forethought and self-denial. It may often seem easier to get a prescription and take medicine than to attend to these homely precautions. But prevention must ever remain preferable to cure.

MENTAL work up to the very last moment before going to bed is not good. It may banish sleep, or at least disturb it. Before retiring, a short interval may be advantageously spent in reading of a soothing and cheering influence, but which demands no intellectual strain. Pleasant ideas should be brought forward and dwelt upon. If it is good "to sleep upon" our troubles and determinations, then we must not spoil our sleep by turning them over.

A SLEEPING apartment should be not only airy, but quiet. While light should not be excluded, the room should still be shady.

IN the morning, we should rise the moment we wake. Happy indeed are those whose early training and wholesome habits enable them to wake when they should rise, and so spare themselves and others the irritation of "knocking up." We may notice that young children always wake betimes, and the terrible sluggishness which seems so common in later life, is often due to the self-indulgence of mothers and nurses, who think to spare themselves trouble by leaving the little ones a while longer in the safe confinement of bed.

To half-awaken, and then allow oneself to doze off again, with a conviction of sin in one's very dreams, is about the worst beginning of a day's work that could be invented. It wastes all the benefit that might have been derived from a good night's rest. It is enervating and demoralising. He who lies on after he has once been awakened, nearly always finally "gets out of bed on the wrong side." He has no time for sufficient bathing; he snatches a hasty breakfast; he hurries off to catch the next train after the one which he should have caught; he is cross with everybody and everybody is cross with him; his bedroom either has to lie in disorder, confusing the domestic decencies of the whole household, or else it is hastily made up without due airing or cleansing, and he has certainly done his utmost to secure for himself, and everybody else, as much discomfort as possible for the whole day.

AN afternoon nap or *siesta* appears to be beneficial to many, and almost necessary to some. It need not waste much time, and indeed no time can be wasted by anything which helps to secure calmness of nerve and evenness of temper. Yet too many middle-aged women, at that period of life when their position at the head of a family numbers them among those "whose work is never done," shrink from this relief and battle strongly against nature's inclination towards it, as if it signified laziness, or perhaps what they may dread more, the suspicion of the advance of age and infirmity. And yet some of those who think they economise time by this mistaken defiance of nature's hints, seem to imagine that they utilise it by sitting, half-awake, through weary "calls," or inane "afternoon-teas."

It is a somewhat debated question whether it is good to sleep soon after a full meal. Animals certainly do so; but man is an animal

plus something more. In many cases, sleeping seems to retard digestion, so that the wakening is accompanied by a disagreeable taste in the mouth and a slight headache. Light reading, or very slight handicraft, seems to give fairly satisfactory after-meal rest. At many hydropathic establishments a twenty-minutes' rest is enjoined after dinner, during which time both books and work are prohibited, and the visitors are thrown upon their conversational resources. A few minutes' rest before meals is beneficial. This puts the mental faculties into quiescence, and gives the digestive organs fair play.

ONE day in seven should be set aside as "a day of rest." This should mean neither a day of idleness nor a day of gloom, but a day of absolute cessation from the toil, and care, and labour of the preceding six days. Of course, the rule, "On the seventh day thou shalt rest," has no value for those who have not obeyed the command, "Six days shalt thou labour." In relaxing some of the Sabbath restrictions of the past, great care must be taken that more actual labour is not thrown upon some classes, and those the most helpless, for the sake of the enjoyment of others. It is possible, too, that some of the Sabbath observances of the past were rather allowed to settle down on a wrong foundation, than were really wrong in themselves. There is nothing meritorious in eating cold dinner on Sunday, but it may be an act of true charity to give one's cook a respite from her daily toil. One may smile at an old-fashioned Scotch peasant's arrangements for blacking the family's boots and fetching in the family's water on Saturday evening, but it gave the household the dignity of one day of calm and perfect leisure, and was a periodic cleansing of the mind from the "noughts and crosses" of corroding little cares and duties. The true Sabbath blessing is rest, with all its possibilities of worship, of family union, and of hospitality to the solitary and to strangers. Nobody who has not been forced to hard work on a Sunday can fully realise how heavily and wearily the following week passes, compared with that following a bright and restful Sunday.

If for a moment we take a glance at rest as a curative agent, we shall see how fully we are indebted to it in our treatment of disease.

If a leg be broken, it must be fixed as immovably as possible in splints, and kept at "rest." Nature will then unite the two ends of the bone. If the injured limb is not allowed this rest, it will become useless: the bone will not unite. The same principle runs through all disease, though it is not always so manifest to the senses. In some diseases of the joints weeks and months of "rest" have to be given to the infirm member, to give Nature time to repair herself. It is often very difficult to persuade the sufferer and the sufferer's friends, that such rest is the only chance of cure.

DURING fevers and other exhausting diseases rest is essential. And what is more, after apparent recovery rest is still needful. After typhoid-fever, the digestive organs must have prolonged rest. After scarlet-fever, the skin must not be hastily expected to perform its functions in varying atmospheres.

AND how much could be said of "brain rest!" It is a mistake to suppose that it is only "brain-workers" who suffer from exhaustion of nerve-force, and who require relaxation of the mental faculties. The brains of such people are often somewhat like the limbs of athletes—they can do easily what would damage others, though, of course, they require to know their own individual limitations, and not to be too proud and persistent in their strength. Everybody who thinks, or feels, and is liable to be worried, will suffer more or less from brain and nerve exhaustion. But, of course, it is in those who, like authors, poets, and musicians, must give out in tangible form the product of their thoughts and the result of their emotions, that brain-exhaustion is most keenly felt. A sore foot may be endured by a person at ease, but what if he is on the march? And the class of people we have named are on the intellectual march, and at times have to perform forced marches.

IN all cases of brain exhaustion, change of scene gives the greatest rest. We have heard a sufferer crave "to be sent to some place which I never saw before." Where the danger is only imminent, or at least not far advanced, it is wonderful how readily the brain takes rest and refreshment. We have seen a single day's outing, in quiet rural scenery or by the seaside, work what seemed like a miracle. A visit to a theatre, one being selected where there is not overcrowding or excitement, and where the play is of a natural and gently humorous character, will do wonders. Cheerful and firm companionship is indispensable in such cases. Causes of annoyance and irritation should be avoided, because irritability is an unfailing accompaniment of such cases, and, though in the sweeter-dispositioned this seldom shows itself by aggression, it is unfortunately only too eager to take umbrage and offence from incidents or words which would have passed unheeded at other times, or have been resolved from discords into accords. Those having the care of such sufferers would do well to look carefully round to see whether their condition is aggravated by the presence of any injudicious or ill-natured person.

ATTENTION to these matters and avoidance of over-work are the means which lead to cure. It is often said that over-work cannot

be avoided. Is it not truer economy and wisdom rather to reduce the family expenditure than to deprive it speedily of its bread-winner? Let what would have to be done then in grief and misery, begin at once in hope and determination. Besides, even when work cannot be minimised, much which is not work, but which leads to the "overworked condition," may be put away altogether. Troublesome callers, interrupting chains of thought, and chasing away time, afterwards to be overtaken by a deadly race, may be set aside altogether. Entertainments, involving elaborate toilets, and strained efforts at conventional politeness, may be abandoned. Sundry responsibilities may be laid down; for nobody should be asked to do himself a permanent injury that others may not suffer a temporary discomfort or hardship. Something may even be done by abandoning the favourite chess, or the "strict game" of whist, and replacing them by a romp with the children. Resort during leisure to some handicraft which has been already perfectly mastered, is often a great boon. More than one woman of genius has acknowledged her obligations to "white seam."

BUT woe! woe! if help is sought from stimulants and narcotics. The delusive rest they give at first is soon followed by a condition in which no rest can be obtained except by semi-poisonous doses of the same deadly comforters.

LASTLY, we must give a few remarks on a rather large class of cases, well-known to all physicians, who are vainly seeking rest and finding none, because they never do honest work to earn it. To them the

Something accomplished, something done,  
Which earns a night's repose,

remains an unproved fact. Like "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," they are ever "sickening of a vague disease," whose plain name is "idleness." Every doctor can bear testimony that there is no class more intractable. He may even frankly tell such a patient that "she would be all right if she were a cottar's daughter," but she will not take the hint. Each day makes such cases more hopeless, for the powers of mind and body, which, if exerted, would save them, daily grow weaker and more difficult to rouse. Such people dabble dangerously in amateur philanthropic work, in anything which will excite their feelings and while away their time without claiming them in a straightforward, simple way of duty. Mere bodily exercise undoubtedly benefits them—a great French doctor cured many such by making them polish the floors—and lawn-tennis, etc., is now constantly recommended. But the root of the evil is not reached by such treatment, and it will soon crop up again. What is really needed is firm household discipline, which will insist that rest is earned, not by weariness merely after one's own pleasure, but by honest work which benefits the whole home-circle, and lightens the toil of others by relieving them from over-work. For it must ever remain true, even in this present life, that it is only the weary—weary through hard work and brave struggle with ignorance, folly, and sin—who can enter into "rest."

## Born to Bad Luck.

THE *Windsor Journal* gives the following history of an unlucky Vermonter:

He was a lad of seven years of age, and, doubtless without the knowledge of his parents, packed his skates under his arm and skipped over to the pond for an hour's sport. He broke through, and drifted some distance under the ice. Before he was extinct, however, he caught hold of an alder-bush in the water, bumped himself up through the ice, and escaped a watery grave.

At sixteen he enlisted in the army, and was shot at the very first skirmish. He came home, recovered, and went back into the service. At the battle of Malvern Hill a shell from the enemy's works landed between his feet and burst, blowing off his left hip and heel, and tearing to pieces his right leg, so that it had to be amputated, besides imbedding two bullets in his left foot, which remain there to this day. When the wounded were picked up the next day, this unfortunate was left on the field for dead, but while his comrades were pitching him into the trench with hundreds of others on that bloody field, they discovered that his corpse was alive, and carried him to the hospital, where he recovered.

On his return home he entered the medical department of one of the colleges, where he graduated, and soon afterwards located as a practising physician not far from Corinth, Vermont. One day, while riding out to see a patient, his horse took fright, throwing the doctor out of the buggy, stringing him all along the road for several rods. On calling together his scattered frame, he found three fingers on his right hand broken.

Not long after, while workmen were repairing his barn, a rafter came down endwise, striking the doctor on his hat. This caused uneasiness for several days.

The last exploit was in company with a friend making a professional call. He took his pipe out of his mouth, and put it in his overcoat-pocket. Passing a house on the way, the doctor remarked:

"Guess they are burning compost here."

Half a mile more, and another house and another remark: "They seem to be burning compost here, too."

The silence of another half-mile was broken by the doctor exclaiming: "I swow, I believe they are burning compost all along the road!"

Upon which he suddenly gave a jump, landing by the roadside in two feet of snow, while what was left of him seemed to be paying strict attention to his pipe-pocket.

## Teaching at Home.

### ENGLISH LITERATURE. PART I.

MANY people look upon the study of English literature as a subject which can be delayed till the pupil has reached a somewhat advanced age, and has made considerable progress in what are considered to be the more important branches of education. Such persons overlook the fact, that the pupils are not always inclined to await the teacher's pleasure in this matter. As soon as a child can read to amuse himself, he generally tries to get something to read, and just as M. Jourdain discovered he had been speaking prose all his life without knowing it, so the child begins to study literature with like unconsciousness; and it often seems left to chance, whether such literature shall be good, bad, or indifferent. It is as well to recognise the fact, that a child begins his acquaintance with English literature when he first reads, or is read to, and that a good deal depends on the direction given to these earliest studies.

ENGLISH teachers have an immense advantage over those of other countries in two respects. In the first place, no other language has such admirable children's books, and in no other tongue have so many eminent men thought it worth their while to write for children. Walter Scott has written a child's history of Scotland, and Dickens a child's history of England. Charles and Mary Lamb, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles Kingsley, and George MacDonald, have all written charming stories for children; and two masterpieces in their respective lines, which, if not written for children, have at least been completely adopted by them, are the works of Englishmen. I refer to "Robinson Crusoe," and "Pilgrim's Progress." So great, indeed, is the popularity of that last work, that not only has it been introduced into all the main languages of Europe, but a Roman Catholic edition of it has been arranged, where giant "Pope" is omitted, and replaced by giant "Heresy."

A STILL greater advantage to the young reader is the singular purity of the best English literature; you may read through a whole volume of Scott or Dickens to a party of boys and girls, without wishing to omit a single line. Anyone who has studied French and German fiction—is familiar, for instance, with Goethe and Victor Hugo—will understand how fortunate English children are in this respect.

It seems to me a great mistake to make the study of literature a lesson; it should be part of a child's life. It should be made the means of cultivating his taste, stimulating his imagination, and enlarging his sympathies. In our very artificial state of life, there is so much that we can only know through books, that a person who has no enjoyment from reading is almost like a person deprived of one of his senses. It is so natural, under our present circumstances, for people to take pleasure in books, that I think it is generally due to mismanagement or neglect, where we find them cut off from this source of enjoyment. For instance, how many people look with something almost like disgust on anything in the shape of poetry, and yet I never knew a little child—and I have known a great many—who was not fond of nursery rhymes.

FROM these beginnings the child passes on to the familiar English ballads; "Chevy Chase," "The Babes in the Wood," and "Barbara Allen," are all favourites with children. I have known little things of four and five pass away a wet afternoon in acting "Lord Lovel," and "Lady Nancy." Coventry Patmore's selection of poetry, "The Children's Garland," is a very good one, and some of its easier contents are suitable at this age, if a selection of poetry is used. But where it is possible, I think it is better to read the pieces from volumes containing the works of single authors. For instance, one evening you can take down a volume of Cowper from the bookcase, and read "John Gilpin," and "Boadicea," and "The Loss of the Royal George." Another time it may be Scott, and you pick out "Allan-a-Dale," or "Young Lochinvar," for your little audience; or Campbell, or Gay—of the fables—or Goldsmith, supplies the entertainment. The child gets accustomed to the look of the volumes, and feels there is something for him inside them. His ear gets accustomed to following and understanding poems written in various metres, and he will not hereafter find a difficulty in reading anything, because it happens to be in verse.



A FAVOURITE book with little children, is the one first-rate nursery classic which Germany has produced; I refer, of course, to the immortal "*Struwwelpeter*." The English translation is very well done, in fact quite equals the original; and the broadly comic pictures and verses help to rouse the child's sense of humour, a sense which is abundantly worth cultivating, especially in girls, who are too often deficient in it.

As a rule, children enjoy poetry much more when read aloud to them; sometimes the rhythm of a piece will please them, when you feel sure they can but very partially understand the meaning. I knew a child of nine, who learnt Milton's sonnet on the massacres in Piedmont, on account of the pleasure she derived from the sound of the words, in their magnificent roll. It may be made a great pleasure to a family of children if a short time in each day is set apart for reading aloud, especially if the time chosen is towards the end of the day, when they no longer want to run about, and are most inclined to sentiment.

It is a pity to keep a child to one type of fairy tale, as it is very interesting to notice the different folk-lore of the different nations. I was not long ago amused at hearing three children of about ten or twelve discussing a book new to them, "*Old Deccan Days*," and comparing these Indian fairy-tales with the German ones they already knew. It was surprising how many points of resemblance they found out, though they certainly had not read Max Müller, or heard of comparative mythology. Grimm's fairy-tales are the easiest to read of any, except Dasent's "*Tales from the Norse*," a most charming book, but, unluckily, rather a difficult one to get. These and Hans Andersen's delightful stories give a good idea of the northern fairy tales, while Cox's "*Greek Fairy Tales*," and Nathaniel Hawthorne's "*Wonder Book*," with its sequel of "*Tanglewood Tales*," give the best classical stories. Hawthorne's versions of the Greek legends form one of the prettiest children's books in existence. Hard, indeed, must the child be to please who does not appreciate the "*Golden Touch*" and the "*Chimæra*." Church's "*Stories from Homer*," particularly those from the *Odyssey*, can be thoroughly enjoyed by children of six and eight years old, and Kingsley's "*Heroes*" is also a favourite book; and I suppose no one will forget the great Oriental story-book, the "*Arabian Nights*." Of course it is not proposed to read all these books straight off to the same children, but they may be gradually introduced to them, a new set of fairy-tales always making a most acceptable present for birthdays or Christmas-time.

IN choosing books for children I think it a mistake selecting chiefly stories about other children, and especially about children leading the ordinary nursery and schoolroom life. It is a subject with which the young readers are already sufficiently acquainted; such books therefore do nothing towards enlarging their ideas, and are apt to foster self-consciousness, and a feeling in the children that they play a more important part in the world than is actually the case. Besides, the most charming characteristics of childhood, innocence and simplicity, cannot be appreciated by children, who, themselves innocent and simple, have happily had no sad experience of the lack of those qualities. I remember a lady who was much struck with the pathos of Wordsworth's "*We Are Seven*," and read the poem to her little daughter, expecting her to share her admiration. The child listened attentively, and, when her mother came to the end, remarked of Wordsworth's heroine, "*She was a very obstinate little girl.*"

STORIES of children in foreign countries or other times, are well worth reading; such books as Miss Martineau's "*Peasant and the Prince*," Miss Yonge's "*Little Duke*," and "*Little Lucy's Wonderful Globe*," Captain Marryat's "*Masterman Ready*," and "*Children of the New Forest*," all bring fresh scenes and ways of living before a child, and help to give great reality to what he learns in his history or geography lessons. "*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*," and its sequel, are universal favourites, and help to brighten up the nursery conversation amazingly, affording a perfect storehouse for quotation on all possible subjects. "*Dear me!*" I once heard a little six-year-old exclaim, who was reading about the Wars of the Roses to her aunt, "*how dreadfully fond they were of cutting off people's heads in those days!*" It's just like Alice in Wonderland, where the queen went stamping about the croquet-ground, and shouting out, "*Off with his head!*"

It may be objected that I have recommended a frivolous style of reading, and have not paid sufficient regard to "instructive" books. But children have as strong a desire for fiction to read as they have for sweet things to eat, and in both cases we shall do better, instead of denying them the food they crave, to see that the supply they get is a wholesome one.

If you come across anything interesting to children in your own reading, anecdotes of animals, curious national customs, or instances of personal bravery, it is an excellent plan to note the passage and read it out at the first opportunity. Also, wherever there is a family of children it is well, if possible, to take in an illustrated weekly paper. The sixpence a week spent on a *Graphic*, or *Illustrated London News* is an excellent educational investment, and it is no drawback if the paper is got at a reduced rate, from reading-room or club, a week or two after publication. With events happening all over the world, children get the opportunity of seeing pictures of all sorts of places,

and pick up a much better notion of geography than they get from the regular text-books. They also learn something of what is going on around them, and are enabled to take an intelligent interest in the subjects which they hear discussed among their elders. Poetry, fairy-tales, anecdotes, and a good illustrated paper, will give sufficient reading for the average child, up to about ten years of age, or till he passes into that more advanced stage where we no longer talk so much about "children," but begin to distinguish them as "boys" and "girls."

## Dr. Jackson.

MANY stories, for the veracity of which, however, we do not vouch, are told of Dr. Jackson, the retiring Bishop of Chester. He has always been remarkable for his genial temper, and Bishop Wilberforce said when first he met him, that "although he had often heard of the milk of human kindness he had never before seen the cow."

Nothing has ever induced Dr. Jackson to say an unkind word of anybody, and, as the following instances will show, he has a happy way of meeting every difficulty.

A new appointment had been made to a well-known Chester church, and at a dinner-party shortly afterwards the "new man" was the subject of conversation. The bishop said not a word until directly appealed to by a lady present.

"What do you think of the new vicar, my lord?"

"I think," replied his lordship, "that he is a middle-aged man."

Another story of a similar kind took its rise when the cathedral nave was re-opened. A certain dean, whose party leanings were a little undecided just then, was one of the special preachers. After service, two dignitaries were engaged in a little friendly criticism of the sermon in the chapter-house.

Said the first: "It struck me as being rather Low."

"How curious, now," said the other, "I thought it rather High;" and appealing to the bishop, who was present: "What did you think, my lord?"

"Why," replied his lordship, with a roguish sparkle in his eye, "I considered it rather long."

It is related that Archdeacon Denison once met him in "*Tom Quad*," and asked him what he thought of a well-known, but ephemeral High Church journal in which the pugnacious archdeacon was supposed to have a personal interest. "I think it is about the best-printed periodical I know," was the cautious but urbane reply of the wary Regius Professor, and this, so runs the legend, was about the nearest approach to a definite opinion on matters of current controversy that he was ever known to give.

## A Lion Story.

THE strength and courage of the lion is so great that, although he is seldom four feet in height, he is more than a match for fierce animals of three or four times his size, such as the buffalo. He will even attack a rhinoceros or an elephant, if provoked. He possesses such extraordinary muscular power, that he has been known to kill, and carry off in his mouth, a heifer of two years old, and after being pursued by herdsmen on horseback for five hours, it has been found that he scarcely ever allowed the body of the heifer to touch the ground during the whole distance. But here is an instance of strength in a man—a different sort of strength—which surpasses all we ever heard related of a lion:

Three officers in the East Indies—Captain Woodhouse, Lieutenant Delamain, and Lieutenant Laing—being informed that two lions had made their appearance in a jungle at some twenty miles distance from their cantonment, rode off in that direction to seek an engagement. They soon found the "lordly strangers," and killed one of the lions by their first fire, while the other retreated across the country. The officers pursued, until the lion, making an abrupt curve, returned to his jungle. They then mounted an elephant, and went in to search for him. They soon found him, standing under a bush, and looking directly towards them. He sought no conflict, but seeing them approach, he at once accepted the challenge, and sprang at the elephant's head, where he hung on. The officers fired; in the excitement of the onset their aim was defeated, and the lion was only wounded. The elephant, meanwhile, had shaken him off, and, not liking such an antagonist, refused to face him again. The lion did not follow, but stood waiting. At length the elephant was persuaded to advance once more; seeing which the lion became furious, and rushed to the contest. The elephant turned to retreat, and the lion sprang upon him from behind, grappled his flesh with teeth and claws, and again hung on. The officers again fired, while the elephant kicked with all his might; but, though the lion was dislodged he was still without mortal wound, and retired into the thicket, apparently content with what he had done in return for the assault. By this time the officers had become too excited to desist; and in the fever of the moment, as the elephant now directly refused to have anything more to do with

the business, Captain Woodhouse resolved to dismount, and go on foot into the jungle. Lieutenant Delamain and Lieutenant Laing dismounted also, and all three followed in the direction the lion had taken. They presently got sight of him, and Captain Woodhouse fired, but, seemingly, without doing him serious injury, as they saw the "mighty lord of the woods" retire deeper into the thicket "with the utmost composure."

They proceeded. Lieutenant Delamain got a shot at the lion. This was not to be longer endured, and forth came the lion, dashing right through the bushes that intervened, so that he was close upon them in no time. The two lieutenants were just able to escape out of the jungle to re-load, but Captain Woodhouse could only stand quietly on one side, hoping the animal would pass him unobserved. But this was too much to expect after all he had done. The lion darted upon him, and in an instant, "as though by a stroke of lightning," the rifle was broken and knocked out of his hand, and he found himself in the grip of the irresistible enemy whom he had challenged to mortal combat. Lieutenant Delamain fired at the lion, but without killing him, and then again retreated to re-load. Meantime, Captain Woodhouse and the lion were both lying wounded on the ground, the lion crunching his arm. In this dreadful position, Captain Woodhouse had the presence of mind, and the great fortitude, in the horrible pain he was enduring, to lie perfectly still—knowing that if he made any resistance, he would be torn to pieces. Finding all motion had ceased, the lion let the arm drop from his mouth, and quietly crouched down with his paws on the thigh of his prostrate antagonist. Presently Captain Woodhouse, finding his head in a painful position, unthinkingly raised one hand to support it, whereupon the lion again seized his arm, and crunched it higher up. Once more, notwithstanding the intense agony, and yet more intense apprehension of momentary destruction, Captain Woodhouse had the strength of will and self-command to lie perfectly still. He remained thus, until his friends, discovering his situation, were hastening up, but upon the wrong side, for it was possible that their balls might pass through the lion, and hit him. Without moving, or manifesting any hasty excitement, he was heard to say in a low voice, "To the other side! To the other side!" They hurried round. Next moment the magnanimous lion lay dead by the side of a yet stronger nature than his own.

## Household Gardening.

As the easiest of all methods of raising a number of plants for furnishing gardens attractively in the summer is by obtaining them from seed, and as this is the very best season for sowing, we may usefully point out a few of the most suitable annuals for different purposes of decoration. Not a few persons are prejudiced against annuals, because they are under the impression that the flowers cannot be used for vase decoration nor bouquets. Several of them are not suitable for those purposes, but others are, as we will endeavour to show in our brief selection.

### ANNUALS FOR CUTTING.

Annuals, as a rule, while exceedingly pretty when seen growing in masses, are not considered valuable for affording flowers that can be cut and arranged in bouquets and vases with advantage. Of some kinds the flowers are individually small, yet so numerous as to be highly effective as seen on the plant, whereas, severed from it, they do not compel admiration; others, though large enough to show to advantage singly, soon lose their freshness when placed in a bouquet or even in a glass containing water; still there are a few, apart from the indispensable Sweet Peas and Mignonette, that are well adapted for the purpose in question.

### CENTAUREAS.

These constitute a very large and varied genus of plants. The name is a classical one, applied to a plant fabled by Ovid to have cured a wound in the foot of Chiron, one of the Centaurs or wild horse breakers of Thessaly, but it is only to one of the species of these plants that our remarks will be directed, namely, to *Centaurea cyanus*, commonly known as the Cornflower or Bluebottle.

This plant grows about two feet high, and produces single flowers about the size of a halfpenny, the petals more or less crimped or fringed, and of a clear, lovely blue colour. So prized are they for room and table decoration, that they are grown by the acre and sold by the cartload in penny bunches during the season in the flower-markets of London and other large cities and towns, yet any one who has a plot of ground in a fairly open situation may grow a few plants of this easily grown and popular annual.

A packet of seed can be had for a few pence, and it only needs to be sown in patches or drills, as previously described, and the plants are sure to appear in two or three weeks. As soon as they can be handled they must, if close together—be thinned out so that they remain about three inches apart; they will then grow strongly and afford a supply of flowers for cutting for many weeks.

### CHRYSANTHEMUM SEGETUM.

As a clear yellow companion to the above plant this is one of the best that can be grown. It is perfectly hardy, indeed a wild plant in some districts, where it is occasionally found growing in moist positions in corn-fields, hence its popular name of Corn Marigold; yet

the flower is very unlike that of a Marigold, and has still less resemblance to those grand double Chrysanthemums that are so striking in the autumn.

*Chrysanthemum Segetum*, or the Corn Marigold, bears single, flat, and quite round flowers from one to two inches in diameter, and they have been exceedingly fashionable during the past two or three years for using in a cut state.

The plants are of the easiest possible culture, the seed only requiring to be sown in rich soil in the open garden, and the seedlings thinned out to six inches apart to grow sturdily and flower abundantly. The colour of the flower is clear spotless yellow, and they are borne on the summit of the stems that attain a height of about two feet. A packet of seed can be obtained for sixpence, and the present is the time of sowing.

### TRICOLOR CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

Similar in form to the above, yet abundantly distinct and very beautiful, are a few annual garden varieties now to be noticed. The term tricolor is applied to them because the flowers of the original species has three colours, white, crimson, and yellow in concentric rings.

The varieties now offered are represented in two or three colours, and they are very rich and striking. To the great flower-seed growers, Messrs. Carters and Co., of High Holborn, the credit is due of improving these plants and raising new sorts at their flower-farms in Essex.

A trio of the newer kinds that are richly coloured is formed of W. E. Gladstone, rich crimson; Lord Beaconsfield, crimson and gold, and the Sultan, maroon and yellow; the older variety, Burridgeanum, white, crimson, and yellow, is also well worth growing. The plants grow from two to three feet high, and like rich soil and copious supplies of water in the summer. Sow the seed as soon as possible, covering it half an inch deep, and thin out the plants as above recommended.

### DWARF CONVULVULUSES.

Few annuals produce flowers that are more effective than these when tastefully arranged in vases or glasses containing water; they are trumpet-shaped, two inches in diameter, and vary in colour from rosy-white to the richest violet-purple imaginable. Although the individual flowers do not last long when cut, yet others expand when the stalks are kept in water. The different varieties can be had in a mixed packet; but the sort known as Splendens is perhaps the richest, and a packet of that is well worth purchasing separately.

The plants grow a foot high, are of a slightly trailing habit, and require no sticks to support them. The seed being rather large, needs only to be sown thinly, as, if the plants are six inches apart, they will quite cover the ground; but allowance must be made for accidents, as every seed may not vegetate, while slugs will, perhaps, want a taste of some of the plants; they, however, attack these less voraciously than they do many others, which is an advantage in gardens in which these pests abound.

These seeds should be sown now, and covered an inch deep, the sowing of the beautiful Climbing Convolvulus being better deferred for three weeks unless placed in pots in a frame.

### ESCHSCHOLTZIAS.

The bright, funnel-shaped flowers of this old favourite plant have been in great demand for room decoration recently, their peculiar form and bright colour rendering them conspicuous. The colour of the best known variety, *Crocea*, is rich orange, the newer sort, *Mandarin*, being of a bronzy-scarlet hue; there are also white and rose-coloured kinds, very chaste and pretty; but the brighter colours are the more popular. The seeds, being very small, must not be covered a quarter of an inch deep, and they are best sown in the open ground, where the plants are desired to flower, thinning them out to prevent overcrowding, as advised for *Centaureas*.

### CANDYTUFTS.

Precisely similar treatment will be suitable for these, which grow and flower freely in any ordinarily fertile soil, and produce their trusses abundantly, these being admirably adapted for either bouquets or vases. The plants are of dwarf compact growth and cover themselves with lilac, purplish crimson, and white flowers, according to the sort that may be grown; the two last-named being perhaps the most effective and worthy of a place in all borders of mixed flowers.

### VENUS'S LOOKING-GLASS.

This is very attractive in habit, in height about a foot, similar to the preceding, the flowers, which are yielded in profusion, being of a deep glossy blue colour, not exceeded in richness by those of any other annual. The plants are exceedingly pretty amongst others in the front of a flower border next a path or lawn. The seeds being small should be sown as advised for *Eschscholtzias*, and the plants thinned out, leaving them three inches apart.

### PRUNING ROSES.

All roses that need pruning must be attended to at once. The long shoots have pushed fresh growths several inches in length, but below these, towards the base of the branches, will be found some dormant buds. To these the shoots may be shortened, and the sleeping buds will awake at once, push strong growths rapidly, and as these will probably escape injury by late frosts, will, in due time, produce beautiful blooms, assuming that the plants are healthy, and are well-supported with liquid manure if the soil is not rich, the Rose rejoicing in liberal fare.

# Odds and Ends.

A LONG list might be made of men who have owed their advancement in life to a smart answer given at the right moment. One of Napoleon's veterans, who survived his master many years, was wont to recount with great glee how he had once picked up the Emperor's cocked hat at a review, when the latter, not noticing that he was a private, said carelessly: "Thank you, captain." "In what regiment, sire?" instantly asked the ready-witted soldier. Napoleon, perceiving his mistake, answered with a smile: "In my Guard, for I see you know how to be prompt." The newly-made officer received his commission next morning. A somewhat similar anecdote is related of Marshal Souvarof, who, when receiving a despatch from the hands of a Russian sergeant who had greatly distinguished himself on the Danube, attempted to confuse the messenger by a series of whimsical questions, but found him fully equal to the occasion: "How many fish are there in the sea?" asked Souvarof. "All that are not caught yet," was the answer. "How far is it to the moon?" "Two of your excellency's forced marches." "What would you do if you saw your men giving way in battle?" "I'd tell them that there was a wagon-load of whisky just behind the enemy's line." Baffled at all points, the marshal ended with: "What is the difference between your colonel and myself?" "My colonel cannot make me a lieutenant, but your excellency has only to say the word." "I say it now, then," answered Souvarof; "and a right good officer you'll be."

AN Irishman is often an "original" in arriving at a result. A jolly set of Irishmen, boon companions and sworn brothers, had made up their minds to wend their way to America. There were five in number—two Patricks, one Murphy, one Dennis, and one Teague. It so happened that the vessel they were to go in could only carry four of them. At length honest Teague exclaimed: "I have it. We'll cast lots to see who shall remain." But one of them declared that it was anything but genteel to do that sort of thing. "You know, Teague," he said, "that I am an arithmetician, and I can work it out by subtraction, which is a great deal better. But you must all agree to abide by the figures." All having pledged themselves to do so, Pat proceeded: "Well, then, Pat from Pat you can't, that's very certain. But take Dennis from Murphy is easy enough, and you will find that Teague remains. Teague, my jewel, and it's you that'll have to stay behind." Poor Teague was therefore bound to acquiesce in this remarkably novel decision.

FRIDAY is regarded by a great many people as unlucky. But see what America has to thank this day for. Friday, Columbus sailed on his voyage of discovery. Friday, ten weeks after, he discovered America. Friday, Henry III. of England gave John Cabot his commission, which led to the discovery of North America. Friday, St. Augustine, the oldest town in the United States, was founded. Friday, the Mayflower, with the pilgrims, arrived at Plymouth; and on Friday they signed that august compact, the forerunner of the constitution. Friday, George Washington was born. Friday, Bunker Hill was seized and fortified. Friday, the surrender of Saratoga was made. Friday, Cornwallis surrendered Yorktown, and on Friday the motion was made in Congress that the united colonies were, and by right ought to be, free and independent.

MR. DUMLEY was making an evening call, and Bobby, who was allowed to sit up a little later than usual, put to him the following question: "Mr. Dumley, do you want to make five pounds in ten minutes?" "Do I want to make five pounds in ten minutes?" laughed the young man. "Certainly I do. But how can I make five pounds in ten minutes, Bobby?" "Mamma will give it to you. She told papa that she would give five pounds to see you hold your tongue for ten minutes."

DURING Her Majesty's sojourn in the vicinity of Loch Vennachar, some years ago, the Princess Louise had occasion to drive into Callender to match some velvet. She procured it at the shop of a draper in the place, but on rising to leave was annoyed to find she had not her purse with her, and, begging the draper's pardon, told him she would send him the money next day. "Dinna fash yersel, mem," said the imperturbable tradesman. "Yer mither has an account here."

A MARRIED man falling into misfortune is more apt to retrieve his situation in the world than a single one, chiefly because his spirits are soothed and relieved by domestic endearments, and self-respect kept alive by finding that, although abroad be darkness and humiliation, yet there is still a little world of love at home, of which he is monarch. Whereas a single man is apt to run to waste and self-neglect—to fall to ruins like some deserted mansions, for want of inhabitants.

DURING the Reign of Terror the mob got hold of the Abbé Maury, and resolved to hang him. "To the lamp-post with him!" was the universal cry. The abbé was in a bad fix with a mob for his judges—the tender mercies of a mob! With the utmost coolness the abbé said to those who were dragging him along: "Well, if you hang me to the lamp-post, will you see any clearer for it?" This bright sally tickled his would-be executioners and saved his life.

A SOLDIER boasted to Julius Caesar of the many wounds he had received in the face. Caesar, knowing him to be a coward, said to him: "The next time you run away, you had better take care how you look behind you."

WHEN a book raises your spirits and inspires you with noble and courageous feelings, seek no other rule to judge the book by. It is good, and made by a good workman.

A FIRM faith is the best divinity; a good life the best philosophy; a clear conscience the best law; honesty the best policy; and temperance the best physic.

PHILOSOPHY easily triumphs over the misfortunes that are past, and over those that are to come; but the trials of the present triumph over her.

WHETHER happiness may come or not, one should try and prepare one's self to do without it.

THE truest mark of being born with great qualities is being born without envy.

No man flatters the woman he truly loves.

"FATHER," said a youth of tender years and sympathetic nature, as he paused for a moment before dipping into the bread pudding which formed the dessert of his dinner yesterday, "father, I wish the cook wouldn't use the bread to make it up into puddings; why don't she crumble it up and throw it out to the poor birds?" "But," responded his more practical sire, "that would prevent you from having any bread-pudding, which you like so much." "But the poor birds," said the tender-hearted boy; "I am afraid they will starve." "Yes," returned the parent, "but if you have no pudding you may starve yourself. If you should throw away your food to the birds, and then find that you were hungry yourself, what would you do?" The boy was silent for a moment, then his face brightened, a touch of his father's practicality illumined his eye: "Why, then," he said softly, "couldn't we go out and kill the birds?"

THE most practical lover has been discovered at Bristol. In one of his letters to his sweetheart he wrote: "I wish, my darling, that you would not write me such long letters. If you were to bring an action for breach of promise against me, the lawyers would copy the correspondence between us, and charge fourpence for every folio of seventy-two words. The shorter the letters, the more we save from the lawyers." And yet he was not a lawyer.

It is recorded of a rich old farmer that in giving instructions for his will he directed a legacy of one hundred pounds to be given to his wife. Being informed that some distinction was usually made in case the widow married again, he doubled the sum, and, when told that this was quite contrary to custom, he said, with heartfelt sympathy for his possible successor: "Aye, but him as gets her'll deserve it."

"ALL this hard wood you export," the English tourist asked the Indiana lumberman, "all this maple and beech, you know, where does it go?" And the man told him that most of it went direct to Scotland, where it was worked up into boxes, and churns, and paper folders from the rafters of Burns's cottage and the home of Sir Walter Scott. And the tourist said "Haw," and wrote something in his note-book.

BARON VON S., who was addicted to the use of spirituous liquor, labelled his hunting-flask with the word "Poison" in large letters to keep off intruders. One day he detected the groom in the act of taking a vigorous pull at the said flask. "Fellow," he exclaimed, "can't you read? Don't you see that it is poison?" "Yes, but I—I—I couldn't bear the thought of outliving your honour."

"THAT poor fellow," said a temperance orator, pointing to a cripple, "owes his dilapidated condition to whisky." "You are wrong," said a bystander. "That man is paralysed, and I am certain he never drank." "Oh, that really makes no difference in my argument," rejoined the orator, "for if he had been addicted to drink he would have been paralysed sooner."

AT one of Mr. Henry George's recent lectures, that worthy had his watch snatched as he neared the door of the hall. The lecturer on progress, poverty, the rights of the people, etc., etc., was thunderstruck at the liberty taken with his property, and shouted: "Somebody has stolen my watch." "Say, rather, nationalised it," said the voice of a wag in the crowd.

"JAMES," said a national schoolmaster to his pupil, "what is an average?" "A thing, sir," answered the scholar promptly, "that liens lay eggs upon." "Why do you say that, you silly boy?" asked the pedagogue. "Because, sir," said the youth, "I heard a gentleman say the other day as a hen would lay, on an average, a hundred and twenty eggs a year."

"NEPHEW," said a farmer to a lop-sided youth, who had been quartered on him for the last six weeks, and resisted all gentle hints that his stay had been prolonged quite sufficiently, "I am afraid you'll never come to see me again." "Why, uncle, how can you say so? Don't I come to see you every winter?" "Yes, but I'm afraid you'll never go away!"

MAGISTRATE: "You assert that you each have an occupation. State them." First Vagrant: I am a renovator of secondhand toothpicks, your honour. Second Vagrant: "And I am engaged in the business of smoking glass for the observation of eclipses, which in some measure accounts for my frequent periods of prolonged leisure."

AN Irish lawyer having addressed the Court as "gentlemen" instead of "yer honours," after he had concluded, a brother of the bar reminded him of his error. He immediately rose and apologised thus: "May it please the Court, in the haste of debate I called yer honours gentlemen. I made a mistake, yer honours." The speaker then sat down.

AN old Dutch tavern-keeper, who had his third wife, thus expressed his views of matrimony: "Vell, you see, de first time I married for love; dat vas goot; then I married for beauty; dat was goot too, about as do first; dis time I married for money, and dis is petter as poth."

A FORLORN-LOOKING man said: "I've tried everything I could turn my hand to, but couldn't make anything answer; and now I have decided to go up among the hills where they say there's a wonderful echo, to see if I can make that answer."

A NOTED wag in a college, one morning read a theme of unusual merit. The president being suspicious, asked pointedly if it was original. "Why, yes, sir," was the reply. "It had 'original' over it in the paper I copied it from."

"How is the earth divided?" asked a pompous examiner, who had already worn out the patience of the class. "By earthquakes," replied one boy, after which the examiner found that he had had enough of that class.

A JEWELLER, being sent to prison, said to the turnkey: "If you let me out, I'll sell your watch for you to good advantage." "No, no," responded the turnkey; "instead of letting you sell my watch, I'll watch your cell."

ENGLISH nobleman to Highland gillie somewhat deficient in English, and whose father had been a weaver: "What occupation did your father follow, Mac?" Gillie: "My father was a spider, my lort, he was."

"Do you know a good way of curing hams?" asked a man of his neighbour. "Oh yes," was the reply; "but the trouble with me is, I have no way of procuring them."

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### QUESTIONS.

ALASELEY will be glad to know where he can find a poem entitled "Archie Dean."

ALVERSTOCKE writes: "Can anyone tell me the remaining verses of the hymn which begins the first verse:

"Saviour and Lord accept the vow  
I offer in Thy presence now;  
With thoughtful heart and trembling fear,  
My contrite spirit ventures near."

H. J. writes: "Could you tell me where the following may be found, and by whom written?

"When Fate has bid our drama stop,  
And Life's last scene is o'er,  
And Death has let the curtain drop,  
And we can play no more:  
Then who played king, and who  
Played peasant, will not be the test;  
The only question then will be,  
Who played his part the best?"

### ANSWERS.

E. A. F.—We are not able to name the flower from the crushed scrap sent. A hint as to whether it is hardy or tender, dwarf or tall, might possibly have led to its identification, and then the treatment the plant needs could have been given.

HILDA C.—1. To give a list of things in season for each month in the year would occupy too much space in this column, and you can get it in almost any cookery-book. "Little Dinners," by Mary Hooper (Paul, Trench, and Co.), 2s. 6d., has menus for every month. 2. The following is Gouffé's recipe for "Epigrammes of Lamb," with Asparagus Peas. It is an excellent dish and not difficult to do. "Take two necks of lamb; saw off the breasts, and trim and cut the cutlets; remove the tendons of the two breasts; tie the latter together, and braize them in some general stock with an onion (with two cloves stuck in it), and a faggot added. When the meat is done, drain and take out all the bones; keep as many as there are cutlets, to add to the breasts when trimmed; sprinkle the meat with salt, and press it between two dishes till cold; then cut both the breasts of lamb in pieces, the size and shape of the cutlets; spread some reduced Allemande-sauce over these pieces, and bread-crumbs them; then egg and bread-crumbs them again. Cut the bones kept for that purpose, to a point at one end, and stick one in each piece of breast so as to represent a cutlet. Fry them in hot fat and drain them. Dip the neck cutlets in clarified butter; set them in a saucepan; pour on a little more clarified butter, and fry them till they are done. Dish the cutlets and the breast cutlets, alternately, round a croustade filled with asparagus peas, and serve with a boat of Béchamel-sauce." In the event of its not being convenient to follow the recipe and prepare a croustade, or fried bread-case, the cutlets can be dished with the asparagus peas in a little heap in the middle.

JOSÉ.—1. No such enquiry as that you refer to in your letter has reached us previously. An answer shall be given next week. 2. The following is a well-tried recipe for Lemon Paste, which, if stored in a cool, dry place, will keep for twelve months: A pound of finely powdered sugar, four ounces of butter, six eggs, four lemons. Put the butter into a clean bright stewpan, melt, but do not oil it, stir in the sugar, then add the strained juice of the lemons and the grated peel, and when the sugar is dissolved add the eggs, beaten for two minutes and strained. Stir the paste over a slow fire until it becomes as thick as honey, and when done put it into small jam-pots, cover down, and set aside for future use. The paste can, of course, if required, be used as soon as made.

LONDON FANCIER.—1. You cannot do better than get "Notes on Cage Birds," edited by W. T. Green, M.D., published by L. Upcott Gill. 2. It is very likely that it is the fusty seed which has disagreed with your birds. Good seed never smells musty, and is known by the pearly appearance of the husk, freedom from dust, which often induces lung complaints, weight, and sweetness when a few grains are chewed in the mouth. Maw, or white poppy, seed contains a considerable quantity of oil; is consequently fattening, and must be given sparingly; it is more suitable for winter than summer feeding. 3. We have used the following recipe for German-paste for many years, and always found it answer well: One pint of pea-meal, two ounces of maw-seed, a quarter of a pint of bruised hemp-seed, one ounce of coarse sugar, with two ounces of treacle, and two ounces of lard made hot and poured hot over the other ingredients. Mix well together, and when cold put the paste into a jar.

LONDON SPARROW.—"Gladys," to whom we are much obliged, writes that you will find the quotation in Tennyson's "Geraint and Enid" ("Idylls of the King"):

Oh, purblind race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour

Do forge a lifelong trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true!  
Here, through the feeble twilight of this world,  
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen.

PERPLEXED.—1. It is pronounced both "Káy-pel," accent on first syllable, and "Kép-pel," accent also on first syllable; the first pronunciation holds good in "Capel-cure" and "Capel Molyneux," which are "Káy-pel"—the second in "Capel-Curig," which is "Kép-pel Kerry." 2. Pronounced "Weston-super-Mary." 3. Pronounce it "Hugh-en-den," accent on first syllable. 4. There is practically no difference now; but originally the rector received the large tithes, and might be a layman. 5. The vicar received the small tithes, and was perforce in holy orders. 6. A perpetual curate was incumbent of a benefice without being either rector or vicar, but an Act passed some years ago made most perpetual curates vicars or rectors. 7. We are not aware that the name is pronounced so in any other case. 8. We believe the word means much the same, with perhaps a reference more especially to the higher classes.

Q IN A CORNER.—What in England is called a bun, would in Scotland be described as a cookie. From the frequent appearance of these articles at tea-parties, the latter are irreverently spoken of as "cookie shimes."

Q. Y.—No one who is acquainted with the laws of optics can entertain the question of objective vision being possible without any light at all. We say that cats, owls, and other animals see in the dark, the fact being that their organs of sight are so constructed as to allow of their discerning feebly in a very trifling amount of illumination, objects which, to human eyes, would be invisible. But let any nocturnal animal be absolutely deprived of all light whatever, and its faculty of vision is at once totally suspended. "No light, no sight," is an axiom which admits of no dispute.

R. P.—The best known type-writer is the Remington, and, great as are its merits, it is both bulky and expensive; it cannot be easily carried from place to place, and it costs twenty guineas. Messrs. Witherby, of 325A, High Holborn, may claim the credit of having introduced from America a new type-writer, which is both cheap and portable. This is known as "the Hall," and we believe that it has already attained considerable popularity in the United States. The principle of this beautiful little machine is that the letters are all arranged on a small plate, not more than two inches square, which is struck by a kind of finger, working on a complex lever. The whole machine, with its case, weighs under eight pounds, and it may be used in any position, on a desk or in a railway-carriage, and the cost is £8 8s. The speed is inferior to that of the Remington machine, but a practised hand can achieve from thirty to forty words a minute, which is a good deal faster than most people can write. The plate is fitted with capitals and small letters, stops, numerals, etc.; and the manner in which the machine is finished seems to leave nothing to be desired.

TIMID SOUL.—It may be dangerous, but it cannot be unlucky, to walk under a ladder. Probably the idea took its rise in the structures and formalities of the old gallows at Tyburn, where there was no platform, but to which the culprit ascended by a ladder, which was afterwards withdrawn. The application of what was rather a coarse joke than a superstition being lost, people still go on doing what their fathers did before them.

VÉRITÉ.—Apply to Messrs. Colnaghi, Pall Mall East.

WONDER WHY.—There was formerly some little contempt felt for a marine by a sailor, who used to say he was a "Gulpin," that is, a person who will swallow anything; hence probably the saying, "Tell that to the marines." An empty bottle was unkindly styled a marine. It is related that King William the Fourth once said at table, "Take that marine away." A marine officer who was present asked for an explanation. "Sir," replied the King, getting ingeniously out of the difficulty, "it has done its duty, and is willing to do it again."

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—*Shakespeare.*

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 155.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Drifted to Harbour.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

A STILL, calm Sabbath evening. The placid waters of the bay touched by the red sunlight. The rugged cliffs, crowned by dark firs, sharply defined against the mellow sky. An uneven sweep of sand and shingles, where flocks of geese and wild ducks congregate. A row of fishing-boats pulled up high and dry, others lying almost motionless in the shallow water, some distance from the shore. Far beyond, on the horizon, the faint green outline of the island of Nargon.

Borne on the silent air, came the tones of a woman's voice, at first vague, now dying on the ear, now rising and swelling, until the melody of the old Lutheran hymn could be distinguished:

A tower of strength my God art thou.

The singer was at first hidden from view, as she descended the dry, stony bed, which the fury of many storms had torn in their descent to the sea. Then she emerged, sending her song before her, clothed in the soft melodious language of Estonia.

Her tall, girlish form was clad in the short homespun petticoat and white cotton blouse worn by the Estonian peasant-women; her only adornment was the silver chain, with curiously-wrought amulet, round her neck. Her feet and head were bare, yet she walked swiftly over the rough shingles, like one accustomed, whilst her nimble fingers were employed on a large, coarse stocking. Her quick blue eyes seemed to take in sea, and sky, and fir-clad heights, yet her whole soul was in her song. There was glad young life in the lithe, upright figure, the glowing cheek, and coral lip, and she was as fair as the sloe-blossom which lends its grace to her native land. She wore her flaxen hair in a thick plait, reaching below her waist, and tied with a knot of blue ribbon.

At the edge of the water she paused, and watched a diver swoop down and plunge below the surface; then she looked about for a seat amongst the bleached stones. Suddenly a bright idea flashed up into her eyes as she gathered up her skirt, and began wading towards a boat lying far out in the bay.

The tiny fish darted away in shoals at every step. A light breeze swept by and rocked the boat, making it drift to the length of the cable, with which it was attached to one of the many jagged rocks cropping up out of the water, and this made her show a row of pearly teeth. Soon it was gained, and nestling down amongst the dry nets, Brida Rasik gave herself up to the luxury of idleness.

Out burst a hymn again, full and sweet, then the voice ceased. A solemn stillness fell on earth and sea. The sun glowed out in one last departing blush, and silently dipped into the sea. The girl had turned her sweet young face towards the west; her head was pillowed on the nets. Her ears were full of slumberous sounds: the whirr of wings, the soft, low lisps of the water, the hum of innumerable insects above in the air. And as the brighter lights died slowly from the sky, Brida's drowsy eyelids quivered and fell, Dimmer and fainter grew sight and sound, and she slept.

### CHAPTER II.

DARKNESS had fallen. With the sunset a breeze had arisen; it rocked the boat in which the unconscious girl lay. Higher it rose. The boat shivered and creaked as if impatient of restraint. A lull and a sudden jerk, and it was slowly drifting with trailing cable into the night.

Time sped upon swift wings. It must have been midnight when Brida awoke. With a start, and a sudden wave of terror, she sat up and gazed around her. Nothing met her view but black water, and, above, the stars.

In a moment the truth flashed upon her—she was drifting! Perhaps out to sea to meet exposure, starvation, and awful death! Oh, it was terrible!

The wind swept past her with a moan, and now fresh terrors took possession of her. If a storm should arise? It was rising, and she was lost!

She sank back and covered her face with her hands. To die all alone! Not even to sleep in the quiet churchyard beside her mother, but somewhere, far down, where the sun never shone, beneath

the dark, angry waters. They would never know what had become of her. She looked up at the sky. The stars returned her gaze with a thousand glittering eyes; they looked cruel and cold. There was no hope there.

Oh, if it were only day! She would rather die in the sunlight. The stars glittered, but they gave no light. She shut her eyes and tried to say her prayers, but the words would not come, and she could only repeat: "Oh, dear Heaven, do not let me die! do not let me die!"

How long the fearful night was! Would the morning never dawn? It was so cold! She shivered in her thin cotton blouse. Far, far away the hooting of an owl reached her ear; the sound brought with it a little comfort. She was still in the bay. If the day would come they would surely miss the boat, and come in search of it, and save her; but she would have to wait and tremble, long, long. She lay back, trying to shut out thought, and wait with patience.

Suddenly the wind rose, and shrieked like a human being in distress, and the waters whispered mysteriously. Was it the spirits of the drowned fishermen come to whisper to her their dread secrets? Poor Brida's heart died within her. They were rising out of the water. They were closing round her, and bearing her down. A rushing noise as of many waves clapping together, then all was blank.

### CHAPTER III.

HIGH up on the shore of the island of Nargon stands a long, low house against a dark-green background of firs. It is strongly built of logs, with thatched roof and overhanging gables, where the swallows brood. To the right a bridle-path leads into the wood, on the outskirts of which a rough arbour has been reared with benches and a table. Swings dangle from the branches of the neighbouring trees, and close to the house stand a couple of spring-boards. The grass, which shows sparingly amongst the sand, is much trodden down, for this is the school-house.

The autumn day was just breaking when the door opened, and a young man stepped over the threshold. From his dress, he might have been an Estonian farmer, with his suit of grey homespun, broad-brimmed felt hat, and high water-boots; yet his pale, thoughtful face and white hands belied this. A casual observer would have called the rough-hewn features plain, but those who knew the schoolmaster of Nargon, and had seen his face light up and glow with intelligence and sagacity, might have pronounced him handsome. There was gentleness in the depth of his quiet grey eyes, and a firmness of mouth which spoke of culture and self-discipline. It was a face, whether handsome or plain, on which the eye dwelt with pleasure.

Quickly he descended the beach to take his morning dip in the sea, drawing in deep draughts of the powerful resinous odour as he went. He unfastened his boat from its moorings, and pushed from shore. Pulling lustily at his oars, he let his eyes stray with untiring pleasure from the pleasant land, smiling in the morning sunrise, to the dancing wavelets around him. Presently his observation was attracted by a dark object lying close in under the overhanging banks, farther up the coast.

It was an empty boat, he concluded. Who could have landed there? was his next thought. No one, he at once decided. The shore at that part of the island had been undermined by the constant wash of the tide, making it impossible for anyone to have landed there.

The boat must have drifted there without a guide. Some poor fellows had found a watery grave. Such things were of frequent occurrence. He rowed towards it with thoughtful face, and was soon alongside, and there—his eyes could scarcely credit it—there, stretched on the nets at the bottom of the boat, lay a young girl, to all appearances, dead. Her long flaxen hair, moist with the sea breeze, lay like a tangled mass of silken threads. Her eyes were closed.

To fasten the boats together and row to the landing was the work of a few minutes. No time must be lost. Life might not be extinct, and, as he looked at the pale fair face, an intense longing seized him to snatch this one young life from the jaws of death.

Up the beach he carried the lifeless burden with swift steps. No use to seek assistance; the nearest homestead was a mile distant, so he bore her straight to his home, and laying her on his bed, fell to work with terrible energy, chafing the numbed hands and feet, and forcing brandy between the frozen lips.

In vain. The marble face remained cold and still. Then she was dead, this sweet young thing! So young and beautiful, she had passed the grim portals of the unknown. They would come and take away the fair body, and put it down into the black earth. He could not bear the thought. The tears rushed to his eyes as he bent over her with yearning regret.



Was it fancy? Surely the eyelids quivered?

He fell on his knees and gazed with bated breath and fast beating heart. All was still; the long lashes rested as before on the marble cheeks—motionless. He covered his eyes with his hands. "Thy will be done!" he murmured, and—he could not help it—though she was nothing to him, the tears of bitter disappointment fell thick and fast through his fingers. He would have fain restored this tender blossom. She was so young and beautiful to die.

Was that a sigh? It could not be. He must have been again deceived, yet he listened with straining ear. He dared not look, but knelt on with covered eyes. He was not wrong this time. She had moved, he felt it. He looked up quickly, straight into a pair of startled, wide-open, blue eyes. In a moment he was on his feet, the blood rushing to his face, dyeing it to the roots of his tawny hair. Self-conscious, awkward, embarrassed, he stood, without uttering a word, waiting for her to speak.

At first Brida looked about her with perplexed gaze. Where was she? It came upon her with a rush.

The boat drifting on under the pitiless stars, through long hours of terror. Then unconsciousness.

"How did I come here?" she said at length. "Where did you find me? Where am I?" She attempted to rise, but a sudden faintness made her sink back and close her eyes.

This brought the schoolmaster to himself at once.

"You need food," he said. "Do not attempt to rise until I have made you some warm tea."

Brida was too much exhausted to do other than obey, and when the young man entered shortly with steaming tea and a large slice of black bread and sweet butter, he found his charge in a profound sleep.

"I will not disturb her," he muttered. "Sleep will do her good."

He drew forward a small table, and placed the food upon it where she would see it when she awoke. Then for a moment he allowed his eyes to rest on the sleeping girl.

How fair she was! He had never seen anything so perfectly lovely. Surely the look was pardonable?

But he suddenly started like one caught trespassing; his face burned and glowed like a woman's, as he hastily left the room.

Half an hour later he was standing in the long, low schoolroom, amongst his boys. They stood in rows before him, shock-headed, heavy-featured, with sunburnt faces, dressed to a boy in grey homespun, and smelling of peat and tanned leather.

An hour passed amid the droning of voices, the schoolmaster mechanically chalking figures on a blackboard, explaining, correcting, listening.

At the close of the lesson there was a pause of five minutes. He stole out to the door of the room in which the young girl lay. There was not a sound, so he went softly back again to his work.

Another hour of application. The room had grown insupportably hot. He threw open the casement and let the cool sea-breeze blow on his heated temples. His eyes rested on the landscape without, but he saw as in a dream, and everywhere blue eyes looked out at him from beneath long flaxen locks.

The boys had burst from the house, and the schoolmaster was alone. Now he must indeed go and see whether his guest slept. If awake, she would have questions to ask. She would want to go home. At this thought a pang shot through his heart. She had a home, and friends of whom he knew nothing. She would soon be gone to them, and he would see her no more. He did not even know her name. What a fool he was! He would bring it to an end at once. And with compressed lips he put his hand upon the latch.

A woman's voice arrested him, singing softly within. Again that pang which almost took his breath away, and without allowing thought the mastery, he entered quickly.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE room was full of sunshine. His room had never looked so bright and habitable before. The varnished chairs were neatly arranged, the painted floor was clean swept, and the plants he had brought in the previous evening and left in a litter on the table, were carefully laid together in a little heap. The bedroom in which he had left Brida sleeping was within this sitting-room, and the door, which he had closed behind him, now stood half-open. He advanced and stood spellbound on the threshold.

With her back towards him, her upper skirt turned up, and a long brush in her hand, stood the girl for whom, only a few hours ago, he had grieved as for one dead. She was sweeping with a will, and singing a soft accompaniment.

Too confounded to articulate, the schoolmaster stood and watched, until, turning, she perceived him. In a moment she had laid aside her brush, and showing a row of dazzling teeth, stepped swiftly up to him.

"Thank you, schoolmaster, for your hospitality," she exclaimed merrily with a twinkle in her bright eye. "I know all about it—I have guessed. This is the land-tongue of Nargon, and you are the new schoolmaster. When old Yahn Curri had the school, father used to row me over the bay to the school-house, but they have pulled down the rickety old barrack and built you a house fit for the Czar." And she looked about her, still showing her pretty teeth. There was a pause, during which the bewildered young man sought in vain for something to reply, but Brida began again before he had brought out a word. "You found me in father's boat." Her face grew grave, and she shivered. "Oh, it was terrible all through the long night to be alone and think of death! But tell me," she added quickly, looking up into his face, "where did you pick me up? I can remember nothing but lying in the boat with the cruel stars looking at me. Then darkness."

The schoolmaster was obliged to rouse himself.

"The boat was lying close to land, and you were in it. I thought you were dead, so I brought you here." He glanced around him as he spoke. "I fear things were not very tidy," he added diffidently with a short, nervous laugh. "I am sorry it is not comfortable; I am used to it, and do not mind."

Brida laughed.

"Oh, you men get into a nice muddle if you are left to yourselves," she replied. "A bachelor's house is easily recognised." Then, resuming her brush, she continued: "I thought the least I could do was to tidy a little in return for your kindness."

And she cast on him a grateful look.

"You are too kind," he said, "and I do not deserve your gratitude. I only did for you what any one would have done in my place. Surely no one would see a fellow-creature die without trying to save him; and I brought you back to life without even personal risk."

He moved to the window and took a seat. The soft plash of the waves came in through the open casement, mingling with the distant shouts of the boys at play, but he heard it not; he was watching the swift, lithe movements of his companion, as she converted his little den into order and neatness, and an undefined feeling of sadness stole over him.

A pile of books lay in a confused heap in a corner.

"May I sort these?" she asked, looking up at him from her knees on the floor.

"If you will be so kind."

She opened one, and looked into it.

"Ah, if I could only read it," she sighed. "How clever you must be to know all those books!"

The schoolmaster could not help smiling at the simple words and perplexed face.

When the books had been ranged according to their size, on the top of the chest of drawers, Brida regarded them with her head on one side.

"There, that looks better," she said. "You can come at them better when they are in a row; besides, it looks neat."

"You are right," he replied; "you have indeed made my poor house look, as you said, fit for the Czar." Suddenly he pulled out a large quaint watch, and started to his feet. "Time is up!" he exclaimed.

"Wait," interposed Brida; "you must not go yet. Can I have a boat? I must be home with all speed now. Poor father does not know where I am; perhaps he thinks me dead."

The young man looked thoughtful. At length he said:

"You shall go at once; I will row you across myself."

"But the boys—your school?" broke in Brida. "You need not fear to trust me, I can row like any man."

"I will take you," he replied decisively, and going to the door he summoned the boys with a bell. "Lads," he said, when they had gathered, "I must row over to the mainland on business; you may go home. I give you a half-holiday."

In less than a minute the boys had dispersed, and the master returned to the house. Brida was already at his side, and he silently led the way to the beach. Here and there a clump of heather cropped up through the sandy soil. Brida stooped and gathered a few sprays, casting as she did so a long and steadfast look back at the house.

Seated in the boat she chatted lightly, whilst the schoolmaster sat opposite to her plying his oars. He furtively watched the changes in her pure young face, and his heart went out to her. He could not trust himself to reply to her innocent remarks, for his soul was heavy and sorrowful. Every stroke brought the parting nearer. Then he would see her no more. Was it possible that he had lived twenty-six years without her sweet companionship, and had found life tolerably happy?

Meanwhile, she too grew grave, chilled by his silence. He was annoyed, she thought, by her foolish chatter. He was so clever, so far above her in everything. She wished he had been less learned. So she sat quite silent, looking wistfully back

at the receding point of Nargon, with its solitary house on the green slope. Soon the mainland began to grow on the sight, and Brida could discern figures on the shore. A group of fishermen sat mending their nets, but she looked in vain for her father amongst them. At length they became aware of the approaching boat, with the empty one in tow. She rose to her feet, and waved her handkerchief. In an instant every cap was off and waving a response. Brida forgot her companion. Her eyes filled with joyful tears. They were her own people.

Before their boat was in shallow water the fishermen were wading knee-deep to meet it. A dozen pair of hard hands seized the boat to help it ashore, and rough voices were mingled in eager question. The schoolmaster had to stand aside as they lifted her from the boat. No one heeded him.

Her first words were: "Father! where is he?"

He had gone to the town to seek her at her aunt's, they said. The boat had never been missed. No one had thought of it. Then followed question and answer, whilst the unnoticed stranger stood by, moody and silent, until Brida arrived at that part of her story where he had found her, and brought her back to life.

All eyes were turned on him now, and his hand was shaken until the sinews cracked again. But he steadfastly declined the cordial invitations to join in a keg of beer at the inn. He wished to be gone and forget. Not even when Brida begged him with beseeching eyes to stay and see her father did he yield.

And the girl stood and watched the receding boat with sorrow, not unmixed with anger. "He might have remained," she thought. "But he is proud, and looks down on poor fisher-folk. Let him go then, he is nothing to me!" And yet as she hurried away to meet her father, she could have wept with vexation.

#### CHAPTER V.

THE schoolmaster rowed away with mighty strokes, his sole aim to widen the distance between himself and the being who had robbed him of his peace of mind. He was angry with himself, angry with fate, angry with the whole world. He did not once turn his eyes to the spot where Brida stood, but looked persistently away, though he felt that she was watching him, expecting, perhaps, some farewell sign. Gradually the bodily exertion quieted his spirit. "Tomorrow," he thought, "will bring the daily routine of duties. I will begin to study hard, and life will flow on as it has done before. In a week the whole adventure will be forgotten." And yet, through all the calm reasoning, his heart ached with a dull pain which would not be stilled, and his honest face was clouded with a grief before unknown. On sped the boat, until his own well-known homestead rose to view. Often had he greeted it with quiet satisfaction, but now it looked dreary and deserted. No smoke arose from its chimneys, no voice would welcome his return. It had always been so, but he had never felt it until now.

In the house her presence met him everywhere. There lay the weeds her thoughtful hands had arranged. He took them up reverently, and returned them to the place where they had lain before. He wandered into the inner room. Here, too, her presence followed him. There stood the row of books; he took the one down he had seen her open, and mechanically fingered the leaves.

The stillness of the house oppressed him; he could not bear it, and his pent-up feelings burst forth. He pressed his hands to his burning eyes. No tears fell, but his heart wept. At length he rushed forth into the darkening wood. It was long past midnight when he returned, with pallid face and exhausted frame, to throw himself upon his bed and fall into the sleep of utter prostration.

A week had passed, in close application during the day, and long lonely rambles in the still, autumn evenings. It was the Sabbath evening once more. The schoolmaster sat at his door and smoked. During the past week he had been teaching himself to forget, and since that outbreak of feeling he had sedulously put from him each rising thought relating to that episode in his life which had so seriously threatened his peace of mind. To a certain extent he had succeeded. Work and a strong will are wonderful preventives of unwelcome thought. But in the quiet and inactivity of the day of rest the struggle had been great, and rebellious memory had striven to assert itself. He had fought manfully against it—had walked miles to the Estonian service, then, after his solitary meal, had wandered hours in the silent, dreamy woods. Now he sat resting, looking out over the bay, as the swallows swept past with a constant whirr and scream, to skim the water in endless circles. How now to banish thought? It came upon him with redoubled force. Just across there lay Tischer. She might be sitting on that very shore of which he could see the dim outline, and be gazing towards him over the shining waters. Had she forgotten him? But why should she remember? He was a fool! That boat which had been growing on his sight was certainly making for the island. He began to be interested in it, and soon was watching eagerly. Yes, it was steering for the point.

His heart bounded wildly, he knew not why, and the vivid colour mounted to his cheek. He laid aside his pipe and walked down to the landing. Now he could make out the single occupant, a broad-shouldered, middle-aged man, who plied his oars like a practised seaman. He was a stranger, but as he leaped on shore he sent his blithe voice before him like an old friend.

"*Terrä, terrä, Cooli Maes*" ("Good-day, schoolmaster"). Then with outstretched hand: "I am Mattæas Rasik, the father of the maiden you picked up last week, and I thank you."

How the young man despised himself for his tingling cheeks as he shook the proffered hand! But it would have been impossible to feel ill at ease for long with Rasik the fisherman, and half an hour later, as the two men sat in the arbour over steaming coffee, sending up volumes of smoke through the interlacing branches, they were like old friends. Rasik was a man of many words, the schoolmaster a good listener, and the evening was far advanced when the former rose to go.

"You will come and see us next Sabbath?" cried Rasik as he pulled from shore. "Brida, too, will be glad to see you."

"I will come."

#### CHAPTER VI.

AGAIN it is the Sabbath, but the face of Nature is changed. No longer do the heather-bells deck moor and woodland with their delicate beauty. The pines still stand clad in their dark green robes, but the fairy birches have scattered golden leaves over the brown earth, where here and there the yellow star of the tormentil peeps bright-eyed out of scarlet leaves. The clear metallic light of late autumn lies on the landscape, making the rocky cliffs stand out in bold relief, and the motionless water reflect like a sea of glass, save where glittering drops fall tinkling from the upraised oars of the solitary rower, who is nearing the shores of Tischer.

A young man, tawny-haired and grey-eyed, springs from the boat to the shingle, and turns to ascend the steep path leading to the heights which overlook the little fisher-village on the one side, and the bay with its dotted islands on the other.

On the top he pauses and draws a long breath. Not a sound is heard, for the song of birds is long since silent in the copse. All Nature is silent as if at prayers. He feels the subtle spell of perfect peace which lies on all, and his spirit is lulled and soothed by it. Presently he is startled by a slight rustle amongst the hazel-bushes close by. Some busy squirrel, doubtless, is still seeking for stray nuts. It stirs again, accompanied by the snapping of dry twigs, and the branches are parted by a plump arm, disclosing the blushing, wondering face of Brida Rasik, amidst a shower of golden leaves.

"Schoolmaster! You here?"

The surprise is unfeigned, it is not a rendezvous. She approaches and holds out a timid hand.

There is a change in Brida since we saw her last; there is a shy, confused light in her eyes which quickly shun his; her manner is subdued and shrinking now, where before she was lively and loquacious. He, too, is changed. He no longer turns his gaze aside, but allows his eyes to rest on her fair young face with undisguised passion. He has taken her hand, and still holds it in his, and for a moment there is silence. Brida's lip is beginning to quiver, and she tries to withdraw her hand, but he holds it in a firm grasp as he says in trembling accents:

"You must not, you shall not go, Brida. I must speak, even though you send me from you for ever. Brida, I love you more than my life—you know I love you."

He pauses, overcome by emotion, as the burning tears well up in his eyes. Brida does not reply, but turns away her face from his burning gaze, and he resumes with bitterness, mistaking her silence:

"You have robbed me of my peace of mind. You have come between me and my work. Oh, if I did not love you to madness, maiden, I would hate you as only he who has loved can hate. But I will go," flinging her hand from him with passionate vehemence; "I will leave this wretched place, and you shall be troubled with my presence no more. Surely the world is wide enough to separate us!"

Another pause. Brida feels as if she were turned to stone. She longs to speak, but her lips refuse utterance. He watches her with a gleam of hope even through his despair. Her averted face and persistent silence deceive him again. "She dislikes me," he thinks, "but cannot say so. My presence is hateful to her. Yes, I must go!"

When he speaks again it is with forced calm. He will not terrify her with his passion.

"Forgive me, maiden; I am cruel to frighten you. Think no more of me. I am half mad. But oh, my darling, if it could only have been! But it cannot, and I do not blame you. I was a presumptuous fool to suppose that such happiness could ever be mine. There, do not cry, I am not worth such tears. Farewell."

He takes her hand once more, for the last time, and presses it to

his lips, then turns from her with faltering steps. A low, piteous wail as of a child in distress arrests him. Brida has sunk down on the grass and buried her face in her hands. Her long-suppressed feelings burst forth, and she sobs as if her heart would break. He was gone. She had let him go without a word. Oh, how could she bear it?

"Brida, my love, say I have been wrong!"

The schoolmaster is kneeling by her side. He throws his strong arm round her.

"Do not go, do not go," she sobs. "Oh, I am so miserable!"

"And I," he cries exultingly, "am so happy!"

The brighter lights had faded in the west, and the stars were growing and deepening in the heavens, when two figures were slowly wending their way down the steep path towards the village of Tischer. Is that our awkward, shy schoolmaster who is looking with undaunted confidence into the beaming face of that bright creature by his side? He is actually leading her by the hand. And that is Brida's merry laugh which rings out on the still air as she exclaims in a happy, saucy voice:

"You are but a simple fellow, schoolmaster, not to have seen long since that I cared only for your foolish self. You go poking about the woods, observing the ways of every beast that crosses your path, and there's not a poor little weed that can hide itself from you; but the thing nearest to you, that you cannot see."

His only reply is to draw his love to his joyous heart and close her sweet lips with a kiss.

## Youth.—A Sonnet.

THERE is no gift like youth; once was I young,  
And held the jewel in unheeding hands,  
While spring-tide walked the slowly wakening lands,  
And made me promises with silvery tongue,  
Re-echoed in their thousand songs low sung  
By free, wild birds. Then on the bright brown sands,  
The pearl-hued sea danced smiling; fairy bands  
Swung all the flower-beds that gaily rang,  
To welcome me to life.

I paused awhile,  
And waited for the future that should rise  
To crown my manhood. So did hope beguile,  
Till something passed across my noon-tide skies,  
And e'er I knew youth lived so brief a while,  
Age took my hands in his, claiming his prize.

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAMN DURDEN," Etc., Etc.

### Book VI.

#### CHAPTER VII. A WOMAN'S MOODS.

HALF an hour after, and she was sitting in her own study at her writing-table.

"I need not trouble myself to write any more," she said in a strange, dazed sort of way, listlessly turning over sheet after sheet of MS. "No one wants it; no one will care; no one knows what has been in my life and my heart; no one dreads what may still be."

It seemed to her as if years had passed since she left that room, to come back weighted with a fresh burden, to stand face to face with a harder duty.

When the door opened, and Madge Dunbar crept in, pale and frightened, she did not move; she only looked up once, but her look said more than any spoken words.

"You have been beaten; you are going back to him?" said Madge, sharply, fearfully, smitten to the heart by the revelation of pain and woe that one look had brought to light. "Oh, my dear, my dear, how could you?"

Beryl rose from her seat and pushed aside the papers, and went over to the chair by the fire where she had sat the evening before, listening to the story of the monk.

"Yes," she said, "I am going back. Since he has come all this way to assure me he has forgiven me, you would not have me—ungrateful?"

"Forgiven! What has he to forgive?" cried Madge passionately. She threw herself on the rug and caught the cold and trembling hands that lay tight-clasped in Beryl Marsden's lap.

"He is wonderfully magnanimous all of a sudden after three years; after absence, silence, insult—after leaving you to starve or

go to wreck and ruin had you been so disposed, he turns round like this! There's something behind it all, Beryl—take my word for it!"

"What can there be?" she said wearily. "I don't suppose my beauty impressed him very powerfully—it didn't seem to—and he wants nothing but just my presence under his roof—no affection, no wifely interest, only just appearances."

Madge looked and felt bewildered.

"It is most extraordinary," she said. "Did he say anything about—Ivor Grant?"

"A good deal," answered Beryl quietly. "It was only natural he should; but it suits his purpose to believe I was only a little thoughtless and carried on a flirtation."

"How worn and ill you look!" cried Madge tenderly. "I wish you would lie down and rest. You look just like you did before you had that terrible illness."

"Do I?" said Beryl wearily. "Perhaps I am going to be ill again. Oh, I wish I were—I wish I were going to die. I think it would be easier—at least it would be rest. Oh, Madge, you don't know what it is to long and long for rest, and it never comes—it never comes."

"It will come, it must; oh, try and believe that, dear. You can't be always tried like this; and perhaps he is changed, he may be kinder—better. Did he seem sorry?"

"Sorry!" that dreary little laugh fell tuneless and mocking on her ear. "He sorry? What has he to be sorry for? He always thought himself immaculate. Now he is doubly so; receiving a sinner back into favour is such a pleasant and self-satisfying emotion."

"Don't," cried Madge hurriedly. "Whatever you do, don't get into that mocking, bitter way of speaking. It is not safe for a woman like you to harden herself."

"No," said Beryl drearily, as she glanced down at her hands clasping and unclasping each other in nervous restlessness. "It is not safe."

"If I could do anything," implored Madge tearfully.

"No one can do anything for me," said Beryl, in the same cold, restrained voice. "I am very unfortunate. I thought these three past years had been hard and sad enough, but they look like happiness now beside this."

"Why did you promise?" cried Madge passionately. "It is too hard—too cruel. You can't bear it. You haven't strength."

"Yes," she said quietly, "I think I have."

"And when do you go?" asked Madge at last after a pause, during which her tears had been rapidly falling.

"He is to write and let me know his arrangements. I think that was what he said. 'Arrangements!' It sounds calm, and business-like, and satisfactory—doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Madge, "it does. And you think you can fall in with them? Do you remember what you said to me last night?"

"Last night," said Beryl with a weary sigh, "was—last night. I dare say I said many foolish things. The sight of the ghost unstrung me. Most emotions are not so much a matter of feeling with women, as of nerves."

"What has come to you?" cried Madge sorrowfully. "You are only acting; you are not true to yourself. You will suffer for it afterwards."

"Shall I?" she echoed faintly, and rested her head in a strange, tired fashion against the chair-back. "Perhaps you are right. I always seem to suffer for things afterwards."

Madge Dunbar was silent. She was puzzled and she was distressed beyond measure, and she could not understand Beryl in this mood. Tears, laments, complaints—these might be soothed or answered; but this cold, hard, cynical way of treating trouble pained and perplexed her all in one. Yet some instinct told her that the reaction would be terrible when it came.

"He is very much changed," continued Beryl presently. "So old, and worn-looking, and wizened. I thought I felt a little sorry for him—once. After all," she added with a swift change of mood that swept the calm and coldness from her in a sudden passion of sorrowful despair, "after all, facts are facts. He is my husband; I am his wife. I must do my duty if—he claims it; and he has done so. It is simpler to look the truth in the face, and the truth is only this: that to nourish any feeling of sentiment for a man not your husband is wrong and shameful. It must be beaten out, trampled out, killed out of one! There lies my task in the future."

"And when it is done?" said Madge Dunbar involuntarily.

"There will be peace, perhaps. Can you fancy the utter nothingness one would feel—passion, bitterness, sorrow, remorse, pain, all ended? Ah, how quiet life would be!"

For the first time her self-command left her, and tears were dangerously near her eyes. She steadied herself with an effort.

"I don't want to be pathetic," she said. "I have reached a stage

where pity is dangerous. I feel calm now, calmer than I have done for long. I must try and keep myself so. It is so weak to cry, and tears don't do any good."

"They are better than this hardness that you call calm," said Madge. "You frighten me, Beryl, when you talk so. It is so unlike you—so horribly unlike you."

"I want to be hard," said Beryl fiercely. "Hard as iron, cold as steel. I will not let myself think, dream, remember. It is dangerous, it is unwise, it is killing me! What did John say? 'Sentiment destroys women.' Of course it does, of course it must. And what have I to do with sentiment, I at my years, with my life half lived?"

She stopped abruptly, her hands clenched hard and close. Something she saw in Madge Dunbar's face smote her to the heart as a child's grief might have done.

"I am tired," she said, faltering; "let me be by myself. I shall be better then."

"Very well," said Madge gently, "and think of your children, dear; that will soften you. Any tears, any grief, would be better than this."

"I have cried so much," moaned Beryl, covering her eyes with her hands, as if to shut out that pitying face. "Oh, the nights, the dreadful, dark, long nights, when will they end? when shall I be at peace again?"

Madge Dunbar stood still and looked at that cowering figure with a strange, unfamiliar sensation. The tragedy and pathos of this life she loved came home to her then as they had never done before, and with it that sense of utter helplessness which comes to most onlookers, as the full sense of grief or suffering meets them face to face.

"If she would only cry—it would be so much better for her if she would only cry!" she thought.

But tears were far enough away from the dry and burning eyes that looked up at her own. Madge turned away, and drew up the couch near the fire and arranged the cushions more comfortably.

"Come and lie down," she said with gentle authority, and laid her hand on Beryl's arm.

Without a word she rose and laid her head down on the cushions, and closed her eyes in very weariness.

"That is right," said Madge softly, covering the slight figure with a rug. "Now you are not to speak any more. I want you just to listen to me for a moment. Perhaps you think I don't understand unhappiness, because I have always seemed such a frivolous little butterfly. But I know what sorrow is, all the same. Oh, Beryl, as I said before, don't let it harden you, that is the worst thing that could happen. I know what hurts you most. It is the knowledge that you let your heart go out of your keeping. But you could not tell, and he—I know he was too brave and honourable to breathe a thought of wrong. Think of him as the friend who stood between you and sorrow; think of him beside your children's dying bed; think of him, in his great pity and longing for you, stifling pain so bravely, and comforting you, as you have told me he did comfort you. What is there of shame in all this? What is there that a man like John Marsden should cavil at? He who left you lonely, grief-stricken, unprotected, at the mercy of strangers in your hour of greatest need. Few men or women could have come out of such an ordeal as you and Ivor Grant have come. And now—oh, my dear!—you are not going to break down now. Not going to let yourself be spoilt, and hardened, and embittered."

A gesture from that shivering figure stayed her.

"Don't speak of him," cried Beryl faintly. "I mustn't think of him; it makes me weak—so weak, and I want to be strong. I—I must be strong."

"No," said Madge gently, "not strong like this; not hard, and cold, and unnatural. You can't deny yourself, you can't choke out the tenderness that is in you—the tenderness that made you little Jack's mother more than John Marsden's wife."

There were tears now, painful tears—tears that fell like drops of scalding lead upon the clasped white hands, but tears that rejoiced Madge Dunbar's heart, knowing as she knew that unless that strained and cruel tension was relieved, the aching brain must suffer for the tired and aching heart.

"That is right," she said gently. "It may hurt you, but it is good for you. God sent women tears, perhaps just as he sent them children. They comfort and ease them when the fight is hardest. You have come to the worst part of your fight to-day, and you must come out conqueror."

"No," she said with a sob; "I am beaten. Sorrow is too much for me. There seems nothing more to do except just endure pain."

"It won't be pain always; it will get soothed, and lulled, and die away."

"If I could think so!" she moaned; "if I could only think so! But I can't forget, Madge! It isn't in me."

"There is no need that you should forget," said Madge gently. "One doesn't forget one's dead; only one thinks of them lovingly,

regretfully, tenderly, as things waiting for a better life, and a happier one than this. And that is how you should try to think of Ivor Grant."

"You are right," said Beryl. The tears were falling freely now, the coldness and hardness had fled. "He has passed from my life, and I from his. It seems impossible such pain can live and last, and end in—nothing; and it is not easy to believe it just at first. But I must. Tell me I must. Don't stop telling me. Oh, Madge, Madge! No, don't look like that—I am only faint."

# CHAPTER VIII. A WOMAN AND THE LAW.

"IN effect," said Count Savona, "you can't persuade her."

"In effect, my good friend, I cannot. She is indignant, she is passionate, she is incredulous; but above all she is obstinate—obstinate as a mule."

"And the lawyers cannot move any further without her?"

"No, so they say; because she has the one paper they want."

"I knew that long ago," muttered the count with a dark frown. "Can't it be got from her?" he added aloud. "Where's your authority as a husband?"

"Nowhere, just at present. I confess I'm beaten. She's very ill, you know, and I can't be violent."

"Violent, with a woman like that! What a mistake!" exclaimed Savona. "That is your worst policy, my friend."

"You are always talking of 'policy.' I should like to see some of yours exercised. Just you try your hand at persuading Beryl to do a thing she doesn't want to do. I doubt if you'd succeed any better than myself."

"Probably not," said the count coolly. "You see I labour under the slight disadvantage of not being her husband."

"Husband! Fiddlesticks! After the way I've behaved to Beryl, that plea doesn't serve me for much. She just looks at me with those calm, grand eyes as though to say, 'What of those three years?' and—and well, 'pon my honour, count, I can't help feeling small and mean."

"That's a pity; you should have contrived to make her feel she's in the wrong. A man can do anything, you know. A married man, especially, can indulge in any little escapade short of actual desertion, and even then your beautiful English law steps in, I believe. There's some clause, isn't there, about six years and three hundred and sixty-four days eleven hours; turn up before the twelfth hour, and you're all right? I have a great admiration for your English law. It is a grand institution."

"I wish English law would knock this sentimental tomfoolery out of Beryl's head," muttered John Marsden sulkily. "And to get ill now, of all times! It's enough to try a saint."

"You see your return was rather a surprise," said the count with a sneer, "and her sudden accession to the Court awoke old sentiments. I suppose she thinks it sacrilege to accept what her lover has lost?"

"Don't call him that," blustered John Marsden; "you forget whom you are speaking to."

"Oh no, I don't. I only imagined you had no 'fine' feelings on that point."

"There you're wrong. A precious lot of bother she's going to give us, though," he went on gloomily. "All this family business has to be investigated. It's the oddest tangle I ever heard of. The idea of her mother being connected with the Grants, and she never knowing it!"

"I found that out long ago," said the count, rolling a cigarette in an airy, graceful fashion peculiar to himself.

"You find everything out," John Marsden remarked with a sort of sulkily admiration.

"Yes, when it suits my purpose. I have traced a murder out before now."

"A murder!" echoed John Marsden.

He shivered involuntarily, and glanced round the room—a somewhat gloomy room—one of a set of chambers that he had taken in the vicinity of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the better to watch the case and hurry on the lawyers, so he had said.

"Don't speak of horrors to-night," he went on nervously. "This place is bad enough, when one lives in it alone, and one's system isn't as brisk as it might be. I—I wish sometimes I hadn't come. Those dark staircases and cupboards and places give me the horrors."

The count looked at him keenly.

"Queer things, nerves," he remarked; "play the deuce with a man, though. There have been times when I could have sworn I've seen a face looking at me from out of some nook or corner of a room. And the more you try not to see it, the more certain you are that it's there. Now that cupboard, for instance, over there—"

"Don't!" cried John Marsden fiercely. "I won't have it—I tell you, I won't have it! That cupboard's just the one I always fancy some one might hide in."

"So they might," said the count airily. "It's roomy enough. But we're not afraid; oh no, we're not afraid. We don't live in a land of traitors, brigands, assassins. No fear of a secret foe creeping out from thence with stealthy step. Can't you fancy it, my friend—creeping on in the darkness and the shadows, dark and relentless as an avenger, with bated breath, and shining steel held firm in a ruthless grasp; with—"

"Be silent!" screamed John Marsden shrilly, as he sprang to his feet. "I tell you I won't listen—I won't!"

"You needn't listen," said the count, looking at him as if he were some curious study he was analysing. "I thought 'twas only conscience made cowards of us. Do you still possess one?"

"I don't know," stammered his companion, sinking back into his chair, and passing his hand over his damp brow. "I—I'm not in good health. Liver, you know, and all that. And living alone tells on a man. I think I'll give up these rooms."

"I should," said Savona quietly, "and go and live at the Court; possession is nine points of the law, you know. Another of your admirable English maxims."

"I could not do that, could I?" cried John Marsden eagerly. "Beryl wouldn't hear of it, and—"

"Beryl, always Beryl," sneered Savona. "Must you consider her? What is the wife's, that is also the husband's, is it not?"

"But she won't allow that it is hers. How can I help that?"

"You must get possession of that paper," said the count, looking at him steadily.

"Easier said than done. She's watched and guarded by that little Dunbar woman like a prisoner. There's no getting at her."

"But you might get at the paper."

"How?"

The count took his cigarette from his mouth, knocked off some loose ash, balanced it carefully in his fingers, then threw it aside.

"How?" he said with an earnestness he had not yet shown.

"By stratagem. Where does she keep her papers?"

"How do I know? I suppose in a desk or cabinet; most women do."

"She is not like most women, and she does not keep them in any desk or cabinet. Of that I am sure."

"You?" cried John Marsden, looking at him bewildered. "How on earth could you know?"

A strange look came over the Italian's face.

"I have stayed at Vaux Abbey," he said. "Whether as a guest or not doesn't signify. The papers we seek are not in Mrs. Marsden's desk."

John Marsden shrank back and looked at him with a sort of horror not unmixed with fear.

"You—you dared!" he stammered.

"Oh yes; why not?" said the count tranquilly. "I dare anything when I'm put to it. You forget that I hate Ivor Grant, and I'm a good hater. He won't be the first who's discovered that. Those papers are necessary for my vengeance. I thought your wife possessed them. I think so still. But, as I said before, their hiding-place baffles me. I didn't find any love-letters either," he went on mockingly, "or I would have brought them to you—a proof of my disinterestedness. They are very exemplary, these platonic lovers, and they don't trust even platronics to paper. They are wise."

"Come, come, you know," blustered John Marsden. "A man can't stand this sort of thing, however badly his wife has behaved. You've no right to play the spy on her. Of course, with me it's a different matter. I can do what I choose, and I've every right to do it; but you—"

He paused abruptly. Something in that sinister face, in the lightning-like flash of the dark eyes, struck to his heart with a sense of sudden fear.

Savona merely leant his elbows on the table at which they were sitting, and resting his chin on the palms of his hands, looked full in the face of his companion.

"My friend," he said calmly, "you're a fool!"

"Thank you for the information," said John Marsden, with a praiseworthy attempt at indifference. "You will excuse my saying that I've always heard foreigners were remarkable for politeness."

"Have you?" said the count with a sneer. "Perhaps they are—when it suits their purpose."

"I may infer then it doesn't suit yours; yet it strikes me I've most cause to complain. You've brought me over to England on a wild-goose—chase at the peril, too, of my life," he gave an uneasy glance again at those shadowy corners of the room, "and it strikes me I may be months—years, even—here, before those lawyers can settle anything. They talk of throwing it into Chancery now. You know what that means?"

"Yes," said the count with a meaning smile, "another of your English institutions—not quite so admirable as the laws for husband and wife."

"Admirable! It means everything going into lawyers' pockets,

and nothing to those who have right on their side; it means weighting hope with a living curse, and life with a burden worse than poverty; it means being badgered, and worried, and tortured till one hasn't a moment's peace. No, thank you, my friend, I'd sooner go back to India than wait the issue of a Chancery suit."

"Ah," said the count dryly, "I think I've heard something of the same sort before. Well, the point at issue resolves itself into this: by fair means—or otherwise—you must get those papers from your wife within a week's time. If I were in your place, my good John Marsden, I think I should succeed."

He rose as he spoke and began to button his overcoat. Marsden looked at him appealingly.

"You—you're not going yet?"

"With the deepest assurances of my regret," said the count mockingly, "I am going—now, this moment."

"It's so hatefully lonely here," muttered John Marsden. "I wish I'd never come to the place. And I've had a touch of fever to-day. I—— You might stay till I go to bed, count."

"True," said Savona placidly, as if he were agreeing to a self-evident proposition, "I might, my good friend, but I don't intend to."

John Marsden muttered something under his breath not exactly complimentary, but the count gave no sign of hearing it. He nodded and went over to the door, opened it, then paused on the threshold, and looked back at the gloomy face and wizened figure by the table.

"The Indian mail is in," he said quietly. "I suppose you know that?"

John Marsden started perceptibly. His yellow face took a grey and frightened look.

"What of it?" he said with an effort at calmness.

"As yet, nothing," said the count imperturbably. "But she brings passengers, you know. Are you not expecting a consignment of—tiger-claws?"

And with a mocking laugh he closed the door.

It seemed to John Marsden as if long hours had passed since the sound of that mocking laugh and closing door had ceased to echo in his ears.

He sat there in the same attitude, staring moodily at the fire in the grate, full of bitter and revengeful thoughts.

"I wish I could understand that man," he said to himself. "Why has he mixed himself up in this business? Why did he write to me about Beryl, and how has he wormed his way into secrets unknown even to members of her own family?"

He only puzzled himself to no purpose, as many others had done before him. If there was a mystery about this count and his countship, it was a mystery as yet unfathomed. Gossip and ill-report were about him in plenty, but no authentic basis had as yet been discovered on which to rest the suspicions he aroused. That convenient "they say" was all any one could bring to bear upon the stories of which he was the hero. He had a method all his own of drawing people slowly and helplessly into his toils. Once in them they very rarely found escape possible, save by that one gate which despair opens to the broken-hearted and the desperate, and which even the powerful will of Count Savona could not close.

After leaving John Marsden, the count walked leisurely through the streets. His face was not good to look upon, it was so darkly set, it bore so cruel and so merciless a determination.

"How the affair drags," he muttered, as his teeth closed viciously on the cigarette he had just lighted; "and only a woman between me and five thousand pounds. I must have those papers. Where can she have put them? Perhaps the good folks at Vaux Abbey will find the Abbey ghost pursuing his nocturnal rambles once again."

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## Aunt Clare's "Old Story."

(A STORY IN TWO WEEKLY PARTS.)

### CHAPTER III.

THERE never was such a May as that one. One other May-time there was which was as good, but then the good was gravely mingled with serious, tender thoughts. Then I was sailing away for life on the measureless ocean of a woman's responsibilities—responsibilities which are joys, but yet which incline one to give little heed to the gay notes of every sunbeam.

Now, in this first May-time existence was a very sunbeam.

Sir Peter Farre's son coming down to the rectory made an excuse for some country junketing, as the weather settled into regular summer warmth. Of course I was in all this, for the rectory boys and girls were as much like brothers and sisters to me as people not actually bound by kinship could be.



Oddly enough, Mrs. Barlowe began one day to talk to me about her nephew.

"It is a great trouble," said she. "Peter is very unsatisfactory—very unsatisfactory."

She was tearing a quantity of list off flannel in readiness for winter needs. A soft screech of tearing wool followed her remark. She looked at me as if for an answer.

"Is he?" said I carelessly. I could not endorse her assertion as a fact.

"Very. You have been brought up in a practical school, Clare. Is a man to idle away his time doing nothing like this for week after week?"

"He will have to fight."

Mr. Farre was, it may be stated, a lieutenant in His Majesty's Guards, now on leave.

"Might have had to. Have you not heard the last? He talks of selling out."

I had heard that.

"Shall I sell out?" one day Mr. Farre had said to me; "sell out and take a home civil appointment, and then——"

"And be scouted for a coward, because they say the war will last, and even the Guards must go."

This had been my answer in one of my hot impulses.

There had been nothing more—nothing more that I care to write down. So I felt inclined to taciturnity when Mrs. Barlowe sought to talk.

"He ought to be at the Horseguards now, volunteering, pushing, doing anything and everything to get sent to the front. These are the times for a man to make a name."

I could not refrain.

"Make a name!" repeated I; "a name just big enough to be sent home in a despatch as 'killed.'"

My face was hot, and my fingers twisted within each other. How could I utter such mean words? I would sooner be annihilated altogether than have a man, a friend of mine too, even seem to dream of acting as my words apparently desired.

Mrs. Barlowe's black eyes transfixed me. Her mouth was open as if to speak, but she did not speak; something seemed to have struck her with surprise; she even ceased tearing the list from the flannel.

"Well-a-day!" said she as slowly as an exclamation could be made to come.

At that moment one of her maids called her away, and I was free to go likewise.

I was rising from my seat, when a shadow came between me and the midday sun. Peter Farre was coming through the open window; he was wearing the cinnamon coat in which I had first seen him—he was a stranger then, not a stranger now.

"Where are you going?" asked I. That cinnamon coat generally meant riding off for some long hours; besides, he had the unmistakable, alert, somewhat restless air of a journey upon him. "Not Bardene again?"

"No; the horse is well enough—well enough for some good stiff work to-day. Here's a letter forwarded by my father by special messenger. I got it half an hour ago."

"Well!" He stood silent, so I forced out that one word.

"It is an order to join at once. I must post up to London. Clare, you have saved me from acting like a poltroon. I should have never dared look you in the face if I had sold out; now I shall dare—I shall hope."

"I never was so glad, Peter," burst in Mrs. Barlowe. "The doctor has just told me. Really, I beg your pardon, my boy, for I was just saying to Clare that you were 'unsatisfactory.' 'Unsatisfactory,' indeed. I really don't suppose I ever meant it. Everyone says this will be a glorious campaign. We shall all be quite proud. Clare, say we shall all be proud."

But I did not say it; for that matter I did not say anything, but just stood still and let everyone else talk, for the doctor and all came pouring in, and they made much fuss of saying, "good-bye." We all went to see Peter Farre mount and ride away.

After that the May was soon ended, and the sunshine grew hotter, and the flowers were every day more and more plentiful. I was past sixteen too, and naturally with that fell out of many of my childish ways. Aunt really once told me she "had hopes of me."

We all—that is, all our acquaintances in and about Hayleigh—fell into our customary ways, and the merrymakings which had been got up in honour of the rectory visitor were all over, with no like gaieties giving promise of imitating them.

There came war news from time to time, and I, we all, naturally were on the *qui vive* to learn what was done and what was not done. This interest in national fighting had, of course, existed just as hotly before, but I suppose it was from my childishness that I had not until then looked upon the realities of war as being actual events

which must touch so many hundreds living in their country homes at ease.

We at Hayleigh were all "at ease," but now all at once it became to my older eyes, or rather older heart, quite a different, nay, a much more real matter.

One day there came word of an expected battle. It was rumour which brought the news, and, like many other similar rumours, it was fading away through the circumstance of our far distance from the metropolis, when aunt got a letter, franked by her cousin, Sir Owen Burke.

The rumour was true—there had been a great battle, a momentous victory. And Hayleigh bells clanged forth, and bonfires were lit wherever men could get together litter and stuff that would burn.

When that loud clang of the church-bells began, I ran out of the house and away to the woods upon the low hills. I had one good cry for a minute—it was only a little thing, and Peter Farre and I had agreed that women may cry for "little" things.

Days and days went by, and the country was glad. We heard of one and another village home that was not glad, seeing that one and another lad was lost by the war to Hayleigh.

Days and days—how long they were! A time came when—when one of us would have given a whole life to have lengthened that weary tarrying.

An official despatch was sent by Sir Peter Farre to the rectory. One read therein, "Peter Hillyard Farre, captain, killed."

How many names came before and after his! Ah me, war is dreadful!

Mrs. Barlowe had wished that he should make a name. Here was the making!

#### CHAPTER IV.

AFTER that, we at Hayleigh again seemed to drift out of much care for public affairs. Something, too, seemed to spoil what was left of the summer. At The Chase we had certainly plenty to think of which kept our thoughts occupied and our hearts careful enough.

Miles came home from Charterhouse. He was just a year older than I was, and a fine tall stripling. He burst upon us full of brilliancy, of ardour, of sure and perfect success. He broke up our monotony; father had fallen into some strange dulness, and pained me by treating me tenderly, instead of as the daughter of good fellowship I always had been to him. Miles was like new life; the good old times seemed to come back with him.

He was crowned with honours, too. He would be the head Carthusian when he should go back. One year more, and then—it was as we four sat over dessert on the first night of his coming home that he fairly broached the subject of what he wished to make of his future.

"You'll like a year or two at college. I had it myself, though I'm afraid Greek and Latin would soon cry havoc over me now. But you are finer stuff than I am, my boy. You'll do more than I did," so began my father.

Miles was the apple of Aunt Clare's eye.

"I do not see, brother," said she, "that you need fall into such a habit of depreciating yourself. Miles can stand on his own good advantages, and yet you be worthy enough. Times alter, and Miles will go with the times." She straightened her tall figure, and throwing back her head slightly, as spectacled folk do, looked with prophetic satisfaction at Miles.

"I hope he will not go with the new-fangled notions of the times, and play ducks and drakes with the land, that is all I have to say," cheerily remonstrated father. "The place is no worse now than my father left it to me. I've stuck to the old plans."

"Why, father, you've drained the whole of the Holt Farm, and," I nodded sideways to him, "what about those cottages?"

"They were unnecessary—hem, yes. But what was I to do? Miles won't blame me for letting the creatures have a whole roof over their heads. Less for him to do when he comes to it—eh, lad? As for the Holt, it's worth a pretty penny more now than it was."

"And Miles is to have the odium of raising the rent," put in aunt, with an eye to business, and yet to popularity for Miles.

"You say nothing, Miles," I burst in. "What are you dreaming of? I believe you like Latin better than land. Confess now."

The lad looked up with that quiet expression of his. It was the look that made him so much more like our mother than I could be.

"Miles will have interests beyond agriculture," loftily answered aunt for him. "A landowner may have in the future many responsibilities beyond his own acres. Why should he not go up to Parliament? Why should he not?"

"You are talking as I remember they talked about me," said my father, "but I never did any more than just manage to be squire. A pretty handful, too."

"I am afraid I shall disappoint you, Aunt Clare," Miles began in

his bright, pleasant way ; " I do not feel the least ambition towards political life."

" And why not ? Have you ambition at all ? I doubt it. You must not drop into—" For a second she hesitated. " You must—"

" Shall I say what is my great wish ?" Miles stopped her. " I have thought it over, father, for I would be sure of myself, and I always come to the same ending. You will send me to college," the boy spoke meditatively, and yet with the pink flush of excited hope on his cheek that for all its manly down was so fair, " that I know. But you send me there to make me an educated squire," a merry twinkle came into his frank eyes ; " I am for going beyond that. I wish to take orders—to be a clergyman."

" Eh, ha ! what's that ? Haymans never went beyond squires."

" Beyond, indeed !" retorted aunt. " Miles might go as far ' beyond ' as ever he chooses. He'll not go far if his notion is to be rector of Hayleigh and squire all in one."

Aunt Clare was strict even to the narrowness of extreme conventionalism in her going to church, but we never looked upon her as a religious woman beyond the formal religiousness of Sunday. Father was different ; had he not married our mother, a rector's daughter ? Now, aunt's tone of voice showed that her ambition for Miles was feeling itself sorely disappointed by his desire.

She took off her spectacles, wiped them, set them on her nose again, and looked at him enquiringly.

" And why that ?" she asked.

Miles's face flushed red with dislike at speaking his innermost thoughts. Then suddenly with a plunge and with the hot hurry of his young enthusiasm he cried :

" Is it not the highest a man can do ? I cannot say when I first began to wish it, it is a part of me—my calling, I suppose," his voice fell as if in reverence. " You do not ask me to give it up, father ?"

Father gulped down his port wine hurriedly, and grew somewhat redder in the face.

" Can't say, can't say," he nervously said ; " comes by nature, I suppose—eh, lad ? You bring your birthright before me sharply. She, your mother—she had almost died for you, lad—said, ' Should we not give him to the Lord ? ' We'll see, we'll see. Come and talk it over in the garden, children ; we don't want any more of this," looking over the polished table with the desert upon it.

So we three went off to the garden, and we talked ; but things came about us in the time that closely followed which seemed as if, however much all the world might agree with Miles in his lofty and holy desire, that desire was not to find its fulfilment.

After all, Miles was still but a boy, and one day, having their holidays together, he and the rectory boys went boating on the River Nene. They upset their boat, and Miles came very near drowning. However, of this last we knew nothing until the following day, when he was taken with intense shivering, which only ceased to become a raging fever.

He was leeches and was tended night and day by Aunt Clare and nurse. I did the little they would permit ; but for weeks we all supposed that ambition of either the worldly or heavenly sort was over for him on this earth.

It was autumn before he could be said to be well, and even then strength was gone from him so far that, though we never hinted so much to each other, we each felt and feared that he inherited more than our mother's delicacy of constitution.

However, by waiting things grew better and mended so far that he began to think again of the future and of study.

He could never go back to Charterhouse, but he could have a tutor at home. Therefore, as soon as Christmas was passed, this tutor came, and made another in our household at The Chase.

It was a very good Christmas. You see, we had been anxious and weighed down for so long about Miles's health, that the season's gaiety came like a tonic into our spirits seeing that he too could be gay with us.

The country, too, had peace, and so many of the country houses were rejoicing in the home-coming of such brothers and cousins who were soldiers, that an unusual number of entertainments were given.

It was a mixed gladness, however, when one saw, as I did, at the county ball, so many bright uniforms flit past me. I could not help thinking of—of my friend.

However, any thoughts of that sort had to remain thoughts, and I had to go out like the rest. I may as well say it, for I do not think overmuch vanity lurks behind the truth—that Squire Hayman's daughter, even I, the " hoyden," as aunt had once called me, was not the last of the girls to be sought in these gay doings.

I was not blind, and truly I did my best to push it away from me, but I seemed altogether weak and powerless. I said my sharpest things, and I put on my most careless ways. I even tried to be haughty, and distant, and cool ; it was all of no use. I suppose I could not alter myself, and that I had not altogether lost a sort of childishness, though I was far on past sixteen—nearly seventeen,

The end came one morning.

The hounds met on our lawn. Colonel Bolsover had ridden over to breakfast with us. I do not know how the opportunity came—he asked me to marry him.

Ah me ! I was covered with shame and confusion of face. Love ! how could I love ?

I do not remember what I said, or how I said it ; he was kindly, and a true man, he left me to myself.

But it could not end so.

My father was told, and aunt was told, and the Colonel came again. Came many times, but he could not win me ; how could he ?

That was the difficulty. I could give no reason. I had no story to tell, no dream to put into words. Had not my dream been quenched in death ?

In those days the guardians of young girls were wont to be harder than they are nowadays, and for a girl to rebel and unreasonably to refuse marriage with so noble and eligible a man as was Colonel Bolsover was to merit domestic discipline.

Poor father did not know it. Miles was busy with his books. I had no mother, there was only aunt ; and aunt saw fit that I should become Mistress Bolsover—nay, I believe she thought in her heart that the good Colonel's two brothers would die, and would leave him with an earldom. No one knew, as I have said, but nevertheless, it came to be true that I was kept in durance vile. Locked in my room, apportioned only some limited and plain food, set to sewing-tasks which my soul abhorred.

Aunt did it thinking it was for my good ; it only strengthened my poor faded dream into new life. I grew—sitting up in my room at work, or with my hands folded before me as the daylight faded—to imagine all sorts of impossible hopes out of the chances of war.

Folly ! folly ! Could a man be lying on the battlefield all these long months ? Could there still be a prisoner held back when all were exchanged ?

But at night and morning father saw me, and petted me, and pinched my white cheeks, and, I know, wished often enough that he had his " hoyden " Clare back again. For I was very proud, and sooner than condescend to complain of my daily imprisonment and toil, would not mind how pinched and pale I became.

Every day I said the same to myself—I could not change ; I could not marry. Marry ! with no love in my heart ! The thought was a shame.

But it was weary living—weary to sit and sew all day alone ; weary never to go out over the crisp fields and gardens, to have no books, to know nothing all day but the four walls of my room.

At last, one day, I cried, and the show of tears was on my face when father saw me at dinner.

#### CHAPTER V.

WHEN dinner was over, he carried me off into his study—the room where all the bookshelves were, and where his guns and whips and squire-like treasures were ; where he did his accounts, saw the steward, and had magisterial conclave with Dr. Barlowe and other county magnates ; where, in sooth, he was free from domestic rules and punctiliousness as these things were personified in aunt.

" Now, little one," began he, " we must end this troublesome business."

The " little one " was a loving term of old days. His tall, proud daughter bowed beneath the sound of the tender words. I fairly fell upon his neck and burst into tears.

The tears soon ended. I was so tired, or I would not have let them come.

" Is it always the same, Clare—my daughter ?"

" Quite the same, father ; the same, so far as my feelings go," I answered in the fullest stretch of pride. " But I am weary of all this. You can do as you wish. If he likes to content himself with a wife who cares naught for—"

" Hush, hush, Clare !" The old man was terrified at my hardness. His happy experience had never shown him marriage under such a guise as this. " So good a man, so honourable, so—"

" Yes, I know, father. But still, it must be ended, as you say." I stood before him in utter carelessness, all the rebellion beaten out of me.

A loud ring pealed through the house.

My face flushed, then I grew cold as ice, and my very knees trembled beneath me. My fancies and imaginations had taken so strong a hold upon me that the maddest possibilities were flashing through my brain and heart.

" Colonel Bolsover, sir."

The words were scarcely out of Baines's lips than the Colonel strode in. He was in evening-dress, but had thrown over this a thick, furred soldier's cloak. He had ridden fast. Bolsover Place was ten miles away.

He bowed low before me, seeming to start for a moment at sight of my tear-washed face; then, with true gentlemanhood, ignoring all but courtly deference of manner.

Truly I was sorry that I could not give to so noble a man his desire.

"You are a magistrate, Mr. Hayman; will you come over to take a man's deposition?"

"My good sir, won't the morning do?"

"If law and public authorities will go to work on hearsay that we can jot down. I know none of the names, but it is some story a man of mine wants to get told. He is one of the last prisoners sent back. He came in yesterday, starved, and in rags; how he found me out I know not; at any rate he is not long for life, and the odds and ends of his speech tend to show something of more importance than we private folks can take the responsibility of. He is an old soldier of mine, a staunch, reliable man. His wits are worn by hardship; but there is a persistent idea running through all he says. Will you come?"

"Seems I must," my father made a comical grimace. "Ten miles—a stiffish road, too."

He went off, shouting to Baines for mufflers, and boots, and coats all in a breath.

I was alone with this unwelcome lover of mine. Could I help it if he made use of this chance of speaking?

And I—I was so weary, I was so careless. I answered him as I had answered my father: if he was content to take so cold a wife I would no longer say him nay.

My heart smote me when, my father coming back, the Colonel took my hand and led me forward in his noble, gallant way, saying: "This is the proudest moment of my life."

I was in bed; I am sure I had not been asleep when I heard the clatter of my father's and the groom's horses over the hard stones of the courtyard when they came home.

The next day all the world, our little world, knew that I was to be Mistress Bolsover.

But it was not until evening that the Colonel came. We did not know why he was not at The Chase to dinner. Aunt waited a full half-hour for him, which piece of procrastination I never knew her endure willingly before.

Aunt had sailed in all the majesty of her thickest taffety robe out of the dining-room, when the expected ring was heard rousing every dog about the place. I tarried behind with my father, and Miles, and Mr. Erskine the tutor, feeling by some instinct that the chintz parlour would be the room sought by the visitor, that being aunt's and my usual resort. I was rebellious still.

I was mistaken, and he came in to my father.

After the first greetings, he fell to talking of the matter which had detained him.

"Richards was so surely dying, that I could not leave him."

"Mere wool-gathering, sir—mere wool-gathering," said my father somewhat shortly. "What are you going to make out of it all? Nothing, that I see. Clare, child, go to thy silks and tambour-work, we'll be with thee anon."

But there was a reality of the outer world, the world of wars and fighting men hanging on my lover's lips, and I would fain linger.

"We can learn no more than we have learnt now," Colonel Bolsover spoke on, unheeding me, it seemed. "Richards is dead, but there came more vehemence into his speech at the last. Laverne is clearly the name of the place—the castle where he was."

"He and the army of officers and men! My good sir, is there any sense in supposing that there are so many still held in bondage?"

"I do not know; there are no sure means of knowing. Truly, I hope not, if their treatment is to be like what Richards has endured. But I shall go to the Horse Guards and report, that is plain duty."

"What have you to go on? Are you going to send an army out to this Laverne? waste more blood over—you say yourself, perhaps only a handful of bones!" Father turned and saw me. "Clare," said he, and I never before heard his voice so hard to me, "hie thee away. This is no talk for a discreet maiden's ear."

I had to obey, but I held the door unlatched, and I tarried outside.

"It may be so, sir. I do not deny it. But we have some names now, all men of my own, too—Clarkson and Farre, Captains; Corporal Dennis. A big lever must be used to get at them, living or dead!"

What did I hear? Farre, Captain?

The only thing I heard more at that time was the jangle of the brass door-handle against the brass-plate enclosing the lock. My hand had been upon it, and I suppose my hold was helplessly loosing itself in a faint.

Miles told me afterwards that he and the Colonel found me on the floor in a dead swoon, and carried me up to my bed.

After that Colonel Bolsover went up to London, and then he came back, and affairs concerning my marriage came to be the great

and sole topics of the household. There was no reason for hindering his wishes, and what was any part of it to me?

I had given my word, and I must not depart from it. Methinks I was no gay and gladsome bride, however. The sheen of silk and satin was no pleasure to my eyes, though I was so young—not seventeen yet; but I set myself to wear a haughty and cold front to everyone I saw.

I felt myself every day growing more into the semblance of Aunt Clare; once I overheard her tell my father that "she was pleased to see me mending my ways; there was some dignity about Clare, some—"

May had come again. On the morrow I should be seventeen, one week hence I should have become a wife. The fair spring sunshine was exactly like I remembered it to have been the year before; the snow of the May-flowers was melting from the hedges, and roses would be coming soon. I wandered out, and the hot afternoon sun found me in the long meadow-grass where I and the stranger had met a year ago.

Before I had been there long Colonel Bolsover came out to me. His noble face was shining with a glad light; it was not long before I heard the cause of this.

He had had a post from London, and the story of Richards was all true. Prisoners had been held back at a château called Laverne in the mountains. It was all as bad as he had said, but they were released, and—posts in those days were little more fleet than ordinary travelling—they were in England.

He held my hand within his arm as he told me this. I suppose he felt some trembling of my fingers, for suddenly he looked down into my face.

Alack, alack! I could not help myself. As we, Peter Farre and I, had said once, "tears did not come over great woes"; mine, which had rarely been shed in the many past months, were pouring forth now.

I had forgotten—forgotten that my own deed had set me as far away as death had seemed to put me from my love; I had forgotten everything, except that the Captain Farre of my lover's regiment was my—my—yes, my stranger friend.

I could not help it. I rushed with all my old impulse to speak and show the whole truth. I have no faintest memory of what my words were, I only know that all my coldness, all my dignity fell from off me, and in the end I found myself kneeling on the sunny summer grass praying him to forgive me.

For truly I had need of great forgiveness, having shown so great a contemning of a noble man.

Two days after—I had been freed since that burst of mine out in the meadow—we three, Colonel Bolsover, Peter Farre, and I, were walking over the gardens in the pale, long, spring twilight.

That morning had the Colonel brought my "friend" back to me—surely heroes have not yet died from off the face of the earth!

Riding post to and from London was to this man what he saw to be the duty of his manhood—what could we two ever do to show him our gratitude and our love?

Yes, he had my love—my second-best love now and always.

You see, he was not a young man. I did my best. I—Peter Farre and I—had gone out to him when we saw him strolling along alone.

"May we come and walk with you?" I asked, and my voice naturally fell low. "We have so much to tell you—Peter has so much to tell you."

I had laid my hand on his arm. He put his own above it, and said:

"My child, yes." Those words came very quietly; then he lifted his head, and went on heartily: "That is just what I was thinking. Farre, come, begin. Let us hear all the romance of travel."

"Not much romance, Colonel," answered Farre, "but rather some very unpleasant realities."

"Well, let us hear some of them; or, I suppose, the future is more to the fancy of this dainty lady than the past. What are you going to do with your two selves? You'll get a long leave if you apply for it; why don't you?"

"Shall we, Clare?"

And in this way we went strolling along, as I have said, while the sweet long twilight began and ended.

In a very few weeks a marriage did take place at Hayleigh Church, and, after that, Peter and I went wandering about the country in a long honeymoon. Miles went up to Oxford for his first term, carrying Mr. Erskine with him.

In coming years, and while my father was still squire at The Chase, Miles became rector, and Aunt Clare had to succumb before her nephew's more worthy ambition. Another prophetic notion of hers, however, did see its fulfilment, for Colonel Bolsover was the Earl of X—, and, I am glad to say, had a Countess with whom to share his honours.

(Concluded.—Commenced in No. 154.)

## There.

THERE the warm sunset sank,  
Over the sea;  
There the light wavelets broke,  
There the low breezes spoke,  
There the eve's magic woke,  
Rapture for both of us,  
You, love, and me.

There the grey morning rose,  
Over the sea;  
There the thick raindrops fell,  
There the wind's moaning swell,  
Murmured, farewell, farewell!  
Sorrow for both of us,  
You, love, and me.

There the gay noontide shines  
Glittering yet;  
There we once vowed and wept;  
There grief on gladness crept;  
Have you the record kept?  
Mem'ries for both of us,  
For—I forget.

## Doris Hazlewood.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"GUESS what I have got for you, Nellie?" said John Bowden in a cheery voice as he joined his niece, who was sauntering in the garden, book in hand.

"A very, very charming story?"

"No."

"A tiny white dog, like a ball of ice-wool?"

"No."

"I never could guess anything," replied the girl a little wearily, "but I know that it is something I shall be glad to have."

"You have been a little dull lately, and—"

"Have you found me dull, uncle?" asked the girl a little eagerly.

"Well, my dear, I can't say I did until Mrs. Ponsonby called my attention to the subject, and then it seemed to me that you were not quite as bright as usual."

"Mrs. Ponsonby has not seen me for weeks."

"Ah, then she must have heard of you, and I have seen for myself that you are a little pale, and I quite agree with her that you need somebody young with you. I am away long hours, and am not very amusing at the best of times. You want cheering, so I have got you a companion, Nellie; a miracle of cleverness, who will take interest in all your little feminine pursuits, and keep you merry all day long."

"Thank you, uncle, but I do not know that I shall quite like it; wouldn't it be something like having a governess?"

"No, not at all;" and Mr. Bowden paused to consider what it would be like; "more like a playfellow, only you are too old for play. I think, Nellie, you must consider her a guest who is charitably disposed to do her best to amuse and please you."

"An excellent guest, uncle. And what is her name, and where does she come from?"

"Her name is a very pretty one—Doris Hazlewood, and she has been some time with Mrs. Ponsonby, who parts with her because she thinks she will be such an immense acquisition to me."

"How very kind of her!"

"It is kind, Nellie; I might have looked far and wide for a suitable person, and failed to find one at last."

"We do very well as we are;" and she put her arm through his, and leant in a caressing way upon his shoulder.

He kissed her and called her his darling.

"You heap kindnesses upon me. You are too good."

"I cannot do too much for you; you are my niece, and all that I have to love. I wish I could take the same care of the little one over the seas."

At this wish, the face that had been beaming with affection and kindness, turned sad and solemn.

"That may happen yet," she answered softly.

"It is a foolish hope, and yet I cling to it. Show me the roses, Nellie; we are going to be merry and put away retrospection."

And they went to look at the first full-blown blossoms of the season, and took pride in their beauty.

James Bowden was chief banker of Littlepool; his forefathers had been bankers there for many generations, and it troubled him to think that a time must come when the town would have no banker of that name. He had neither son nor nephew, his only relations

were two nieces—Ellen Bowden, his brother's child, and the unknown girl far away.

He had come into the world in the banking-house itself, a substantial, roomy old mansion in the high-street of Littlepool, where his grandfather had lived all his life, and which his father had made his home, as a matter of course, as soon as he became head of the business.

As a young man he had moved with his father into the suburb, and when he himself married he went a little farther towards the country, and some years later, for the benefit of his delicate wife, he had taken a beautiful place five miles from the town.

When he himself became sole possessor of the old-established bank, there was no thought of his going to live in the old house; times had changed, and it was then considered only a suitable residence for his chief clerk.

He knew everybody of any standing in Littlepool, and many of the county families; but his wife's weak health had prevented his going into society, or receiving friends at home, except upon the rarest occasions. And when he had recovered from the sorrow of losing her, his habits of reserve and seclusion were so confirmed that he lacked inclination and energy to break through them. It seemed so natural to him for Nellie and himself to be alone, that it had never struck him that the life was too dull for her, and when Mrs. Ponsonby made him aware of the fact, he felt a guilty sense of having failed in his duty to the girl, and hastened to repair his error at once, and thought himself most fortunate that the person who had pointed out the evil could supply the remedy.

The housekeeper was an important person in the banker's household, because she had been a devoted attendant on his deceased wife, and there was a kindly etiquette in force among the inmates of the mansion that she should be specially informed of any approaching event. So after dinner Ellen went to tell her of the coming of her companion.

"It is a good notion," said the old woman, "I'll not gainsay that, for we are all a bit aged for company to a young thing like you, but I had rather the young lady had come recommended by anyone than Mrs. Ponsonby. She do have a way of passing on to her friends people she wants to get rid of."

"Oh, don't say that!"

"It is true, Miss Ellen. That coachman your uncle took to please her, had such a dry throat that he was always stupid, trying to moisten it with drink, and was barely fit to drive a pig, let alone your uncle's beautiful horses; and the housemaid she passed on to the rector's wife wasn't all she might have been by a long way."

"You quite frighten me, nurse," Nellie said, with a little feint of alarm.

"I do not wish to do that," she replied gravely; she always understood words in their extreme literalness. "There isn't anybody who isn't right sometimes, and Mrs. Ponsonby may be right about this companion; but I know her little ways—mean, I call them, but then, I suppose, I don't look at things as ladies do."

A few days later Doris Hazlewood arrived in Mrs. Ponsonby's carriage alone. That lady had promised to come with her and introduce her to Ellen, but, instead, sent a perfumed little note pleading unexpected hindrance. Ellen read the honied phrases of excuse, and then went down to meet the stranger, feeling just a little nervous.

She found a pretty, graceful girl, a few years older than herself, looking at photographs, who in response to her gentle words of welcome said:

"I am very glad to come, and hope that I shall be able to make myself agreeable to you—useful, I believe, should be the word, but I must frankly admit, Miss Bowden, that I am not a useful person."

"There is nothing for you to do," replied candid Nellie. "My uncle and myself consider you our guest, and hope that you will be comfortable."

"Certainly I shall; but I have duties, and the chief among them is to bring back the roses to your cheeks. You have been pining."

Doris made a scarcely perceptible pause on the word, and Ellen blushed, and the speaker continued:

"Pining for want of companionship of young people. Please to regard me as the representative of young people. I will try to have as various moods as possible, so that I may seem many girls, though I am only one."

"Thank you," said Nellie, feeling that an answer was expected, and not knowing what to say.

"I must learn your tastes, Miss Bowden. Do you like girls to be sad, merry, or demure?"

"I like them to be exactly what they are."

"But some are very chameleons for changing."

"I doubt if I could ever much like those," said Nellie; "but will you let me show you your room?"

The two girls went together to the handsome chamber that was prepared for Miss Hazlewood. It opened into the little room that was Ellen's special domain, and where all her pet belongings were gathered—the gifts of her uncle and aunt, and the treasured relics of her father and mother.

After giving a glance of satisfaction round her own room, Doris looked into this.

"What a pretty woman!" she said, catching sight of the picture of a lady. Ellen courteously invited her to enter, and as she stood gazing at the face, said:

"That is my uncle's sister."

A few minutes later Doris was in her own chamber, looking in the glass.

"I am very like her," she thought; "when I looked at her I seemed to be gazing at myself."

She pushed her hair more off her forehead, and saw that the likeness was increased. When she came downstairs her coiffure was arranged much after the fashion of that of the portrait.

"I am so glad I have a little time to make friends with you before your father comes home."

"My uncle," suggested Nellie.

"Your uncle, of course. I have a bad habit of saying one word for another. Mrs. Ponsonby has told me so much of his liberality and kindness that I quite long to know him."

"You will soon do so," replied Ellen simply.

She loved and revered her uncle, but she could not praise him to a stranger.

Doris went back to the subject of Mrs. Ponsonby. She had much to say of the doings of that lady; she had travelled with her, had been at her London house, had looked on at one or two of her great receptions, and had been taken to a fancy ball, dressed as Queen Mary.

"How very kind of her!" cried Ellen.

"I doubt the kindness. I think she liked to show me off as a part of her establishment. It is not every great lady who has a dependent who makes up well as the unfortunate Mary. She said my hair and my eyes were just the right colour. I am sure I don't know why."

"They are very pretty," said Nellie, looking with shy criticism at the graceful head.

"Pretty! I do so hate the word. I should like to be beautiful, or great, or famous. Should not you?"

"I am well content as I am," Ellen said quietly. Afterwards she remembered, with a little surprise, that, much as Doris had said about Mrs. Ponsonby and herself, she had mentioned nothing from which Ellen could deduce how long she had known that lady, how she had become introduced to her, or where and how she had lived previously. It was curious that so much personal gossip should have revealed nothing of the speaker's antecedents. Ellen was not inquisitive about her companion, but it struck her as odd that so much candour should really reveal so little.

The banker greeted with grave kindness the stranger who had come to dwell under his roof, and the three were soon quite sociable together; and before the evening was over he told himself that the house was much brighter for the new comer's presence. She could sing, play, paint a little, take a hand at whist; she knew something more than the moves of chess, and was strong at backgammon, the banker's favourite game. In fact, as she said herself, beginning with a smile and ending almost with a tear: "I am jack-of-all-trades and master of none—a bad position for a poor orphan."

Mr. Bowden's voice and manner were very tender, as he asked her to walk in the garden before it was dark, to see the roses; he had great compassion for orphans, and always felt that they had a great claim upon him. Ellen, too, was touched, and took an early opportunity of whispering, "I am so sorry for you," and was momentarily repelled when Doris gave her a look that said, "I cannot understand;" but she quickly remembered, and, with warm pressure of Ellen's hand, whispered back:

"I thank you so much. I knew you were very sympathetic."

A few days later Doris was again standing before the picture of the fair lady as Ellen entered the room. "You admire her so much," she said.

"I am deeply interested in her," and there was a look of grave thoughtfulness on Doris's face that pleased Ellen, who had a liking for gravity and steadfastness.

"Hers was a sad story: she married in opposition to her friends, and, when her husband quite failed to get on in England, the little family emigrated. And many years later, when she was a widow and coming to Europe, thinking to do better for herself and her little girl, she was drowned."

"Poor mother!" sighed Doris. "And what became of the child?"

"She was saved with a few of the passengers."

"And—"

"That is all I know," replied Ellen.

"She is your cousin, and her mother your uncle's sister, and that is all you know," said Doris indignantly.

"Yes; uncle tried all means to get information, but we have never heard anything more of her."

In a few weeks Doris Hazlewood had won her way into all hearts but one.

The prejudiced housekeeper gave her warm allegiance, praised her wise sayings and her respect for those older than herself, taught her to make a syllabub, and permitted her to peep into her famous book where recipes and newspaper-cuttings were pasted indiscriminately. The crotchety gardener, with whose views on the grafting of roses she fully agreed, thought her over sensible for a woman, and the other servants declared her beautiful and sweet-mannered. The banker was delighted with her, and looked upon her presence as a great gain. In the first days of her coming, he had felt that there was something about her that was familiar to him, and as time passed this sensation grew upon him, until he sometimes inadvertently spoke as if they had known each other for years. Perhaps this feeling was due to her marked resemblance to the portrait of his sister, of which circumstance he was entirely unconscious.

Ellen admired Doris, and had much good-will towards her; but her faith in her was weak. She noted discrepancies of statement that were more than carelessness, as they never occurred except for obvious reasons; and her swift changes from mirth to sadness were distasteful to her. She likened the girl's soul to shallow water stirred to its depths by a pebble, so easily was it moved; and she knew that she had liked best the old days when she was alone. She was a little sad mostly, and sometimes, when Doris was chatting brightly to her uncle, her mind would wander to some bygone pleasantness, and suddenly she would be startled by the deep pathos of her companion's voice as she made some reference to the past, that inferred that it was too sorrowful to be spoken about. And then the banker would grow retrospective, and, recalling the misery caused by unforgiving hearts in the years gone by, would urge the girls, if ever they quarrelled with anyone, to hasten to make up differences, lest it should be too late for reconciliation. He, too, would be silent, and Nellie sorry, well knowing that he was bitterly regretting his harshness to his sister; but she could not comfort him. She was too shy, with Doris looking on, to put her arms round his neck and kiss him, as she would have done in former times. He missed her gentle caress, and fancied that she was growing less fond of him.

Once Doris was standing before the picture that had so singular an attraction for her, when she said abruptly to Ellen:

"Do you want to find your cousin?"

"My uncle would be delighted to have her safe here."

"But you yourself, I mean; do you want her?"

Ellen hesitated; the coming of one stranger had not increased her happiness.

"Ah, you do not; you are jealous of her." And Doris turned away with a gesture of contempt.

Ellen felt herself to be very wicked and uncharitable, and wondered if somebody who had danced with her in the winter at Mrs. Ponsonby's, and had shown a very kind interest in her when he made several calls upon her uncle in the spring, had looked deep into her heart and seen the evil dormant there. If so, she would never regret that he had left her, without saying the words whose meaning she seemed to have read in his eyes. To see blame or regret in his face would be sorrow indeed; better far never more to meet.

## CHAPTER II.

ONE afternoon the girls were drawing in the morning-room. The door-windows were wide open. Sward, and path, and flowers, for some distance, were in soft shadow, but beyond, the golden sunlight was full upon tree, plant, and blossom, making more distinctive and brilliant their various forms and colours. The sky was deeply blue; no bird sang, only the bees hummed drowsily. A gentle wind swayed the branches of the trees, and wafted sweet scents into the quiet room.

The banker entered, saying:

"How pretty and how comfortable you look, girls. How I wish the other little one was with you."

Doris rose from her chair a little pale, and said:

"Is your desire so very earnest to know her?"

"I would give my right hand," replied the banker fervently.

"Then look at me. I am Dorothy Haslemere;" and she stood before him calm and resolute. "Am I not like my mother, your sister? Look well at me. Am I not the image of her portrait? Compare me with it. Are not her eyes mine, her hair mine, her mouth mine, her form mine, even to the pose of her head and the folding of her hands?" And she stood before him the exact presentment of the portrait. "Does not your sight recognise the resemblance, the identity; your heart feel it; your mind acknowledge it? They do, Uncle James. You have felt always that you had



known someone like me in the past. I have seen that in your glance. And we have never been as strangers to each other, the unknown kinship was too strong for that."

"Dorothy!" cried the old man.

"You see your sister in me. You acknowledge me as her child," she said with grave earnestness.

"I do. My heart has done so already, I think, Dolly;" and he opened his arms, and as he kissed the face that rested on his bosom two tears fell upon it, and he knew that the love for his sister that had been dammed up in his heart would rush out on her child in a flood.

With his arm still round Doris, Mr. Bowden said:

"Nellie, do you not welcome your cousin?"

The girl was partly stupefied by what she had heard and seen, and by the startling rapidity of the change in their relations to each other. She rose and moved slowly towards her uncle as he stood proudly holding Dorothy's hand. Her face was void of intelligence as that of a sleepwalker.

"I wish you joy, Doris," she said in monotonous voice.

"Kiss her," said the banker.

Nellie coldly touched with her lips the cheek that was turned towards her, then went back to her seat.

"Have you anything of your mother's, Dorothy?" His voice seemed to linger caressingly on the name so long unspoken.

"Do you forget the wreck, uncle? The 'Orion' carried to the bottom of the sea, as well as my dear mother, all her treasures, all the little mementoes of her childhood, of her lost husband. All his letters and yours."

"Mine!"

"Yes; you were kind once. She talked to me often of you, and treasured a few loving letters. She had destroyed the cruel ones—those you wrote just before she left England, when you refused to see her or listen to her prayers for reconciliation."

"I know, and I regret it; but I sent her the money that she needed."

"Yes, money; you sent her money when she wanted love." And the girl stood aloof from him, beautiful in her scorn. "She hated the loveless gift, but she used it for the sake of her husband and her child. She would have starved rather than have touched it for herself, but for us she sacrificed her just pride. The dearest wish of her heart was to return it to you. And it was mine. I have hoped that when we met I should come to you with it in my hands, but they are empty, uncle," and she extended the beautiful pink palms towards him with exquisite dramatic action.

"Thank Heaven!" he said. "I could not have my money thrown back to me."

"I have worked hard to do it. I respected my mother's pride."

"Spare me, Dorothy. I too have suffered."

"You have not been poor and alone in a strange land, but," she continued with sudden softness, "you have repented of your harshness. I have witnessed your remorse, else were I Doris Hazlewood still. And you have hungered to give to the child all the affection you denied her mother, so, uncle, I stand revealed to you as Dorothy Haslemere."

"My sister to the life," he said, "but with more spirit and force."

There was exultation in his words.

"Yes, I could not be crushed, extinguished like my mother. It is my hard life that has made me different; sorrow and endurance have made me strong."

"I sought eagerly for you, Dorothy; I would have sheltered you from all grief and trouble had it been possible. I wanted you."

"And I have striven to come to you, and my will is strong. For years my mind looked straight to this meeting, but I meant to come to blame, and, uncle, I am come to love."

"And be loved," he said, as the tender affection in her eyes thrilled him to the heart.

At this moment Nellie's head, which had been resting upon her hands, fell to the table with a dull thud. She had fainted.

Uncle and niece went to her.

"She is jealous," said Dorothy; "yet she has had all your love hitherto, and might spare me a little now."

The old man was startled. How thin and ghastly the girl looked! She was his cherished darling, but in the joy of finding the lost he had forgotten her.

They laid her on a couch, and bathed her hands and face with water. The banker would have called the housekeeper, but Dorothy said it was better not. And presently Nellie opened frightened eyes that grew calm as they rested on her uncle.

"You are better, pet? It is the heat," he said.

"Yes, the heat," Nellie answered languidly, and Dorothy fanned her with a screen of peacock's feathers.

Later, Dorothy told her uncle that a lady—the only one saved from the wreck—took her to France with her, and befriended her

until she died. Then, always full of the intention of seeing her uncle without his knowing her for his relative, she called herself Doris Hazlewood, and got a situation as English governess to some little children, and very gladly accepted Mrs. Ponsonby's offer to engage her as companion when chance led to her meeting that lady in Paris. Her mother had often spoken to her of Littlepool, and it was with great delight that she learned that Mrs. Ponsonby had a residence near it, at which she occasionally resided.

Dorothy had a way of referring to kind things said of her uncle by her mother that made him feel that he ought to do very much for her to make amends for his neglect of his sister. So he made her rich presents, and in the access of generosity, prompted by some remark of her mother about his liberal home and open hand that she had remembered opportunely, he bought a pony carriage for her use and Nellie's.

Dorothy drove well, as she did most things, and by right of her few additional years, took the lead in the house, and Ellen became a person of little importance. The girl subsided into her changed position quietly. Her uncle would have been indignant if anyone had said that he loved or considered her less than before, but the brilliant Dorothy was always ready to amuse him, and put herself so easily and persistently to the front, that Ellen was sometimes a little unnoticed and forgotten.

She was unhappy; all the pleasantness of her life was slipping from her. She was rather weak in health and inclined to be moody, and she felt that there was a spirit of antagonism springing up between herself and her cousin, known at present only to themselves, but which she feared could not be always secret, and which would greatly displease her uncle. She fought against it, as also did Dorothy, who liked to be friendly with everybody, but was quick to take offence with her cousin, and had a bitter tongue which she sometimes used against Nellie with poignant effect.

Once the banker noticed some ill-will between the girls, and he spoke to Nellie kindly, bidding her not to be jealous of her cousin, for his love and his wealth were enough for them both. Nellie denied the imputation.

"But you seem almost to dislike her at times." She could not deny this, and he added: "Then you must be jealous, for she is good and affectionate."

The girl began to cry. He kissed her and said:

"Get over this bitterness, my pet; it is not worthy of you."

And she was humbled and ashamed, but she soon roused herself and tried to put away the hateful feeling, and to see nothing but the good in her cousin's character.

### CHAPTER III.

DOROTHY took a fancy for the sea, and urged Nellie's pale looks and languor as a reason for going there. The banker got apartments for them at a pretty little village just beginning to gain a place in public favour, and placed them under the care of the housekeeper.

They had been there about a week, and were walking on the most frequented part of the beach, when Nellie observed a gentleman, with a look of surprise and recognition on his face, coming towards them as if to speak. He did not, however, but turned aside when close to them, and Nellie, glancing at Dorothy, saw a curious expression of reproof and command in her eyes.

Afterwards she observed that the man was following them at a distance, and said so to her cousin, who answered it lightly:

"It is the fault of your *beaux yeux*."

The next morning Ellen was very wakeful, and rose and went into the little garden before anyone was astir in the house. The gate was ajar, and she was tempted to run down the little lane by the side of the house that led to the shore, and see how grand and beautiful the ocean looked in the early sunlight. She had gone but a little way down the lane, when she saw the stranger of the beach and her cousin standing together. Dorothy seemed to be pleading earnestly and to gain her point, for the tall man kissed her and went away. She advanced towards her cousin, who exclaimed involuntarily:

"What would uncle say?"

"It is only my brother," said Dorothy haughtily.

"Your brother!"

A deep red came into Dorothy's face as she said sharply:

"Are not all men our brothers, Simplicity, when it is not convenient to introduce them to our friends in their true personality? He cannot be my real brother, as you know I have none."

"I hardly understand," stammered Nellie.

"No," replied her cousin, "you have been protected and cared for always, and have not had to fight your own battles like me." And Nellie was softened, and listened compassionately to a little tale Dorothy told her of how she had been wooed and almost won, and then the man proved false, and she had resolved to forget him, and had succeeded in doing so, and the man came back and wanted his old place in her affections, but it could not be; he had kissed her,

but now they had parted for ever. Then she asked Nellie to promise never to make mention of him to herself or anyone else, and the girl gravely promised.

The two went to look at the sea, and were better friends than they had been yet. Mr. Bowden came down for a few days, and found Nellie better, and Dorothy charming, congratulated himself that he had two such nieces, and laughed and said that men would soon conspire to rob him of such treasures.

The next visit, he took them back home with him. Dorothy had grown tired of the place. The covert dislike to each other had come to the surface again, they had wearied of each other's society, and Dorothy, in revenge for Nellie's reserve, spoke of the concealment that like the worm in the bud, made pale her cheek, and threatened to tell her uncle that she was a love-lorn maiden if she did not rouse herself and be companionable.

The old house grew gayer, and people who in the past had only called, or at most looked at the grapes and the flowers, now came to afternoon-tea, and sometimes to dinner. The girls went out, and Miss Haslemere was much admired and talked about, and made many friends; but few people cared about Nellie, who seemed to be losing all her youthfulness. She felt herself eclipsed and dominated by her cousin, who, with the merry malice that amused lookers-on, could taunt her bitterly.

And yet once again, when she had been stung to a reprisal, her uncle had whispered to her:

"She is a sweet, good girl, Nellie, and sometimes I fear that you do not quite value her as you should."

Then Nellie found the world a dreary place and a lonely, and wondered how it was that she was losing the love of the two hearts whose affection she most prized—her uncle's, and the other—she would not give him a name even to herself, he was only a memory.

The banker came home early one day to drive with the girls. The three were standing on the lawn in the sunshine waiting for the carriage. Neither had noticed a man coming through the park. He crossed the grass to them, and they were rather startled by his saying:

"You here, Doris; I thought you had left England. Your letter said so."

"I do not know you," she said. Then, looking at Ellen, added: "I do not wish to know you."

She moved from him, and putting her hand on Mr. Bowden's arm, said:

"This person insults me by his presence. Will you bid him leave me?"

"Doris—sister, are you mad?"

"This gentleman will tell you that I have no brother."

"Certainly she has no brother," said the banker; "she is my niece. May I request you to leave us."

"And no father?" asked the stranger of Dorothy.

"None," she answered firmly, looking him full in the face with steady eyes.

"You deny our father, our tried, patient father, who has borne with you so long. This is too much!"

"There is some mistake," suggested Mr. Bowden.

"Ellen knows of this person," said Dorothy, addressing the banker, "and she knows that he is not my brother."

"You told me so," said Ellen.

"Do not believe her," cried the stranger; "she is steeped to the lips in falsehood. Doris, will you come home with me, and make confession to this gentleman you have so cruelly imposed upon?" She turned from him with scorn. "It is your last chance," he said bitterly. She moved not. "Mr. Bowden, in two days time I will bring my father to you, and then you will know whose child she is. Doris, will you come?"

She was as immovable as a statue. He lifted his hat to them all and strode away.

"He is mad," said Dorothy, "or is it the excitement of wine? In that case he may sleep away his folly."

"He seemed sober," replied the banker; "but his hurry is insane; he is out of sight already."

Mr. Bowden helped the girls into the carriage, and as Dorothy took her seat she said:

"I wonder what his business at the house was?"

No one could tell her, and the subject was allowed to drop.

The banker had not forgotten that both his nieces had seen the man before, but the present was not the time for enquiry.

Through the long drive Dorothy was most amusing; she seemed resolved that her companions should not have a moment for reflection. The banker was quite carried away by her vivacity, but Ellen thought her heartless, and wished that she would cease the chatter that fell upon her ears as pitilessly as hail upon the window-pane. She recollected that Dorothy herself had said that she once loved the man, and, if he had lost his wits through love of her, she owed

him compassion. And Ellen felt all her old aversion to her cousin growing deeper and deeper, until she wished earnestly that she had never been found; then she reproached herself for the wish, and a sense of unreality came over her, as if all that had happened of late was but the phantasy of a dream.

In the evening Dorothy made reference to the stranger when she was alone with her uncle—mentioned that he had addressed Nellie and herself in the same strain at the seaside.

"He seemed in earnest," said the banker; "perhaps it is a case of mistaken identity."

"Perhaps so," she answered, "but it need not trouble us; I, at least, am safe and strong in your love and protection."

"They shall never fail you, Dolly."

She kissed his hand with the grace that made all she did seem the right thing to be done.

The next morning she called Mr. Bowden's attention to Nellie's pale face, and suggested that the fresh breezes of the Atlantic, or the air of Swiss mountains, would do her much good. Would he not let them go away at once—to-morrow? She would get everything ready. She delighted in doing things in a rush. He did not know what a capable girl she was—what an excellent cousin!

He answered with a smile, pleased at her eagerness for Nellie's good, that he was too old to be hurried, but that a doctor should see Nellie, and under his advice they should go at leisure to ocean or mountains as he should decide. She laughed, commended him for having resisted her wiles, and he went into town amused and flattered, and satisfied that he possessed the most charming niece in the world.

The following afternoon, Dorothy asked Ellen to drive to the station with her. She was sending off a box to a friend, and wished to pay the carriage.

They went. Dorothy spoke to the ticket-collector at his little window. The train came in; she saw the box deposited in the luggage-van.

"I have managed nicely," she said as they walked back.

The door of a first-class carriage was open; she stepped lightly in, arranging her dress daintily. The guard closed the door. Dorothy gave Nellie an insolent smile, as she cried in her sweetest tones, "*Au revoir!*" The train steamed away out of the station, and Ellen stood alone on the platform, bewildered and amazed.

She went back to the carriage, and, as she drove home, came to the conclusion that this strange proceeding was some frolic of her cousin's, and that she trusted to her winning ways to make peace with her uncle on her return.

Ellen was coming downstairs to join her uncle, who she believed had come in while she was dressing. As she reached the hall, the outer door was opened, and three gentlemen entered. She recognised the tall, young one that she had seen twice before, and understood that the white-haired one was his father; but the sight of the third made her heart stand still. It was the Henry Hervey whose eyes had said more than his lips. He saw her, and, shaking hands, the two followed the others into the drawing-room. Then he introduced his companions to her, saying that they were very old friends whom he had not seen for many years until within the last few weeks.

Ellen was nervous, and the three men were all more or less eager and constrained, and it was a relief to her when her uncle came in, and after a few minutes took the venerable old man with him to the library. The young man went to a window and looked out, playing restlessly with his watch-chain. Mr. Hervey, who had never been far from Ellen, came closer to her and said softly:

"I have longed to see you. And you—have you missed me a little?"

"I thought you had forgotten me."

"I could never do that, but I feared to speak too soon, and circumstances kept me from you longer than I expected. I think I was wrong—I should have been bolder. May I be so now?"

Something in Ellen's face gave him the desired answer, and he was about to take her hand, when a servant came in, saying:

"Miss Haslemere is wanted in the library, but she is not in her room, and this letter was found there."

Ellen took the letter addressed to herself, opened it, and read:

"SWEET COUSIN,

"Do not break your tender heart for me; I have played high and lost. The picture and its story put the idea into my head, and I made a good Dorothy Haslemere. I am sure Mr. Bowden will endorse that statement.—Your loving friend, "DULCIE HILL.

"My humble acknowledgments to Mrs. Steven for so kindly allowing me to peruse her incomparable commonplace book."

"I will go to the library," she said to the servant. "I am so glad," she whispered to Mr. Hervey. Her words were an enigma to him, but he saw the brightness in her face, and was glad also.

She gave the letter into her uncle's hands, saying: "Doris left for London this morning."

Mr. Bowden read the letter. He hardly gathered all its meaning, but he understood he had been tricked—befooled.

"Is this your daughter's writing?" he asked the old man.

"Yes," he answered readily; "and it is her style. She is heartless and cruel. I am tempted to hope that I may never hear of her again. News of her always brings sorrow and humiliation."

"I am very, very sorry for you," said Mr. Bowden, shaking hands warmly with him.

"And I am grieved that she should have brought trouble into your life," he replied.

"It is little harm—little harm, that she has done us," he said kindly; then noticing Nellie, he added: "I am afraid I was less kind to you, my pet, than I ought to have been—you were wiser than I."

"Mischief, always making mischief," said the grief-stricken old man. "She is indeed one to bring the grey hairs of her father with sorrow to the grave."

"Do not be grieved for me," said Ellen tenderly, deeply touched by his misery. "I shall forget her in a day."

"Thank Heaven!" was the fervent answer.

To the banker's ear there was a new and glad ring in the girl's voice, and when he looked at her face he marvelled at the happiness there. The old man, moving to take his leave, said:

"My son is with Mr. Hervey."

Then the banker's mind, quickened by the excitement of the moment, caught a clue to the change in Ellen, and rejoiced that it was not all due to the withdrawal of the supposed cousin.

"As honourable men as ever lived," said Mr. Hervey, as the three watched the father and son walk sadly away.

"I pity them from my heart," replied the banker. "Ah, Nellie, we must be all-sufficing to each other in the future."

Mr. Hervey forbore to put in his claim for Nellie that evening, but the next day he did so, and was successful. And the banker used to say for many years, "That as he lost a niece he gained a nephew," and Nellie would smile joyfully, for time neither dulled nor lessened her love for her husband.

## The Editor's Note Book.

THE prospects of the London season for 1884 were never particularly brilliant, and now, on the top of political doubts and Parliamentary dissensions, comes the lamented death of the Duke of Albany as the finishing blow. Nothing now remains to complete the discomfiture of the West End tradesmen but a dissolution, which may be brought about by the occurrence of any one of some half-dozen probable contingencies.

THE late Duke was not so well known to the public as his brothers, his delicate health having condemned him to a quieter life than is led by the other sons of the Queen, but where he was known he succeeded in making himself popular and respected. The affectionate sympathy with which the intelligence of his premature death was received was creditable alike to the people and their Sovereign.

OF course the early intelligence of the melancholy event comprised all that variety of circumstantial but inexact statement, which makes newspaper reading nowadays so speculatively interesting. The Duke, we were told, had fallen upstairs, had fallen downstairs, had fallen off a chair; he had died of apoplexy, of epilepsy, of concussion of the brain.

By the time the actual facts of the case were made known, the papers had been filled with sensational accounts of the manner in which the Queen had received the mournful news, and of her first interview with the poor young widow. These were all officially contradicted after a day or two, and it became evident that the reporters had again depended on their imaginations for their facts. Newspaper enterprise is, no doubt, a very good thing, but surely the line ought to be drawn at fiction.

WRITING so long before the day of publication as I am obliged to do, it is almost dangerous to venture on any comment on such a situation as that at Khartoum, which may undergo complete alteration at any moment, but I think that enough has happened to show that General Gordon's mission has unfortunately failed, and that the untrustworthiness of the troops on whom he has to rely exposes him to serious danger. The telegram from the country along the Red Sea coast announcing "the close of the war" may be true enough, but must not be taken to mean that our Egyptian difficulties are very much nearer solution than they were before.

THE battle of Cincinnati, as it may be called, is mainly interesting to the inhabitants of that city and the State of Ohio, but may also be recommended to the attention of politicians who are not indisposed to play fast and loose with the passions of the mob. One of the first things the rioters did, following the example of the Parisian Communists, was to burn down the Court House, which contained the archives of the State and, no doubt, much legal evidence, the destruction of which will be useful to a great many of the ringleaders. The moral of the story is the old one, that it is impossible to estimate the mischief which may arise if a lawless mob is allowed to get out of hand, even for half an hour.

TELEGRAMS from Madras state that an epidemic of small-pox is raging with great violence in that presidency, and that the mortality is mainly amongst non-vaccinated children. It also appears that the chief difficulty in dealing with the epidemic arises from a widespread superstition among Hindoos that small-pox is a goddess, whose visits ought not to be interfered with. After all, there is not much to choose between these Hindoos and our own more civilised anti-vaccinationists.

THE announcement by a Temperance Committee of two handsome prizes for "a good temperance drink, which shall take the place of the cheap intoxicating liquors to which the public are accustomed," is in the nature of a confession that mankind wants something more than merely to quench its thirst with water or lemonade, and that the world-wide instinct which leads to the consumption of some form of fermented liquor is not so unnatural a one as Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Dr. Richardson would like us to believe.

WHAT the teetotalers want, in point of fact, is a stimulant which shall have something of the cheering effect of alcoholic drink, without the accompanying disqualification of producing intoxication if consumed too freely. It is of no use to point out to the advocates of total abstinence that a moderate use of the good things of this life is the simplest way out of the difficulty. Perhaps, on the whole, it is well that there should be an organisation to assist in the reform of people who cannot drink without making beasts of themselves, but I think it will take a long time for chemists to invent a wholesome drink which will stimulate without over exciting the converted drunkard.

BARON HUDDLESTON, in refusing to stay execution in an action for damages in which he had decided against the Guardians of St. George's-in-the-East, who were the defendants, made a remark which may be commended to the attention of some of the learned judges who are far too ready to encourage, in all sorts of cases, and under all sorts of circumstances, that system of appealing which grievously handicaps a poor suitor as against a rich one, and the abuse of which is one of the crying evils of our present system of legal procedure.

SAID Baron Huddleston: "No, it is a cruel thing to parties in a cause that they should be dragged from one court to another on an appeal that may never succeed. Unless I have some doubt I will never sanction an appeal." Whatever the profession may think of this, there can be no doubt that the public will cordially agree with the views of the learned Baron.

ONE would hardly have expected that so Conservative a body as the City Commissioners of Sewers would have unanimously agreed to a resolution asking the Sanitary Committee to consider the desirability of erecting a Crematorium at the Ilford Cemetery, in order that the public might have the option of burning instead of burying the bodies of their dead. It would seem as if the question of cremation had emerged from the "fad" stage, and was about very speedily to take its place among the reforms, the carrying out of which is only a question of time.

THE *Daily Telegraph* thinks that so long as people can disappear, or be murdered in London, without the discovery by the police of the circumstances of the disappearances, or the murderers being discovered and punished, it is a mockery for Mr. Howard Vincent to assert that London is the safest capital in Europe. But it must always be remembered that London is really a vast province and not a city at all, and that it is really difficult to say—not in a leading article, but as a matter of practical business—how, unless he is assisted by happy accident, a detective is to discover a murderer who is sufficiently astute as to leave absolutely no evidence behind him.

THE idiotic form of amusement known as practical joking seems to be coming into fashion again, and the success of the elaborate hoax which was carried out so effectively at the Haymarket Theatre some weeks ago will probably lead to a number of more or less ill-natured mystifications. The Haymarket hoax was one of the most pardonable of its kind, inasmuch as little sympathy could be felt for the victims, while the contrivers were able personally to enjoy the result of their scheme; but it would puzzle all Earlswood to say wherein

lies the humour of sending a number of bogus orders for goods to be delivered at a particular house at a given time.

EIGHT hundred and sixty pounds for a print, which not many years ago was sold by auction for about a fortieth part of that amount, is not a bad price considering the "badness of the times" and the fact that there is "no money." Whether the measure of a collector's joy is in direct proportion to the price he pays is not very certain, but it certainly looks very like it.

MR. HERBERT FRY'S valuable "Guide to the London Charities" is not a facetious publication, but even in its business-like pages there is an occasional gleam of unconscious humour. Thus, "The Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace," with an income of something more than three thousand pounds, has, under the heading "Number of persons benefited last year," the significant words, "No return." I wonder who, except the paid officials and the printer, was in any way the better for that three thousand pounds.

C. D.

## Iron as the Colouring Matter in Nature.

A DEEPER interest and larger beneficence belong to that ochreous earth of iron which stains the marble of your springs. It stains the great earth wherever you can see it, far and wide—it is the colouring substance appointed to colour the globe for the sight, as well as subdue it to the service of man. You have seen your hills covered with snow, and, perhaps, have enjoyed at first the contrast of their fair white with the dark blocks of pine-woods; but have you ever considered how you would like them always white—not pure white, but dirty white—the white of thaw, with all the chill of snow in it, but none of its brightness? That is what the colour of the earth would be without its iron; that would be its colour, not here or there only, but in all places, and at all times. Follow out that idea till you get it in some detail. Think first of your pretty gravel walks in your gardens, yellow and fine, like plots of sunshine between the flower-beds; fancy them all turned suddenly to the colour of ashes. That is what they would be without iron ochre. Think of your winding walks over the common, as warm to the eye as they are dry to the foot, and imagine them all laid down suddenly with grey cinders. Then pass beyond the common into the country, and pause at the first ploughed field that you see sweeping up the hillsides in the sun, with its deep brown furrow, and wealth of ridges, all aglow, heaved aside by the plough-share, like deep folds of a mantle of russet velvet—fancy it all changed suddenly into grisly furrows in a field of mud. That is what it would be without iron. Pass on, in fancy, over hill and dale, till you reach the bending line of the seashore; go down upon its breezy beach—watch the white foam flashing among the amber of it, and all the blue sea embayed in belts of gold; then fancy those circlets of far sweeping shore suddenly put into mounds of mourning—all those golden sands turned into grey slime; the fairies no more able to call to each other, "Come unto these yellow sands," but, "Come unto these drab sands." That is what they would be without iron. Iron is in some sort, therefore, the sunshine and light of landscape, so far as that light depends upon the ground.—*Ruskin.*

## Cookery.

### NEW RECIPES FOR OLD SWEETMEATS.

ONE of the great conveniences of the present day is the large number of economical preparations for culinary and domestic use. Not only have we numerous kinds of prepared soups, more or less excellent and moderate in price, but there are tinned vegetables, meat, fish, fowl, and fruit, all of first-rate quality, for it does not pay to preserve any but the best articles, though some brands are far superior to others. Condensed milk has now an established reputation, and is an invaluable addition to the fresh milk supply. Nothing can be better than a cup of coffee made with Café Vierge, an extract of coffee which may be cited as possessing the highest strength and flavour, with the addition, when required, of a teaspoonful or two of Swiss milk. Most useful, too, are the preparations of cocoa manufactured with a view to enhancing the nourishment of the staple ingredient by such additions as malt, as in Liebig's cocoa.

No one, in these days, need be worried about the preparations for a party, especially in the sweetmeat-department, for jellies, creams, and custard are all so nearly prepared for the table as to require little more skill than goes to mixing the contents of bottles and tins with the requisite quantity of milk or water. By all these useful and excellent preparations, catering is made a much easier and simpler affair for both cook and housekeeper than at any other period of our domestic history.

In this paper we purpose to give a few recipes for making favourite little cakes and sweetmeats with very little trouble and comparatively small expense. Time was, when preparing almonds for cakes was an affair of much labour, and it was only at certain seasons of the year that cocoa-nuts were to be had. At present almonds can be bought ready pounded, and desiccated cocoa-nut is, for culinary purposes, as good as that which is freshly grated. To add to the conveniences of having these nuts ready prepared, we now have dried whites of egg, known as "Nelson's Albumen." This preparation is the whites of eggs carefully dried, so that it will keep for an indefinite length of time. It is useful for any purpose to which the white of egg is applied, and answers well for clearing soup and jelly. When required for use, the Albumen is soaked in cold water, and whisked in the usual way.

This Albumen will be found very useful, when, as in the following recipes, only the whites of eggs are required for use, or when, as is often the case, an extra white of egg is wanted.

The strength of the Albumen is fully equal to that of the fresh egg, and it is even more readily whisked to a strong froth.

### MACAROONS.

Beat up a packet of Nelson's Albumen with three teaspoonfuls of cold water to a strong froth, mix in half a pound of finely sifted sugar, and two ounces of pounded sweet and bitter almonds in equal quantities. Flour a baking-sheet, and lay on it sheets of wafer-paper, which can be bought at the confectioner's, and drop on to them at equal distances a small piece of the paste. Bake in a moderate oven for ten minutes, or until the macaroons are crisp and of a golden colour. When done cut round the wafer-paper with a knife, and put the cakes on a sieve to dry.

In following recipes for this class of cake some judgment is required in the choice of the sugar, and the result will vary greatly, according as this is of the right sort or otherwise. A little, more or less, sugar may be required, and only practice can make perfect in this matter. As a general direction it may be given that the sugar must be of the finest quality, and be very finely sifted, but not flour-like.

### CHOCOLATE CAKES.

Whisk a packet of Nelson's Albumen with three teaspoonfuls of cold water to the strongest possible froth, mix in half a pound of finely sifted sugar, two teaspoonfuls of Schweitzer's Cocotina, and six drops of Nelson's Essence of Vanilla. Sift paper thickly with sugar, and drop small teaspoonfuls of the mixture at equal distances on it, allowing space for the cakes to spread a little. Bake for ten minutes in a moderate oven.

### COCOA NUT CAKES.

Beat up a packet of Nelson's Albumen with three teaspoonfuls of cold water to a strong froth, mix with it a quarter of a pound of finely sifted sugar, and two ounces of Challen's Coker Nut. Put sheets of wafer-paper on a baking-tin, drop small pieces of the cake mixture on to it, keeping them in a rocky shape. Bake in a moderate oven for ten minutes, or until crisp.

### COCOA NUT ROCK.

Boil half a pound of loaf-sugar in a gill of water until it is beginning to return again to sugar, when cool, add a packet of Nelson's Albumen, whisked to a strong froth with three teaspoonfuls of water, and stir in a quarter of a pound of Challen's Coker Nut. Spread the mixture, not more than an inch thick, in a greased pudding-tin, and place in a cool oven to dry. When done, cut in neat squares, and keep in tins in a cool, dry place.

### AMANDINES.

Blanch and pound to a paste three ounces of bitter almonds with a little rose-water. Beat three-quarters of a pound of sugar to a cream, with a quarter of a pound of butter. Work in a quarter of a pound of flour and the almond paste, and having thoroughly mixed these ingredients by beating with a wooden spoon, stir in three packets of Nelson's Albumen whisked to a strong froth with nine teaspoonfuls of cold water. Bake in small tins as for queen-cakes; when done turn them out and ornament some of them with minced pistachio kernels, or coloured sugar, or they may be iced.

### APPLE MERINGUE.

Beat up two packets of Nelson's Albumen with six small teaspoonfuls of water, and stir them into half a pound of stiff apple-sauce, flavoured with lemon-extract. Put the meringue on a bright tin or silver dish, pile it up high in a rocky shape, and bake in a quick oven for ten minutes.

### MERINGUES.

Soak three packets of Nelson's Albumen in nine small teaspoonfuls of water, whisk to a very strong froth, and mix with three-quarters of a pound of finely sifted sugar. As quickly as possible fill a tablespoon with the mixture, and put it on a strip of paper placed on a baking-board; repeat this, working rapidly, until all the meringues are made, then sift fine sugar over them, and put them, without loss of time, in the oven, the heat of which must only be sufficient to dry the meringues, and give them a delicate brown tint. When the meringues are coloured, and feel firm to the touch, take them off the papers, and with great care scoop out from the inside as much of the soft sugar mixture as you can without injuring the case. When this

is done, again place the meringues, the hollow side uppermost, on fresh strips of paper, and let them remain in the same moderate heat until perfectly crisp. When cold fill one case with whipped cream, place another over it, and if necessary to keep it in position, use a very little white of egg. The meringues must not be filled with cream until just before serving, as of course the moisture may dissolve them.

## Kartaline.

MANY ladies who have leisure time, and who are fond of painting, without possessing enough talent and originality to produce first-class work, will be glad to hear of this process, which is an easy and effective way of colouring photographs, and one that essentially differs from the usual methods. We are all familiar with the washed-out look most photographs coloured by amateurs present, and with the aggressive way in which jewellery, when it is painted, will start out of the picture; but in Kartaline the colouring matter is vivid, and becomes incorporated with the chemicals, and so a part of the print, leaving the surface of the photo free from all roughness, and of the smooth creamy delicacy that is seen in water-colour painting upon ivory. Another advantage of using this method is that it is indelible.

THE Kartaline colours are sold in boxes, with the necessary medium and preservative and small camel's-hair brushes; but each article can be bought singly. The colours consist of white, flesh (Nos. 1 and 2), vermilion, carmine, light and golden yellow, light and wood brown, sienna, blue, violet, purple, green, and black. They are dry, except the black, and when used have to be wetted with the medium before they are applied. All the shades of colour are very deep, and the only skill necessary consists in putting them on and wiping them off, so that the colour remaining on the photo is sufficiently strong and not too vivid. Any well-printed photo can be thus painted, and does not require to be removed from its card; but vignette pictures of ladies in evening dress or fancy costume, or children's heads, are the most effective.

THE process is as follows: Have a tumbler of water at hand, into which to drop the brushes, so as to wash them after applying colour, a clean small face-sponge, a saucer, the medium, and photo. Take the photo, and wet it all over; if the tongue is used to wet the photo it will be more effective than water; but, if this is objected to, use the water and sponge. Commence by painting the flesh. For a fair woman and a child use flesh tint No. 2; for a dark woman, flesh tint No. 1; for a medium complexion, first a little flesh No. 1 and then flesh No. 2. Mix a little colour with the medium, take it up with the brush and drop it on the cheek, and wipe it off at once with the sponge. Look at the result, and put on more colour, if what is on already is too pale. Remember, when putting on the colour, that, after it has once been allowed to sink into the photo, it can never be softened, so be particularly careful not to put too much on at a time or to mix it very strongly. Keep on applying the flesh tints to the face until the complexion is made evenly over the whole surface; then mix some blue, and put this on and take off immediately in places where shadows are visible, also at the roots of the hair, round the eyes, at the chin and nostrils; and when these shadows are formed blend all together with a final wash of the flesh tint over the whole face. Work in the hands and arms with the two flesh tints and with the blue shadows. The lips, eyes, and hair of the picture are next painted. The iris of the eye paint with blue, brown, or black, according to its colour, the pupil with a touch of black; touch the ball of the eye with a little white to make its highest light, and put a touch of white in the iris; carefully mark out the eyebrows and eyelashes with sienna, light-brown, or wood-brown, and work these in with a brush that is nearly dry. Soften every tint by taking it off, except the last touches to the eyelashes and the reflected white lights. Work the lips in with flesh tint No. 2, and constantly wipe off and remove their colour, so as to leave them strong in tone without hardness. A little blue in the shadow of the lips will help to soften them. Work the hair tints in the same shades as the eyebrows. Touch in the jewellery with the same care as the flesh tints, make gold ornaments with golden-yellow and with white reflections. Silver ornaments with white, mixed with blue, and with strong white lights.

THE drapery, lace, and background of the photo are worked in when the finer portions are completed. For the drapery the colours can be mixed by one tint being laid on over another, and reds obtained of various shades by using a wash of yellow before applying the carmine or vermilion. Yellow, as a first wash, with various browns afterwards, will give good shades. For the lace, touch in white or black rather strongly. In working at large surfaces, have sufficient colour ready mixed in a saucer, and put it on with a large brush and sponge it off. By applying plenty of colour at once, a uniform shade over the whole drapery will be obtained. The first tints should be thus put on and washed off; but the final tints are allowed to dry on the photo. Do not use green for dresses, and only sparingly in the backgrounds. It is used for tree foliage, but never without brown and yellow added to it, to soften its tone. Black is another hard colour,

and requires careful application. White can be put on very thick, and shaded with blue and black. A little practice will soon initiate the painter into the depth and tone each colour produces, and into the careful washing away of the tints.

THE brushes must be washed between each tint being applied. Use the preservative medium when the painting is perfectly dry; pour it once quickly over the surface with a large spoon. It preserves the picture from dust and dirt, but need not be used if the painting is to be protected with glass.

## Spring Cleaning.

### PART III. CARPET CLEANING.

SOME old-fashioned people still prefer to have their carpets carefully planned and fitted into every corner, as if the boards were something to be ashamed of. Younger housekeepers, with the love of novelty, adopt the simpler mode of having a carpet laid down only in the centre, with a margin of the boards stained all round, and polished or varnished. The modern housemaid is but little aware of what she owes to the revolution in taste, and is by no means as grateful as she ought to be for the changes from large pieces of furniture to small, and for having the corners of the room so accessible to brush and duster. There is quite as much grumbling by that functionary over the boarded margin to be kept polished as there was over the periodical brushing of so much additional carpet.

THE centre carpet ought never to require much severe cleaning. As the edges are not nailed it can be raised frequently and dust removed from beneath it. Even if a few carpet-tacks should be driven in, they can be taken out and put in again without bringing in the upholsterer's man. The carpet which is tightly strained is easily swept. Damp tea-leaves scattered over the floor before sweeping absorb the dust, but it must be admitted that all modern teas are not innocuous, whether from adulteration in the tea or uncertainty in the colours of the carpets, it would be difficult to determine. Bran is one of the very best substitutes for tea-leaves to use with sweeping, and freshens the colours. Put the bran into a bag—a pillow-case will answer well—close the top, pour on cold water, leave to soak for half an hour, squeeze until almost dry, use like tea-leaves on the carpets. The water squeezed from the bran comes in usefully for washing any chair-covers with crewel embroidery, or woollen materials delicate in colour. The antimacassars should be well worked through the bran-water, rinsed in clean water, shaken to get rid of superfluous drops, and pinned out to dry. If circumstances prevent the carpet being raised and removed from the room, go round with hard hand-brush and stir all the dust out of the pile. Then sweep with bran. Raise round the edge and take as much dust as possible from underneath. Lay down again, and go over with damp rough cloths, thoroughly scrubbing every part. Stair-carpet often requires to be cleaned more thoroughly than that used on sitting-rooms. Bedroom and nursery carpets also require vigorous treatment, for health considerations as well as for sake of appearances.

CHOOSE a fine day for carpet cleaning, as rapid drying is essential, and a good current of dry fresh air of great importance. The beating also, which is the first stage, can only be done effectively out of doors.

IF the carpet be of large size, it is thrown over a stout line, or across a fence. Small pieces and stair-carpets are more effectually done by being held by two people who strike alternately. The steam threshing-machines are rapidly taking the place of the old flail in farmyards, but those who have seen the latter used will understand the whole system of carpet-beating. One person stands on one side of the carpet, another on the other, and time is kept by giving stroke on stroke alternately, thus allowing the dust to escape. The untrained domestic who administers a few smart raps with a cane here and there upon a rug or carpet, and considers her duty is discharged, does more harm than good, and leaves the dust in patches undisturbed. Turn the carpet wrong side out, and beat thoroughly on that side, then turn the other side and treat it in a similar manner.

MUCH of the success of carpet-beating depends on the choice of sticks. They must be pliable, yielding a little to the blow, yet sufficiently substantial to inflict a decided blow. A good blackthorn is an excellent servant, and if there be a knob at the end, it should be covered with some rags to prevent the stick tearing the carpet or splitting the seams. If a walking-stick with round end be employed, strike with the knob.

CARPETS may, like dresses, be cleaned by different methods—dry cleaning, and ordinary scouring. The choice of process must depend on the colours of the carpet and its condition—if it be much soiled, or only requiring to be freshened. Blues and greens are fleeting colours, and require careful treatment. Dry cleaning and very rapid finishing are essential for delicate colours.



AFTER the carpet has been well beaten, go over it carefully to find if there are grease-spots. If the colours are fixed, rub the spot with a piece of hard soap, and wash out with a brush and cold water, well drying the spot with a flannel, and then with a coarse cloth. For blues and greens, soap is doubtful. Instead of it make a mixture of fullers'-earth, gall, and water, rub it in, leave it for some time, then rinse and dry very thoroughly.

A LARGE carpet will take a whole day to clean, so housekeepers must arrange to leave the scrubbers undisturbed at their work, and not expect several other things to be included in the same day's labour. The professional charge of sixpence the square yard is really not excessive, as the cleaning alone, without beating, or taking out grease-spots, will occupy twenty minutes for each yard, and one yard must be done before another is begun.

WITH delicate carpets the wet must not be allowed to soak through to the wrong side, and it is quite unnecessary to clean the latter, the right side being enough.

HAVE ready a number of dry, coarse cotton or linen cloths, some coarse flannels, and one or more large pieces of coarse sponge; two or more hard scrubbing or scouring brushes, some large tubs or pans, and pails, and a plentiful supply of both hot and cold water.

GALL cleaning is always safe for good carpets, rugs, Berlin-wool work, etc.; as not only does it leave the good colours uninjured, but it refreshes those which may have grown dim with wear. Put a bag of very fresh bullock's gall into a pail containing two gallons of cold water, with four ounces of pearlsh dissolved in it, and well mix it either with a stick or with your hands. Have ready, besides this, two pails of cold water, a large sponge, a couple of flannels, and some dry coarse cloths. Dip the brush into the gall and scrub and water the carpet, a square yard at a time, as quickly and carefully as possible. Rinse and take up the gall and dirt with a large flannel or sponge, which is to be frequently rinsed in the pails of cold water. Well dry with cloths before beginning a second square. As this process must be rapid, not allowing the damp to penetrate, it can be done indoors. If the carpet be very well brushed previously, and all the dust which may have filtered through removed from the boards underneath, it may remain spread in the room in which it belongs. The smell from the gall is at first objectionable. To lessen this as much as possible, it should be obtained from a bullock freshly killed. The carpet when cleaned should be placed in a good current of air; or if it has been cleaned on the floor, open doors and windows for a couple of days will remove any unpleasant odour.

AMMONIA is also used for dry cleaning; the smell remains for a longer time than that from gall, but it is less unpleasant. Dissolve in a small pan four ounces of pearlsh in hot water, and mix with it one gallon of ammonia, which must be bought from a druggist, not from a chemist. Dip a sponge or coarse flannel into the ammonia, take it out rather wet, and well rub it into the carpet; then dip the scouring-brush into the liquor and well scour the part already sponged as quickly as possible. The dirt and ammonia must then be taken up in the sponge or flannel, and the part well dried with flannels and cloths before proceeding with the next. If either this process or the previous one should be done in a room, a good fire must be kept burning to dry the carpet quickly. The floor or board under the part scrubbed must be very clean.

CARPETS with few colours can be scoured, and for the commoner kinds of stair-carpet this soap cleaning is quite good enough. The same rules as to a clean floor, rapid work, and rapid drying, apply to scouring. Cut up a bar of soap and dissolve it over a fire in two gallons of water. Put two quarts of this dissolved soap into a pail of warm water. Dip a scrubbing-brush into this soap-liquor, and scour with it about one square yard of the carpet, being careful not to let the liquor soak through to the back. When this piece is thoroughly cleaned, rub the soap well out of it by means of a coarse flannel or sponge, taking up all the wet and dirt made by the brush; rinse the flannel or sponge frequently in warm water. Prepare some common sour by stirring into clean water sufficient oil of vitriol, bought at a druggist's, to make it taste sharp. Take a clean sponge, and dip it into a pail of sour, squeeze it out, and then rub the sour well into the part of the carpet just cleaned and rinsed. Rub as dry as possible with clean, coarse cotton or linen cloths before going on to another square yard of the carpet.

CARPETS which are reversible are generally cleaned by the thorough process, and if there be few colours in the design there is no difficulty in administering a good homely treatment of soap-and-water, giving a due measure of rinsing to both sides impartially.

THE professional cleaner will have a stone floor, with a fall of six or eight inches, to drain off the soap-and-water as used, but in a private house a substitute may be found in a deal table, by raising one end. A board of three feet wide and sufficiently long to rest on trestles, say ten or twelve feet, allows two persons to work at the same time. The floor on which it rests must be very clean, as the carpet drops on

it as the process proceeds. Place the carpet on the board face upwards, scouring with soap-liquor and hand-brushes. When as much as the board supports has been scoured, pull the carpet to one side, let it drop down, and clean a fresh piece. When all is done hang the carpet over a fence or clothes-horses, to drain for a few minutes while the board and the floor are cleared of soap and dirt. Return the carpet to the board as before, and scour out the soap with plenty of cold water. Again drain the carpet, again dry up the floor, and again scrub with more cold water. If all the dirt seems gone finish with sour as directed for other processes. Drain and dry as fast as possible.

## Gold-Diggers' Drinks.

THE taking of "drink" has always been highly characteristic of the miner. No bargain could be made or any other matter of business or sociality settled without the indispensable drinks. A friend of the writer's, whose lot it was to officiate at one time as a clergyman in a mining community in California, used to say that he had to ring a bell on the Sunday morning, all through the apology for the street, to call his parishioners to Divine service, and that, finding nobody in the church when he came in, he had first to look into one gambling saloon or tavern, and then into another, to invite those he found there to come to church. "All right, parson," would be the good-natured reply; "we'll be there as soon as we've played out this hand for the whiskies. Jest go ahead with the prayers and things, and we'll be along for the preachin'!" The same clerical friend was shocked on his first arrival among the miners at being asked to "stand drinks," after he had received a liberal subscription towards the building of his church. Two mining companies threw dice to determine which of them should treat the "whole creek" to champagne, and as the wine was sold at fifteen dollars a bottle, the cost to the loser may be guessed. In most mining localities it was regarded as a cause of mortal offence to decline drinking with the first fellow who shouted, "Let's put in a blast, colonel!" In some places it was considered quite a serious breach of etiquette not to ask all who were sitting round in the bar-room of a tavern, even though total strangers, to "step up and take a drink." Sometimes an invitation was not required. A traveller, after a long ride, dismounted one day at a tavern to take some refreshment, when, to his utter astonishment and dismay, some fourteen men who were sitting round stepped up, and "lowed they would take sugar in tharn." The gentleman paid for the fifteen "drinks," as it was in strict observance of the custom of the country, but he took good care not to revisit that hostelry.

The Australian gold-digger of old times was, in many respects, different from the Californian, but still he evinced the same carelessness of money. It used to be the custom for these men to come down to the township after they had made a slight "pile," go each to his favourite public-house, and give his money into the landlord's hands, with the intimation that he "shouted" (or asked all and sundry to drink) until it was expended. Then the landlord, at short intervals, would call out, "Step up, boys; it's Jim Jenkins's shout!" Then they all wished Jim luck, until Jim's shout was out, when he went back to his gully, proud that he had "spent his money like a man." One one occasion, a digger came down and handed his money to the landlord according to custom; but contrary to expectation, nobody would respond to his shout. He had been a convict, "lagged" for some grievous offence. The man was at his wit's end; he couldn't drink by himself. At last he struck upon the brilliant expedient of engaging an idler at labourer's daily wages—eight shillings—to *drink with him*. And so he got through his holiday!

## Household Gardening.

WITH mild weather vegetation will move rapidly, and trees flower, and vegetables rush onwards to maturity. And not only will that which is useful or beautiful make quick progress, but the unsightly and pernicious will be summered into activity. If the old adage of a "stitch in time," etc., has force in anything, it is in reference to prompt and timely measures for the extirpation or prevention of weeds. Attacked in their weak infantile state they are quickly and easily subdued; but if by negligence or procrastination they are allowed to become established, they will soon be practically masters of the situation, and bad masters too, because robbers, depriving the soil of its virtues, and compelling plants and crops that it is desired to cultivate to sicken and starve. Begin early, then, in waging war against weeds; attack them even before they are fairly visible. Immediately there is the slightest suspicion of a green tinge on the soil run the hoe through it briskly. A thousand incipient weeds may then be destroyed in a minute, but neglect this simple, yet profitable work, and the weeds that have been spared will give trouble for weeks. No better advice than this can be given to owners of gardens in April, for, if acted on, the advantages resulting will be felt throughout the season, and gardens will be rendered more profitable and enjoyable.

## ARUM LILIES.

In a very pleasant and complimentary letter a lady asks for information "concerning the treatment of these plants, and how to make them bloom." "The Lily of the Nile," as the plant under notice is popularly called, is one of the most distinct, handsome, and popular of plants for flowering in the spring in greenhouse and light windows.

At Easter, the large, white, trumpet-shaped spathes, almost resembling wash-leather in texture, are in great demand for church decoration, and are grown in thousands for this purpose by professional cultivators.

They are of very easy culture. The main point in the management of these plants is to secure a strong, luxuriant growth under the full influence of the sun in summer, and then, and then only, they will flower freely in the spring.

If a plant has been neglected in the summer by not having been supplied with adequate support, or has been kept crowded amongst other plants in a room or greenhouse, it cannot be expected to flower in the spring; and all that can be done to induce it to throw up its coveted spathes is to sponge or syringe the leaves frequently, and keep the roots continually moist. The plant is an aquatic, and once it commences growth must have abundance of water. The simplest and best method of treating Arum Lilies in summer is to plant them out in very rich soil in the open garden, watering them copiously throughout the season when showers are not prevalent, and digging them up and placing in pots the last week in September or the early days of October.

At the present time the plants are in pots, and if they have been well prepared and are sufficiently watered, they will soon commence flowering if assigned a light position. After the flowers have faded, let the plants have all the light and air possible, watering them copiously, and at the same time keeping them out of the reach of frost.

About the middle of May they may be stood in a warm position out of doors, and towards the end of the month, or early in June, may be turned out of their pots and placed in the garden.

For inducing a strong growth the best cultivators prepare a trench as if for Celery. Dig in manure abundantly, and then insert the plants a foot apart, dividing them, if it is desired to increase the number, into as many portions as can be secured with roots attached.

They are then watered as often as is necessary for keeping the soil and roots constantly moist. In warm, dry weather they should be freely sprinkled over the leaves every evening, at the same time saturating the roots. For a time they will make little or no growth above ground, but the roots will be working, and towards the end of the summer the plants will commence unfolding their large rich green leaves.

In potting them in the autumn use rich loamy soil, pressing it down firmly amongst the roots, applying water immediately and in sufficient quantity to moisten every particle of the soil, the plants in the meantime being stood in a perfectly shaded place out of doors, and sprinkled two or three times a day to prevent the leaves flagging.

When frosts are imminent remove the plants under glass, allowing them the lightest position at command. They do not require heat in the winter, but must be safe from frost, and during December, January, and February the soil only needs to be sufficiently moist to keep the foliage fresh and healthy. They thus gain a partial rest. Then in March, as the natural heat increases, and water is given more abundantly, fresh, free growth commences, which is soon followed by the coveted flowers.

Persons who have Arums and no gardens in which to plant them, should re-pot them in May or June, removing most of the old soil from the roots and giving fresh loam; then grow the plants in the lightest position at command, preferably in the open air during July, August, and September, during which period the roots should be almost as if in a swamp, for it is at that time difficult to give them too much water.

As fully, yet as concisely as possible, we have sketched the method of growing these favourite plants successfully, and those who carry out the instructions can scarcely fail to succeed in their object. The botanical name of the Lily of the Nile is *Richardia Ethiopica*.

## SCARBOROUGH LILIES.

"Dora I." desires to know if these plants flower every year, with other particulars of culture. Our reply is that healthy, well-managed plants flower every year brilliantly, and there are few, if any, greenhouse or window plants more beautiful in September and October.

The chief essential in the culture of Scarborough Lilies is to have the pots well filled with healthy roots. A few roots in a great mass of soil, or, in other words, small plants in very large pots, seldom grow well or flower freely.

April is a good time for re-potting these plants. In removing them from the pots do not drag them out by the bulbs so as to break the roots, but turn the pot over, striking its edge on a bench or table, and the entire mass of soil will fall into the hand intact.

Take away a portion of the old soil, which may be sour or inert, till several of the roots are liberated, and place in a clean pot, just large enough to hold the roots without crushing them in violently—still, they should touch the sides of the pot.

Afford ample drainage by placing an inch or more of broken charcoal or cinders in the pots—then a little moss or fibre for the soil to rest on. Sufficient of this should be put in and pressed down firmly,

so that the plant, when placed on it, will leave the bulbs just above the level of the pot.

In adding fresh soil, the best being turfy loam, with a sixth part of wood-ashes and sand mixed, work it well and carefully amongst the roots and make it firm—but not hard—and do not fill the pots quite full, as an inch or so of space should be left for holding water.

A good watering should be given after potting, with further supplies as needed when the soil approaches dryness. Over-watering is a danger to be avoided; still, the soil must never be allowed to get really dry, and whenever water is given let it be plentifully, mere surface-sprinklings doing more harm than good.

A shelf in a greenhouse, or a window facing the sun, is a suitable position for the plants, which also succeed in a frame after the middle of June. As the growth increases so must the supply of water be increased, until about the middle of August, when the soil should be kept rather dry than otherwise for a month. This will afford the plants a slight rest, which is favourable for the production of flowers.

As the blooms fade remove them, and the stem will wither, and it can be cut off also. It is not a good plan to permit seed-pods to form, as these exhaust the plants, while the seed—unless the plants have special treatment—is rarely of any value.

The botanical name of the Scarborough Lily—which is really not a Lily at all—is *Vallota purpurea*.

## BULBS AFTER FLOWERING.

A correspondent, writing an appreciative letter from Shepherd's Bush, is only one of many requiring hints on this subject.

The first thing to do after the flowers of bulbous plants fade is to cut off the spikes, which should be done before seed-pods form. The next important matter is to keep the foliage fresh as long as possible under the full influence of light and air. The functions of the leaves is to assimilate the food that is supplied by the roots and to secrete it in the bulb. The longer the foliage can be kept in working order the greater the storage of nutritious matter, and, consequently, the finer must the flowers be another year.

There is no better plan with bulbs that have flowered in pots and window-boxes than to plant them in the garden any time during April after the flowers have withered. There they may remain to flower year after year; a few fresh ones being obtained if the finest possible spikes and flowers are required in pots another season. The plan recommended is better than drying the bulbs and keeping them in paper-bags throughout the summer.

## Treasure Trove.

AN instance once occurred, in which the crown, the lord of the manor, and the clergyman fought a kind of triangular duel for the possession of a found treasure. A good many years ago, the large sum of four thousand pounds was found just beneath the surface of a field near Stanmore. The money being mostly in foreign gold coins of the early part of the present century—such as French louis-d'ors and napoleons, and Spanish doubloons—speculation arose touching the question how such a treasure could have got into such a spot. The rector's gardener found the money; the gardener's wife told the rector's wife; the rector's wife told the rector; and the rector instituted an enquiry. Some of the older inhabitants then recollected that about the year 1815, when the Continent was in a troubled state, a foreigner had come to live at Stanmore. No one knew anything of him or whence he came; the chief fact observed relating to his sojourn in the village was that he used often to be seen walking about in one of the fields. After some time he left the place. Two years later, another stranger made his appearance, and announced that his predecessor had buried a considerable sum of money in a neighbouring field, at the same time sketching a ground-plan, showing the exact spot where the treasure was concealed; that he had afterwards died, and that his representative (the new comer) now wished to obtain possession of it.

As it used to be a frequent custom, in many countries, and especially in troubled times, to hide treasure underground, there seemed nothing absolutely incredible in the story. The stranger and the villagers, however, failed in their search, and the transaction was forgotten until the real finding, many years after, brought it once more under notice. It was supposed that some alteration made in the field, by the removal of certain trees, had thrown the searchers off the right scent. Be this as it may, the treasure came to light in the fulness of time; and then various claimants appeared. The finders (for a second hoard had been lit upon, after the gardener's first discovery) said: "It is ours, for we found it." The rector said: "It is mine, for it was found in my glebe." The lord of the manor said: "It is mine, for it was found on my manor." The sovereign said: "It is mine by law, for the found treasure is of precious metal."

Without detailing the course of the enquiry, and the operation of the law, suffice it to say that the claim of the crown was substantiated. If the next-of-kin, or the legal heir of the mysterious stranger, had come forward and proved his identity, the crown would have waived its claim, because the property had evidently been secretly deposited by some one, and not abandoned.

# Odds and Ends.

THEODORE HOOK, at a dinner-party one day, was charged with stealing from a farce written by one of his friends the expression, "You are down upon me, as the candle said to the extinguisher." He immediately proceeded to show how little he was under the necessity of stealing, by supplying the same species of witticism to everything that was said to him for the next half-hour, *e.g.*, "You are very pressing, Dean, as the tilberts said to the nut-crackers. Pray pass the wine," he continued, "though I'm sorry to trouble you, as the pin said to the periwinkle." "Bravo, Hookens!" shouted the Dean; you must give up your plan of going abroad; we can't afford to lose you." "Oh! it will be all the same one hundred years hence, as the American aloe said when it came into bloom." "But your song, Hook: only a few verses." "You really reduce me to extremities, as the rat said to the trap which cut his tail off. I've a bad cold, but will try my best, and hope to come off with flying colours, as the English general said when he ordered his niggers to retreat. If I attempt a stave, don't make a butt of me."

"So you want a situation as engine-driver, do you?" said the chairman of the company. "Yes, sir," the applicant replied. "Have you the necessary qualifications for such a responsible position?" "I am sure I have, sir." "Well, suppose your train should meet with a serious disaster, in which a number of passengers would be killed and a large amount of property destroyed, what action would you take in such a case?" "I would telegraph the newspapers that the accident was of little importance, and then send word to the chairman of the company to sell the stock sharp." "H'm," replied the chairman; "I am afraid those are not the proper qualifications for a good driver; but you are a man of ability, I see. We want a first-class superintendent. You can consider yourself engaged as superintendent of the line at a salary of a thousand a year."

AMONG the students of the piano now at the Paris Conservatoire is numbered a prodigy of such tender years that the personal intervention of Ambrose Thomas was necessary in order to obtain the gifted child's admission. Ernest Schelling, the prodigy in question, is only eight years and some months old. As the rules of the Conservatoire admit no pupils under nine years of age, a special relaxation of the laws was granted in view of the exceptional talent of the young pianist. He has played in public ever since he was four years old, and during the past season he played at a charitable *matinée* in Paris, his fellow-performers being Madame Sarah Bernhardt, Mdlle. Lureau, of the Grand Opera, and others of equal prominence.

AN acquaintance of Power met him one day in the street and button-holed him at once, exclaiming: "Oh, Power, my dear fellow, I am so glad to meet you! In fact, I was looking for you, for I want to ask your advice under most extraordinary circumstances." "Well," said Power, "what's the matter?" "Captain B., whom you know, has threatened to pull me by the nose whenever he meets me. What would you advise me to do?" "Did he really make use of the threat?" asked Power, with a strange twinkle in his eye. "Oh yes, no doubt in the world about it!" "Well," said Power, in one of his most sarcastic and contemptuous tones, "I'll tell you what to do. Soap your nose well, and it will slip through his fingers."

It is related that in his latter days that strange medley of *bonhomie* and conceit, the Vicomte d'Arlingcourt, succeeded, after several disappointments, in persuading the manager of a minor Paris theatre to accept a drama from his pen. It failed, however, to please the public, and did not draw a sou. During its very short run, one of the author's friends, meeting him on the boulevard, remarked that he hoped he was satisfied, as he had been acted at last. "Satisfied!" echoed D'Arlingcourt with an indignant air. "How can I be satisfied if they play my piece only when the house is empty?"

A GERMAN shoemaker, having made a pair of shoes for a gentleman of whose financial integrity he had considerable doubt, puzzled his Teutonic brain to know what excuse he could give for not delivering them, and finally made the following reply to him when he called for the articles: "Der poots ish not quite done, but der beel ish made outd."

LAWYER: "You say you made an examination of the premises. What did you find?" Witness: "Oh, nothing of consequence; a beggarly account of empty boxes, as Shakespeare says." Lawyer: "Never mind what Shakespeare says. He will be subpoenaed, and can testify for himself if he knows anything about the case."

ENGLISHMAN in America: "Have you any court-plaster?" Druggist: "No; but here's some sticking-plaster. You see we have no royal family in this country, and therefore no court, and consequently no court-plaster. If your finger is cut you will have to take a piece of the democratic article or go somewhere else."

It is claimed that Brush has accomplished the storage of electricity. So did the cyclone, long before Brush ever thought of it. But it didn't make the cyclone any more popular. The trouble with the cyclone's electricity was that it wouldn't stay stored. It dissipated itself. Likewise the property adjacent.

A DAMSEL was asked: "When a lady and gentleman have quarrelled, and each considers the other in fault, which of the two ought to be the first to advance towards a reconciliation?" Her reply was: "The best-hearted and wisest of the two."

A LADY was sitting at table between an Englishman, stiff and cold, and a young Parisian. As the lady was about to move her head the Parisian exclaimed: "Don't turn towards that other gentleman, you will catch cold."

A MAN has an umbrella that was made during the reign of George III. It has passed through a great many rains since.

ONE difference between sailors and soldiers is that sailors tar their ropes while soldiers pitch their tents.

THE woman that maketh a good pudding in silence is better than she who maketh a tart reply.

THE BOARD OF TRADE.—A shopkeeper's sign.

WILLIAM WIRT's letter to his daughter on the "small, sweet courtesies of life," contains a passage from which a deal of happiness might be learned: "I want to tell you a secret. The way to make yourself pleasing to others, is to show that you care for them. The world is like the miller at Mansfield, 'who cared for nobody, no, not he, because nobody cared for him.' And the whole world will serve you so if you give them the same cause. Let every one, therefore, see that you do care for them, by showing them what Sterne so happily calls 'the small, sweet courtesies,' in which there is no parade; whose voice is to still, to ease; and which manifest themselves by tender and affectionate looks, and little kind acts of attention, giving others the preference in every little enjoyment at the table, in the field, walking, sitting, or standing."

In a recent trial the judge having asked a witness: "What is an 'Anthony'?" He replied: "The littlest pig, your honour. The little pig is always 'Anthony.'" On an enquiry why the little pig was so-called, the attorney replied: "I believe, your honour, it is associated with the saint of that name, from the fact that in his unhappy time the smallest and least valuable pig was usually picked for the church."

At a banquet when solving enigmas was one of the diversions, Alexander said to his courtiers: "What is that which did not come last year, has not come this year, and will not come next year?" A distressed officer, starting up, said: "It must certainly be our arrears of pay." The king was so diverted that he commanded him to be paid, and also increased his salary.

A GENTLEMAN dining at a restaurant where waiters were few and far between, dispatched a lad among them for a cut of beef. After a long time the lad returned, and was asked by the faint and hungry gentleman: "Are you the lad who took away my plate for this beef?" "Yes, sir," "Bless me," resumed the hungry wit, "how you have grown!"

A SPANISH student going out with a party to shoot rabbits, was told not to talk lest he should frighten the animals. When the timid creatures appeared he uttered an exclamation in Latin, which frightened them away, and upon his companions blaming him, he said: "Who could have supposed that rabbits understood Latin?"

THE following extract from a French advocate's will pithily expresses his opinion of his clients: "I give 100,000 francs to the local mad-house. I got this money out of those who pass their lives in litigation; in bequeathing it for the use of lunatics I only make restitution."

It is said of a distinguished member of the bar, who secured the acquittal of a client for stealing a cow, at the beginning of his practice, when told that his kindness could never be repaid, as the defendant was very poor, replied: "Oh, I'll let him off easy—I'll take the cow."

A PROFESSOR lecturing on "English Industries" to a class of juveniles, informed them that it took seven men and a boy to make a pin. "I expect," said a little fellow, "that it's the seven men that make that pin, and they use the boy to stick it into to see if it's sharp enough."

"I am ashamed of the effeminacy of my sex," said a lady orator. "Look at your fripperies and superfluities. Why, for instance, do you need parasols when I never use one?" And a pert minx answered: "Because you are on the shady side of life."

A SWELL, while being measured for a pair of boots, observed: "Make them cover the calf." "Impossible!" exclaimed the astonished shoemaker, surveying his customer from head to foot; "ain't leather enough in my shop!"

"WILL you ever pay that bill you owe me?" "Oh yes; sooner or later." "That's all very well, but I want you to set a time. I want to know for certain when it will be paid." "Well, if you want me to be exact about it, I'll say—later."

AFTER a christening, while the clergyman was making out the certificate, he happened to say, "Let me see, this is the 30th?" meaning the date. "Thirtieth!" exclaimed the indignant mother; "indeed it is only the eleventh!"

"Is it about the right length, sir?" asked the skilful barber, as he finished cutting his customer's hair. "I like the sides and back," was the response, "but I wish you would make it a little longer on the top."

It is related of a Lancashire young woman and a Chinese lady that on being introduced they looked at each other's feet, and then both fainted dead away, the former from mortification, and the latter from fright.

MR. X.'s son (just returned from abroad, to new Irish butler, engaged during his absence): "Do you belong here?" Butler: "Bedad, sir, I do; an' if I didn't belong here, sure I wouldn't be long here."

EPITAPH.—Here lies John Fallowes, who lived at All Hallows. He was a maker of bellows. But though he made bellows; He couldn't make breath; And for the want of that It brought on his death.

THE young lady who made seven hundred words out of "conservatory" last autumn has run away from home. Her mother wanted her to make three loaves of bread out of "flour."

A MAN advertises in a country paper for a woman to "wash, iron, and milk one or two cows." What does he want his cows washed and ironed for?

"I HEV often noticed," says Josh Billings, "that the man who would have done such wonderful things of he had bin there never gits there."

"YES," said the reverend gentleman, "I am rector of the church, my mother-in-law is director, and my wife is corrector."

WHAT particular sail connected with a ship would be likely to remind a young man of his earlier days? The spanker.

WHEN the widow buries her first husband she becomes pensive, but after she gets the second she is usually ex-pensive.

THERE is a boy in Birmingham so bright that his mother looks at him through smoked glass.

To die for one's country is sweet, but to live for one's country is a more healthy occupation.

THERE is a widespread contest over who shall be the champion light-weight grocer.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## QUESTIONS.

ADALE writes: "Can any of your readers tell me the name of a song in which the words occur, 'Moods and tenses bother my senses'?"

AUSTRALIA will be grateful if any correspondent can inform her where she can get the piece for recitation called "Papa's Letter."

R. E. P. wishes to know where he can find the lines:

Heart and hand that move together,  
Feet that run on willing errands.

## ANSWERS.

ADALE.—Beethoven's "Adieu to Music" is a piece, not a song. It might be called a song without words.

BUSIRIS.—The earliest age for a clerk is, we believe, eighteen; the limit twenty-five. 2. Director's nomination. 3. If entering at, say eighteen years of age, seventy pounds; at twenty-one, one hundred per annum.

C. L.—You can get your toy boat put in order by Henry Monk, 219, Strand.

DICK DUNMORE.—"Strangers Yet" is published by Boosey, Regent-street, at 2s.

G. O. S. E.—The epigram is correctly given as follows. We do not know who composed it:

Matilda, whose charms were beginning to fade,  
A crusty old widower seemed to upbraid  
With "Pardon me, sir, but I think, to be plain,  
'Twould not be amiss if you marry again."

The gentleman shrugged up his shoulders and said:  
"Indeed 'tis a chance if again I shall wed;  
But, to answer you fairly, I'll just mention this:  
If I marry again, it will not be a Miss."

HEART'S CONTENT.—According to "Men of the Time," Miss Charlotte Mary Yonge was born in 1823. It is said that she gave two thousand pounds, the profits of her "Daisy Chain," for the building of a missionary college at Auckland, New Zealand, and devoted a great portion of the proceeds of "The Heir of Redclyffe" to fitting out the missionary schooner, "Southern Cross," for the use of Bishop Selwyn. Miss Elizabeth Missing Sewell, we learn from the same authority, was born in 1815. The list of her works is too long for us to give in this page. Among her fiction, the most popular are "Amy Herbert," "Katherine Ashton," and "The Earl's Daughter."

HOUSE MOTHER.—If you will refer to an article in No. 59 of this Journal, "Summer Vegetables," you will find full directions for boiling cabbages, greens, cauliflowers, etc. We can only repeat what is there stated, that it is rarely necessary to use soda to preserve the colour of green vegetables. There are places where the water is hardly suitable for dietetic purposes, on account of the quantity of chalk it contains, and in such a case it may be necessary to use soda. London water is well adapted for culinary use, and soda is not required for boiling vegetables in any of that supplied by the various companies either within the metropolis or suburbs. Used in such quantities as some writers recommend—"a bit the size of a pea," for instance—the effect either one way or the other is of no consequence, but when, as is recommended by one authority, you use a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda to a gallon of water, the case is different. We maintain that soda draws into the water some of the finest and most useful properties of green vegetables, and, moreover, that the reason many people find them indigestible is because of this loss on the one hand, and of the addition of alkali on the other. Besides, there is no need whatever for the use of soda in boiling green vegetables. Have plenty of water, sufficient salt, and a perfectly bright clean saucepan, and not only will the greens be a fine colour, but there will be no unpleasant smell whilst they are cooking. 2. You are still in time to make your orange-wine. Will not your wine merchant supply you with a rum or brandy cask? Stone's orange and raisin wines are very useful for family use, and they are pure and wholesome.

JOSÉ.—There is no book published upon "Drawn Work," but it is explained and illustrated in the "Dictionary of Needlework," by S. F. A. Caulfeild, and B. C. Seward, published by L. Upcott Gill. There are also occasional designs in the *Queen*.

LEILA.—A masqueress is a very good costume for a fancy ball, and it is done in the following way. A swallow-tail coat and waistcoat of black satin is worn over a large white shirt-front, with a diamond solitaire and masquer collar. The skirt is quite plain, and rather short, and made of black satin; black silk stockings and patent-leather shoes, a crutch stick in the hand, and a *pince-nez* on the nose; the hair cut short and curly, and parted on one side.

L. G. D.—

He that lacks time to mourn lacks time to mend.  
Eternity mourns that. 'Tis an ill cure  
For life's worst ills to have no time to feel them.  
Where sorrow's held intrusive and turned out,  
There wisdom will not enter, nor true power,  
Nor aught that dignifies humanity.

"Philip Van Artevelde," Part I., Act I., Sc. 5.

L. N.—Lodore is by Lake Derwentwater. Southey has immortalised the spot in a poem commencing, "How does the water come down at Lodore."

ONIONS.—The snake's skin ought to have been prepared, and should not have been folded. You had better consult a taxidermist, who may, perhaps, be able to do something for the skin.

PERPLEXED.—1. "Ramequins," or "Ramakins," are a mixture of Gloucester and Cheshire cheese, butter, eggs, and cream, with the inside of a French roll; they are baked in paper cases in a Dutch-oven, and eaten hot. 2. We do not know the derivation of the word. 3. Shield flourished in the earlier part of the century. He was one of our best song composers. The words of his celebrated song, "The Thorn," are generally attributed to Burns. There is, however, considerable doubt as to the authorship of the words of this song. It is not included in Alexander Smith's edition of Burns's works, nor in the Aldine Edition (Pickering, 1839). 4. We believe he is "Master of the Music" to the Queen. We do not know of any such office as "Composer to Her Majesty."

P. P.—An "Adullamite" is a member of a party of the more moderate Liberals who seceded from the Whig leaders and voted with the Conservatives on the occasion of Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone introducing a measure for the reduction of the election franchise in 1866. They received the name from their being likened by Mr. Bright to the political outlaws who took refuge with David in the Cave of Adullam. The party was also known collectively as "The Cave."

PYGMALION.—Try first-class gentlemen's hosiers. If the work is exceptionally good, you may perhaps get orders.

RAVEN.—It can hardly be doubted that instances of premature interment have occurred, but it is impossible to judge of the authenticity of the records. The poem "On One Who Died in a Tomb" may probably have reference to the reported premature interment of a Mrs. Blunden, a lady of good position in Basingstoke, in the early part of the last century. The cause was supposed to have been that of taking a draught of laudanum in mistake, or in too large a quantity, which threw her into a lethargy, and was not discovered until after she was buried, when, as noises were said to be heard emanating from the tomb, the body was exhumed, but life was extinct, although it was proved that she had breathed, a dew being found on the inside of the coffin-lid:

Worn with old age and penury, nor thence  
Rescued by any man's beneficence,  
Into this tomb with tottering steps I past,  
And hardly here found leave to rest at last.  
Usage for most doth after death provide  
Interment, I was buried ere I died.

SPES.—The verses are not worthy of publication.

THALIA.—"Rowlands' Kalydor" is highly recommended for your purpose.

WHY ABRAHAM?—To "sham Abraham" is to feign sickness, but the more received meaning is an impostor wandering about the country seeking alms under pretence of lunacy. Originally an Abraham-man was one of a set of mendicant lunatics from Bethlehem Hospital, London. The wards in the ancient Bedlam bore distinctive names as of some saint or patriarch. That named after Abraham was devoted to a class of lunatics who on certain days were permitted to go out begging. They bore a badge, and were known as Abraham-men. Many, however, assumed the badge without right, and begged, feigning lunacy.

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 156.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Cruel as the Grave;

### Or, The Dreary Winter.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

WICKHAM is a charming little village, nestled down in a hollow in the midst of a fertile country. There is a great wood sheltering it on one side, and a river flowing through. Doctors will tell you sometimes that it is not a wholesome place; that it is too sunk, too sheltered; but the people of Wickham have firm faith in its healthfulness, as well as its beauty.

As you cross the picturesque bridge over the river, you pass the old grey-stone church, with its crumbling tower and the strange carvings round its roof. What tales this old building could tell us! How many generations have worshipped within its weather-stained old walls!

Passing the church, and turning sharp round, we leave the gleaming river and the manor woods on our left hand, and come into the village, one straight, wide street, bordered on either side with a row of tall lime-trees, whose leaves are already yellowing in the still August sunshine.

Poppy Prendergast, looking out from the drawing-room window of the comfortable old rectory, sighs as a yellow leaf drifts in against her blue gown.

The beautiful fragrant summer is almost over, the child thinks. But Poppy never sighs for long. Presently she leaves the window, and goes downstairs, along the hall, and out of the glass door into the dear old garden.

All the houses in Wickham are noted for their delightful gardens. Everything is still, and sweet, and peaceful here. The old gardener is rolling the beautifully-kept strip of grass, with its blazing beds of scarlet geraniums, of blue lobelia, of calceolarias. He looks up with a smile as Poppy passes. The air is full of the perfume of mignonette. Up against the old red-brick house a purple clematis hangs, a glorious mass of colour; down on the sunny west wall plums are ripening; the jasmine is blooming in fragrant stars. There are long rows of tall, sentinel hollyhocks, every shade of purple, primrose, wine colour; of prim quilled dahlias.

Out in the centre of the grass-plot is a great, hoary old apple-tree, and every now and then a rosy apple comes dropping softly on to the grass, through the still sunshine.

Poppy loves that old apple-tree. She can remember August mornings, when she was a little girl; when, if she had been good at her lessons, she used to be allowed, as a reward, to go out and pick up the ripe red apples in her little white pinafore.

What happy days those seemed, looked at now from the heights of eighteen years!

Poppy crosses over the grass, and looks up through the gnarled old boughs at the blue sky above. She makes a pretty picture as she stands there, the sunshine flickering through the leaves on her bright head.

She is a tall girl, with, for all her youth, a certain stately, womanly way of carrying herself. She has soft, round, flushing cheeks, cheeks that, when she is pleased or excited, crimson up in such a wonderful way as to have long ago earned her her pet name of "Poppy." Mary is her real name. A sweet, red-lipped, childish mouth; honest, innocent, clear grey eyes, with curling black lashes and straight black brows. Not by any means a wonderful beauty; just a fresh, charming English girl in all the pride and glory of her untried youth; who, standing there in the peaceful sunshine amongst the flowers and birds, is wishing, in her vague, girlish way, for something—she knows not what—to happen, something that will break up the even tenor of her way.

"My dear boy, I am so sorry! What can I say?" Old Miss Spencer's kind, faded face was all flushed with emotion.

As Poppy stood under her tree, the old lady was coming down the path on the other side of the wall, leaning on her handsome nephew's arm. He had been making her a confidence. He had been going to be married, and the girl had jilted him, and the kind old maidenly heart was all yearning over her boy. "How could any woman find it in her heart to refuse him?" she thought, looking up at the handsome face, the tall, broad-shouldered figure beside her.

"Dear, dear boy!" she said softly, squeezing his arm affectionately.

Frank Ashpittall was very fond of these old aunts of his, who had brought him up, and whom he had not seen for seven years; he

had been out in India, and only arrived at Wickham the night before, to have the fatted calf killed, the best robe fitted on to him by trembling old fingers.

His gloomy face relaxed a little; the love and kind words did him good. They soothed his self-love, and restored that old faith in himself which had been so sorely bruised. He patted the clinging old hand on his arm.

"Never mind, Aunt Dora," he said. "It won't break my heart. I dare say it will do me good. You have brought me up to think I can have everything I want." And then he went on with a sudden bitterness, slashing the head off a lovely purple dahlia, poor Aunt Dora's pride, as he spoke: "After all, what can you expect? All women are alike. She's married a man with ten thousand a year. How could you expect her to prefer me? 'She was made to shine in society,' her mother says. Women have no hearts nowadays; it's all a question of sale and barter with them."

"My dear boy!"

Kind Aunt Dora was horrified; she stooped for her dahlia, and looked at it carefully.

"Did I do that?" said Frank penitently. "Oh, Aunt Dora, I am very sorry. I must be more careful, or you must not trust me out with a stick."

"Never mind, Frank, it is not the least consequence," Aunt Dora answered heroically. Would she not have sacrificed all the dahlias in her garden to save this dear nephew of hers an ache? "But I can't bear to hear you speak like that. There are plenty of good, true women still left in the world."

"You and Aunt Sophie; I don't know many more. Ah, if they were all like you, the world would be a better place. If I could tell you all I have seen, the trickeries, and shams, and deceits—but you don't know. You judge everyone by yourself."

Aunt Dora sighed, but she smiled too. How could she help being gratified at being the exception to this very sweeping condemnation?

"Do you remember little Poppy Prendergast, Frank?" she said after a minute's silence, during which she was revolving many things in her simple old mind.

"Yes, of course. What a jolly, good-tempered little girl she used to be; she was always ready to do anything for me. Let me see, she must be nearly grown-up now."

"She is past eighteen."

"Ah, how time flies! What has she grown up like? Is she pretty?"

Frank asked this last question with more appearance of interest than might have been expected in a young man who had just renounced woman's society for evermore.

"I don't know," Miss Spencer answered cautiously. Not that she did not admire Poppy herself, but she did not know what this travelled, fine-gentleman nephew of hers might say, and so she was careful not to commit herself. "She has a nice complexion, and fine hair. She is a very good girl," she went on, letting her enthusiasm get the better of her. Long ago, before she had heard this episode of Madeline Ferrers, Miss Spencer had had her little plans and projects, but of course that was all over now.

Captain Ashpittall made no remark. He was not specially interested. Goodness in young ladies did not seem to him to possess any remarkable attraction. He had not met a great deal of it, he would tell you.

"Suppose we come in and see if she is at home," suggested his aunt. "It will be something for you to do, and Mr. Prendergast will be pleased to see you."

"As you like," Frank surrendered himself. "Ah, there is the same little gate, and there is where I used to swing my hammock," he said, kindling into some little interest as they stood down at the end of the garden by the gleaming river. "I think if this weather lasts I must rig one up there again."

"I will look up your old one. It was put by quite safely," said Aunt Dora. "We always come in this way, Poppy and I, to see each other," she went on, as she opened the little iron gate amongst the plum-trees, that led out into the rectory garden.

And so, while Poppy is wondering, and dreaming, and longing under the apple-tree, her fate is coming to her, could she but recognise it, up the sunny path by the hollyhocks, in the shape of this fair-haired, sunbrowned young man, who has been in the wars, who has been wounded, who has been even jilted. What more materials are wanted to make a perfect hero?

"There she is—there is Poppy! I thought we should find her," cried Aunt Dora in triumph, and she glanced askance at her nephew, to see if she could discover what he thought.

Frank Ashpittall looked with some curiosity. This was a very different type of girl from the one he believed had broken his heart and wrecked his life, but still the young man admitted to himself that in her blue gown, with her bronze-brown hair, her freshness and sweetness, she was a pleasant sight to look upon.



She came across the grass to meet them, flushing all over her soft cheeks.

"I thought we should find you here. My dear, you remember our nephew—you remember Frank."

"Oh yes!" Poppy held out her hand, and looked at him with her honest grey eyes. "We are all glad to see you back again."

"Thank you. I remember you quite well, Miss Prendergast, as you were then, a little girl with your hair all hanging down your back; I have just been telling my aunt I remember how good you used to be to me."

Poppy laughed softly.

"Yes, seven years make a great difference," she said.

"Does that mean you will not be good to me any longer?"

"Miss Spencer, it is such a lovely afternoon," and Poppy turned her back on him, "don't you think we might have tea on the grass? You would not be afraid? I will have rugs brought out."

"No, my dear, I am not afraid."

The old lady glanced up at the sky, and down at the grass. She much preferred her tea in a comfortable drawing-room, if she had her choice; but she was aware it was Poppy's way of keeping high festival, and she would not disappoint the child.

"It will be delightful!" declared Captain Ashpitall. "I will carry the tables and chairs for you, Miss Prendergast, if you will trust me. See, here is a delightful corner."

Poppy was in her element. She ordered tea; she searched for ripe plums, she picked some bright flowers for the centre of her gipsy-table. She laughed and chattered as she poured out tea in her harlequin cups.

It was a merry little feast. Frank was surprised to find how much he enjoyed it. He had been so long out of England; the peaceful rectory, the sunshiny garden, the bright girl's face, were all pleasant to him. For a little while he even forgot his cruel Madeline. This was a girl, he thought, looking into the honest grey eyes, who would be true to a man.

"And you have been wounded," she said, looking up at him reverentially. This man was the nearest approach to a hero she had ever seen in her short life.

And the old rector came across from his study, walking slowly. He had stooping shoulders, and snow-white hair, and a kind, careworn face. People said he looked as if he had seen a great deal of trouble. Poppy's mother had died at her birth; the girl was the youngest of a large family, who were all dead and gone—only the old man and the young girl were left.

But since he had come to Wickham ten years before, with his motherless girl, no one had ever heard him speak of those old days and those past troubles.

He was a shy, silent, reserved man, kind-hearted, courteous with all his flock, but never very familiar.

Poppy he simply idolised. All the pent-up love of his heart seemed to be poured out on this one child who had been left him. I don't think she ever missed another love; from the time she was born he was father and mother both to her, and if his love and care had not been enough, every woman and mother in the parish, rich and poor, high and low, had kind words and kind wishes to spare for her. She had grown up amongst them. They loved her bonnie, winsome, girlish ways. If she had a cold or a headache—for she was not very strong—everyone was troubled for her. She lived in an atmosphere of love, and peace, and kindness.

"Well, what do you think of her?" said Miss Spencer a little wistfully, as she and her nephew took their way home an hour later. "Some people call her nice-looking."

"Nice-looking!" said Captain Ashpitall emphatically. "I call her charming, so frank and unaffected too, without any of the airs and graces of town girls."

And so it began, and, of course, from the very first everyone knew how it would end.

The good people of Wickham looked anxiously at Miss Spencer's nephew, to see if he was worthy of such an honour, and one and all decided he was.

And the sweet, hazy, August days drifted by, and the child, in her quiet old home, flushed, and softened, and brightened, growing lovelier and sweeter every day. Something new had come into the world; she did not understand it all; she only knew that she was happier than she had ever been before.

The little gate at the end of the garden was always open now. Captain Ashpitall would stroll in of a morning, would find his way up to the old bench under the apple-tree, where Poppy was sure to be, or, if not there, down in the summer-house, or in the pretty, old-fashioned drawing-room. What did it matter where, so long as they were together?

Frank Ashpitall was handsome, well-bred, courteous, accomplished—just enough of an invalid still to be interesting. They sang

duets together; they read poetry together—the "Idylls of the Kings," Mrs. Browning's sweet, passionate love-poems.

And one evening, scarcely a month after they had first met, they had all dined at the rectory. It was a still, fragrant night, with a great, golden, harvest moon rising over the lime-tree tops. The rector and the Miss Spencers sat over the pleasant wood-fire; the young people wandered up the garden to the moonlit, shimmering river, and there Frank told Poppy all the story of Madeline Ferrers. The girl's grey eyes were full of pity and wonder, perhaps, too, a little pain, as she raised them to his.

"Oh, how could she—how could she?" she breathed softly.

Frank's face flushed under that clear, innocent gaze.

"Don't be sorry for me, Miss Prendergast, unless, indeed—Poppy, I only told you because I should like you to know everything. I thought I cared for her a year ago, but I know now it was all a mistake, since I have seen you, since I have found out what the real thing is. Look up at me, dear."

He was holding her hand now, and they were standing still in the moonlight. Miss Spencer, wandering uneasily to the window, saw them, and went back quickly to the fireplace, and took up her knitting nervously.

"In spite of all that, Poppy, I can give you a whole heart's love.

Poppy darling, look up and say you can care for me."

And Poppy did not say a word, but she looked up at him with all her answer in her true eyes. Frank was her hero, her king amongst men. It seemed to the girl as if her happiness was almost more than she could bear.

"Are you sure," she whispered, a little later, as they made their way up to the house, "that you do not care for her now?"

"I am certain that I never cared for her—that I do not care for her now, certainly. I could never care for a woman who had once deceived me."

Frank spoke sternly; he had very rigid ideas of right and truth. Poppy shivered under his arm, she could not have told why.

"You are cold, my darling. I ought not to have let you stay out so long. You belong to me now. Poppy, Poppy, before we go in, give me one kiss of yourself, and tell me that you never cared for anyone else in all the world."

"Oh, don't you know it, Frank? How could I? Never for anyone else for one moment. It seems to me as if I had loved you all my life."

And so they were engaged, with everyone's full and free consent. The Miss Spencers were delighted, so was the whole parish. Mr. Prendergast was a little taken aback at first, he pished, and pshawed, and exclaimed, he rubbed his spectacles, and passed his hands through his white hair. Poppy was too young to think of such things, he said; why, only the other day she was a baby; but when it was conclusively proved to him that Poppy had thought of such things, that he was no longer all-sufficient for his little daughter's happiness, then he gave way readily enough.

There was really nothing to be urged against it. If she was to marry some day, Captain Ashpitall was about as good a husband as she could have. He was a gentleman in every sense of the word; he had plenty of money of his own; whatever his aunts had would come to him. Above all, there was no doubt at all of his love for Poppy, and hers for him. One stipulation only the old man made. They were not to be married for a year.

"Poppy is young. I have not had much comfort in my children; leave her to me a little longer—she is the last. Captain Ashpitall, she is very young, she has never heard a harsh word in her life. Will you be tender with her?"

Frank was much moved; he got up and took the old man's hand.

"Can't you trust me?" he said. "You don't know how I love her. You will never be sorry for having given her to me."

And he meant it. He had not known it was in him to care for anyone so much.

He was not perfection, this young man. The perfect man or woman has yet to be discovered in spite of our novelists. He was capable of loving deeply and truly, but he was of an intensely jealous, exacting nature. He would have all or nothing.

"Poppy is the very wife for him," said his aunts.

She simply worshipped him. Her trust, and faith, and belief in him were absolute. They were a perfect pair of lovers, everyone said.

"Let me see," said his aunt Dora, laughing at him, one day, "it is not a month since you declared there did not live a woman in the world who could be trusted."

"Ah, but I had not seen Poppy then; that was my ignorance. How could I tell? Poppy is like a piece of crystal. I could scarcely have believed it possible anyone could be so pure and true. It would be impossible to connect the least shadow of deceit with her."

"I must run up to town for a few weeks," said Captain Ashpitall.

August was over; it was the first week in September. "You must write to me every day. Why, Poppy!"

Poppy was crying. She had been strangely unlike herself these last few days. She looked pale, and there were shadows under her eyes, and she had a nervous, anxious manner.

"Why, Poppy, do you care so much?"

Frank was rather pleased, on the whole. He liked these tributes to his charms.

He drove off to the station in high good-humour with himself and all the world. And Poppy stole up to her room and watched him out of sight, and when he turned the corner over the bridge she threw herself down by her bed and cried and sobbed as if her heart would break.

It was a cold day; there was a chill wind blowing through the limes; the yellow leaves were drifting in showers against the windows. Her summer, her beautiful summer, was over, Poppy thought pitifully.

It was a month before Captain Ashpittall got back to Wickham; his business had taken him longer than he expected. He wrote to Poppy, and heard from her every day almost; he bought her a locket in town, and got his photograph in it, smiling to himself at the thought of how pleased she would be, how her cheeks would flush up and her eyes shine.

He had sent no word of his coming—he was fond of taking people by surprise. He walked out from the station, leaving his traps to follow. It was a close, damp day, with a grey fog lying low over the river; the trees were bare; the dark brown leaves lay in drifts on the ground.

Frank swung himself down over the low bridge wall to the narrow footpath that ran along the river at the end of the gardens. It was about the rectory dinner-hour, he knew; still, it was just possible he might see Poppy. "Dear, sweet little Poppy!" his pulse quickened at the thought of seeing her again. But the garden was empty, dark, and desolate. The bench under the apple-tree was almost lost in the mist, the flowers were withered and dead.

Frank turned to go, and, as he turned, came face to face with a man coming in the other direction. A tall, dashing-looking sort of man, with a dark, almost foreign-looking face—a stranger in Wickham evidently. He stared rather curiously at Frank, and made a kind of half bow.

"Who the deuce is he?" thought Captain Ashpittall impatiently, "and what is he doing down here?" It annoyed this young man excessively not to be able to understand everything. "Who was the fellow I met just now by the river?" he asked his aunt, when the first exclamations of surprise and welcome were over, and Aunt Dora, the housekeeper, had given her orders for some kind of meal to be prepared for "the Captain." "I am sure I never saw him before; he looks as if he might be a gentleman, and yet somehow I don't much like the look of him."

Aunt Dora glanced at Aunt Sophie, with something like a guilty flush on her face.

"Do you know him?" said her nephew, looking curiously from one to the other.

"Know him? Oh dear no! We did hear—they do say——" Aunt Sophie admonished her sister with a look. "He is quite a stranger. I believe he is staying up at old Mrs. Randall's, at the Mill Farm. He has come for his health, I suppose."

"Hum! Queer, out-of-the-way sort of place for him to come to;" and Captain Ashpittall dismissed the subject, to his aunts' great relief. A stranger in Wickham was quite an event, and this particular stranger had been a wonderful exercise to their minds.

"I will go up and see Poppy, Aunt Dora," Frank remarked a little later. "Have you seen much of her?"

Again Aunt Dora hesitated.

"Not quite so much as usual, but perhaps that is only natural, since you were not here."

"She's not looking at all well," put in Aunt Sophie, who was always an invalid herself, from her armchair. "You must take care of her, Frank."

"Not looking well? She said nothing to me."

Captain Ashpittall was put out; he did not understand his aunts. Poppy had no business not to be well. He was a young man who liked everyone belonging to him to be happy and prosperous; it reflected a certain credit on himself.

But he forgot all his vexations when he found himself in the cosy, rectory drawing-room, and Poppy, looking, he thought, lovelier than he had ever seen her before, in her soft black dress, with scarlet geraniums at her slim waist, and in the lace round her throat, came to meet him with a little joyful cry, and clung to him as she had never done before.

Mr. Prendergast was dozing over the fire; he roused up to speak to the young man, and then considerably took himself off to his study.

"Poppy, you don't deserve your name; what have you been doing to yourself while I have been away? You look quite pale, now I come to look at you."

Poppy flushed up redly enough, as she answered:

"I have had a little cold, I think, but I am quite well now. Don't say anything to father, he can't bear to think I should be ill."

"You will be all right now. You don't go out enough, Poppy. I wish you would come to me at once. Why must we wait a year?"

"Oh, Frank, we promised, and a year is nothing; it soon goes by."

"I don't think so." Frank was rather offended. "I think if you cared as much as I do—— Well, my darling, I did not mean that; but it is hard lines. Why shouldn't your father give up his parish and come and live with us?"

"I don't think he would like that."

"I can't, you know, be always running down here. I must be off in another fortnight."

"A fortnight! Oh, Frank!" The tears brimmed up in Poppy's grey eyes.

"You won't feel the time, you know," said Frank mischievously. "I will come back at Christmas. Why, Poppy, you little foolish child, I am not worth all that. I did not think you cared so much."

"Who is that fellow?" It was a few days later, a crisp October morning. Captain Ashpittall and Poppy were coming through the pine-woods, when, at the narrowest part of the path, they met the same stranger Frank had noticed before. He stood aside amongst the dead ferns to let them pass. He was less well-dressed than before; and it seemed to Frank that he had a cowed, broken-down sort of a look, as of a man with whom the world had not gone well.

He raised his hat with a courteous enough bow as they passed, and Poppy crimsoned up all over her face.

"Who is that fellow, Poppy? This is the second time I have met him."

"He is lodging up at Mrs. Randall's," Poppy said hesitatingly.

"So Aunt Dora told me; but who is he? It's most extraordinary that no one knows anything about him. Where does he come from? What is he doing here, of all places? What is his name?"

"Mr. West, he calls himself."

"Calls himself! He looks like a fellow, somehow, that had no right to any name. Do you know him, Poppy? I fancied he looked at you queerly."

"I have met him."

"And spoken to him?"

"Yes," said the girl. Her red colour had all faded away now; but she looked at the young man steadily, almost defiantly, with her great grey eyes. "There is no harm in speaking to him, Frank. I don't understand why you ask so many questions."

"Don't you? You are very young, Poppy; you are very pretty; you don't know the world. This fellow may be any kind of an adventurer."

"Surely, Frank, you can trust me."

"Trust you? Yes. If I could not trust you I could not love you. If I had to give up my faith in you, Poppy, I would give it up in every human being."

And so they made friends again after a fashion, and spoke no more of the stranger, but a shadow had fallen upon them. They walked the rest of the way almost in silence.

Frank was put out, he could not have told why. He could not have said what he suspected. He cursed himself for a fool, a distrustful idiot, and yet his suspicions would not be silenced. Poppy was changed, there was no doubt of that. She had grown absent and sad. Once he had come in upon her unexpectedly—she had been crying—she thrust some letters into her pocket. He had been used to boast to his aunt that he knew every thought of her heart—could he say so now? The doubt was a torture to him, and yet, such was the man's nature, that he could not help it.

Mrs. Bosanquet, the squire's wife, was giving a party.

Poppy was a great pet of hers. She had always promised the girl a "coming out" ball, and now she must certainly have one in honour of her engagement, and to introduce Captain Ashpittall to county society. Mrs. Bosanquet was one of the few people who were not quite charmed with Poppy's choice. She had had plans of her own; people said she wanted to marry the girl to her own son, a good-natured, heavy-featured young man. But, at all events, however that may be, she did not approve of Frank.

"He's handsome enough, and pleasant enough, I own," she would say with a little shrug of her fine shoulders, "and his aunts are great friends of mine; but, if I don't make a great mistake, he's hard, and unforgiving, and jealous-natured. Of course he's not jealous now, he has not been tried. Anyone can see that Poppy worships the very ground he walks on. I don't like that either; the most love

ought to be on the man's side, it's safer, and Poppy is a tender plant."

But even Mrs. Bosanquet was obliged to own, the night of her dance, that Captain Ashpittall looked and behaved like the very beautiful of a young girl's lover.

He was the handsomest and the most distinguished-looking man in the room; and he was very tender and devoted to Poppy.

All the mists and shadows between them seemed to have cleared away that night. He was so proud of her beauty, and of the admiration she excited.

She was looking her loveliest, in some kind of pale, shining blue gown, a great bunch of purple passion-flowers at her bosom, a few of the same dusky flowers in her bright hair; her soft cheeks were blazing crimson, her grey eyes shining dark under their black brows.

"Who is she?" the men whispered; "she's the greatest beauty I have ever seen."

Old Miss Spencer, who had chaperoned her, was amazed at the sensation the girl created.

It was after supper, the band was playing a mournful, pathetic waltz tune; Miss Spencer was sitting in the great bay window, half hidden by the folds of the heavy curtain. Her nephew found her out there, and came and sat beside her. He looked very handsome, very well satisfied with himself.

"Tired, auntie? Where is Poppy, Aunt Dora? I have been looking for her everywhere."

"I don't know. Is she not dancing? I saw her a few minutes ago with John Bosanquet."

"Poor Bosanquet!" Frank laughed. He was the successful one, he could afford to be amused; this was not the kind of thing that made him jealous.

"You ought to be proud, Frank; she has had admiration enough to-night to turn any girl's head; but I don't believe she ever has a thought in her heart for any one but you."

"I don't believe she has," Ashpittall answered softly.

"Love me all in all, or not at all," was his motto. He had found all he wanted in Poppy. He would prove himself worthy of her great love and trust, he resolved.

A silence fell between them. The dancers whirled on to the plaintive, melancholy waltz-tune. Frank Ashpittall will not forget that tune as long as he lives.

Some ladies sat down on the other side of the curtain; they were talking over everybody and everything.

"The rector ought to be told," said one; "everyone is speaking of it."

"Does she really meet him?" said the other.

"My dear, it is quite certain. I am the last to mention a thing of this kind if I was not sure, but there is no doubt of it. She meets him up in the woods. I fear it has gone farther than we think."

"And Captain Ashpittall—"

"Oh, of course he knows nothing. No one could blame him for breaking with her."

Miss Spencer put out her hand and half rose from her chair, her nephew pressed her back again. His face was deadly white, his eyes were gleaming; it seemed to the young man that he had been listening to these voices all along.

"Jane told me she met them the other day. I never encourage servants' gossip, but—"

"He's a fine-looking man, rather foreign-looking, don't you think?"

"No good, you may depend upon it. What should he be doing here? When Captain Ashpittall was in London they used to meet every day. I did say a word to Miss Spencer, but you know she is quite infatuated about the girl; however, it has gone too far now. Something must be done, I don't like to see that nice fellow deceived. Shall we go into the conservatory? It is getting very warm here." And the two ladies, quite refreshed by such a delicious piece of gossip, shook out their rustling skirts and sailed away, quite unconscious of the pale listeners so close to them.

Miss Spencer sat trembling in her chair. She was afraid to look up. Her nephew laid a hand upon her shoulder.

"Is this true, Aunt Dora?" he whispered, and his voice sounded harsh and strange. "Have you heard this before? Tell me all the truth."

"Oh, Frank, Frank, I will tell you anything I know, but not here! I never believed it."

Frank made an impatient sound. He went and got a shawl from the cloak-room, put it round the trembling old lady, and drew her out on the terrace.

"Now."

"She did say, Frank—but you know what a gossip she is. I never listen to her."

"And you let me go on in ignorance, and all this time she has been deceiving me—deceiving us all."

"Perhaps it is not true, Frank. I cannot believe it."

"Not true? When it is in everyone's mouth? When I met him myself the very night I came home, prowling about the garden, I asked you, I asked Poppy. She put me off, but I suspected something. I knew something was wrong, I have felt it all the time." He crossed his arms over the balustrade, and leant his face down over them.

"You will not condemn her unheard, Frank. You will hear what she has to say. She is very young. She has no mother. She may have been thoughtless."

"Yes, I will hear what she has to say, and then—I will say good-bye to her."

The waltz was over. Someone was singing in the music-room. Long afterwards the words came back to Frank Ashpittall, though he listened now as one in a dream:

But ah! in the dreary winter,  
I stood by a narrow grave,  
And I saw within it a sweet face dead,  
I'd have given my life to save.  
But I knew my life could not waken  
The life in that peaceful clay;  
So I laid down my heart beside her,  
And silently wandered away.

A cloaked, shrouded figure came hurrying along the dark path, and up the terrace steps. The light from one of the windows showed the flowers in her hair, the pale shimmering gleam of her dress.

Frank Ashpittall stepped forward, and stood in her way. The girl gave a low cry.

"Where have you been? Poppy, answer me!" His voice was low and stern, and the girl turned deathly white, and shivered from head to foot.

He put his hand on her shoulder and almost shook her.

"Have you been to meet that man?—tell me!"

Still she looked at him with wide, frightened eyes. Frank laughed aloud, a harsh, contemptuous laugh.

"And can you say that you have not met him over and over again? That while I was away you used to meet him every day? That your name—yours, my wife that was to be—is in everyone's mouth? I promised Aunt Dora I would hear what you had to say, and you have nothing to say, and so—"

"Oh, Frank, Frank, you are not going to leave me!" She spoke then. She held up her hands in piteous entreaty. "Frank, you will trust me?"

"Have I not trusted you, and have you not deceived me? I told you once, Poppy"—ah, how well she remembered it!—"that I could love no one who had once deceived me. And yet you are young," he went on more gently. "You may have been led away. I would not wish to be hard on you. If you would tell me!"

Poppy dropped her arms in a hopeless kind of way.

"I can tell you nothing," she said in a low voice. "If you will not trust me and believe me, Frank, I can say nothing."

"And you have been meeting him now?"

"Yes," the girl breathed rather than spoke.

"I might have known; I had my lesson before. Heaven forgive you, Poppy! You have done more harm than you know of."

She made no sound; she said no word more in her own defence.

"I can understand now the poor devils you read of, who shoot a woman or run a knife into her," said Frank passionately. "It would have been better for me to have seen you dead than hear this. I will say nothing to your father. You can tell him what you like." She gave a sort of sob—of relief it seemed—then. "I shall be off to-morrow by the first train. It was a bad day for me when I came here; and now." He took her in his arms and kissed her passionately, almost fiercely, once, twice, three times. "There, that is good-bye to the old times—to the girl I believed you to be."

Still she said no word. She endured his kisses passively. When he let her go, almost pushed her from him, she stood as if turned to stone. Only when he was gone, when the last sound of his steps had almost died away down the terrace, she gave a sort of low, gasping moan, and put her hand up to her throat; then she laughed strangely.

"Don't be afraid, Miss Spencer; I am not going to do anything. I think, don't you, that we had better go home?"

She did not cry, she made no complaint, she volunteered no explanation; Miss Spencer had not the heart to blame her.

It was a terrible ending to their happy evening.

"My dear," said kind Aunt Dora, as the carriage drew up at the rectory gates, "I cannot believe it; there is some mistake. If you would only tell Frank."

"Miss Spencer, I can tell him nothing," Poppy spoke with some spirit; "if he will not trust me, it must be all over. You heard what he said—that he could not love anyone who had once deceived him. I have deceived him; we have said good-bye, and it is all over now."

And so it was all over; there was no more to be said. Captain Ashpittall left Wickham by the first train, before anyone was astir. He enclosed a few lines to Poppy for her father, which she was to give him or not, as she saw fit.

Mr. Prendergast took it all placidly, he suspected nothing; he was deceived by Poppy's pretence of indifference, and, truth to tell, very pleased to think that his little daughter was all his own again.

"They had changed their minds," she told him, stroking his white head tenderly; "she was going to stay with him always now."

The Miss Spencers fretted themselves ill. Aunt Sophie took to her bed. Who would have thought it was all going to end like this?

It was a nine days' wonder in the place. People talked and talked, and began to look curiously at Poppy when she appeared in church, or walked about the village, her fair head held higher than usual, a new determined curve about her soft mouth. If she was heart-broken she would not show it. Not yet. It takes a great many tears, a great many sleepless nights, to wash the roses from young cheeks, the brightness from young eyes. Poppy would pay afterwards for the watch she kept on herself.

Only Mrs. Bosanquet would hear no word against her favourite.

"It was all Captain Ashpittall's jealousy and hardness; had she not always said so? Poppy was well rid of him. Meeting a man, indeed! And pray, if she had met him, what had become of him?"

A question that indeed no one could answer, for the stranger had disappeared as completely from Wickham, as if he had never been. Nothing more was heard or seen of him. "Miss Prendergast had fallen between two stools," said the malicious.

That was a dreary winter; there was a great deal of rain. The dead leaves lay in melancholy drifts about the streets; a thick, unwholesome mist hung low over the swollen river. Everyone had colds and coughs; the doctor had never been kept so busy. A change somehow seemed to have come over the pleasant little village. The green gate at the end of the rectory garden was never opened now.

Miss Spencer and Poppy paid each other formal visits. By a tacit understanding Frank's name was never mentioned between them. Miss Spencer had loved Poppy in her own way, but naturally she blamed her, for was not Frank her idol? But yet her tender heart yearned sometimes over the girl, who was young and motherless, and who must have been, kind Aunt Dora said, led astray.

And everywhere I see the room,  
And all the weeping eyes;  
And I hear the tender, terrible words  
While my little one dies.

"Will you come home? Poppy is dying. She wants to see you. Lose no time."

This was the telegram Frank Ashpittall read at his club, one dreary morning a few days before Christmas.

He stared at the flimsy strip of paper, at the few scrawled words. It seemed as if he could not take it in for a minute.

Poppy dying—his beautiful, bright-faced Poppy! Captain Ashpittall had tried to persuade himself that his love for her was dead, that she had killed it herself that October night. But he knew now—he had known all the while—that love is not so easily killed.

Over and over again, in all the dreary days that had passed since he had last seen her, the thought would keep coming to him, had he been too harsh? Had he judged her wrongly? And now, standing with that awful telegram in his hand, it seemed to the young man that he would give all the rest of his life to undo the past, to hold Poppy once again in his arms, to know that she was his, and his alone.

Our lives! This is the way we talk in our ignorance. We are ready to give what is not required of us, what is not ours to give. We withhold what is expected—a little trust, a little faith, a little patience.

It was late on the winter's night when Frank Ashpittall reached Wickham. Never had a train seemed so slow.

The rectory carriage met him. "His young mistress was the same," the old man-servant said in a moved voice. "The doctor gave no hopes. She had been failing for the last month. She was never very strong."

How cold and chill the rectory looked, with the shadow of death brooding over it! A red-eyed housemaid let him in, and led the way to the drawing-room, where a fire was burning, and Poppy's chair and work-table pushed away into a corner.

Frank Ashpittall laid his face down against the cushions of the chair for a moment.

The rector came blundering in, looking ten years older. He did not take the young man's offered hand; he did not understand it all, but in a confused sort of way he connected him with the present trouble.

It was so sudden, so unexpected. Poppy had taken a cold, no

worse than she had often had; but the doctor said she seemed to have no strength to rally from it, and now she was dying.

"She heard you coming, she expects you. Will you go to her now?"

As in a dream Frank followed him up the low, wide staircase, along the passage, into the bright girl's room, with all its pictures and photographs and little valueless trifles. The lamp was burning low. Someone was sitting over the fire—a man, who got up and went out as they came in. Frank saw nothing, noticed nothing but the little white bed in the corner, the wasted face, the great grey eyes that lit up with the ghost of their old love-light as he came in.

"Oh, Poppy, Poppy!"

Mr. Prendergast had gone, and they two were alone together once more.

"Frank, you have come—you are good to come! Frank, I could not die without telling you it was all a mistake. That man was my brother. Poor Tom! I may tell you now."

Frank Ashpittall was down on his knees by the bed.

"Your brother! Oh, Poppy, how could I tell? My darling, my darling! can you ever forgive me?"

The wasted little hand was stroking his hair with its old caressing gesture. Strong man as he was, Captain Ashpittall sobbed aloud.

"Don't, Frank, don't; I can't bear it if you do. Then you do love me still, Frank?"

"As my own life. Oh, Poppy, you do not doubt it, my darling?"

"Put your arms round me, Frank, and I will tell you. You will stay with me to the end, won't you? It has been so hard without you."

The sweet voice was very weak and low. Frank put his arms round her, and held her close. It seemed to him as if his love and his repentance must be strong enough to keep her even from death.

"Poor Tom! he was always wild. I understand it more now. They said he broke my mother's heart, and father cast him off. I used to be so fond of him, I remember, long ago, when I was a little child in Cambridge, and he was at college. I had not seen him since, and I thought he was dead; and then he wrote to me last September. It was a few days before you went away, I remember. He was going to Australia, he said; but he could not go without seeing us again. I was to let him know if father would forgive him. Poor Tom! he said it was so hard to be cast out from home, and he was so tired of it all. He was so changed, no one would have known him. Father passed him once on the road. He used to come to the end of the garden, and I used to go out to him. He was so sorry for everything; he promised me that, once he was in a new country, he would do better. Once I spoke to father about him, but he was very angry, and forbade me to mention his name again; and so that night of Mrs. Bosanquet's ball, he came to say good-bye to me."

Frank groaned.

"Oh, Poppy, Poppy! if you had but told me."

"I could not, Frank; I promised him not; but now it is all right. Father has forgiven him. I told him everything, and when I am dead, Tom has promised me to be a comfort to him."

"Poppy, you are not going to die; I cannot bear to let you go!"

"Poor Frank! I must go. God knows best."

The child seemed to have no strength left her for great grief. She had given all her true heart's love to this man. No one but herself knew what she had suffered when he left her.

But it was all over now; a great peace and calm seemed to have come to the weary, bruised spirit. Within sight of the Eternal Love, human love shows very small and weak; and Frank realised with an agony in his heart—such as he had not felt in all his thirty years—that he might lavish all his love in vain now. He was powerless to call her back to life; she was drifting slowly out on an ocean where her nearest and dearest could not follow her. He never left her again. Father and brother came and went; doctors and nurses took their turn of watching; but there, all through the still night, patient and untiring, Frank Ashpittall sat.

She was very quiet and patient, she had no pain or ache. Sometimes her mind wandered a little. She would fancy herself back in the sunny garden with Frank; once she cried out and begged him "to trust her, not to leave her."

"I am here, my darling; I will never leave you," said Frank. And she opened her sweet eyes on him with recognition.

What more is there to tell of her? In real life people do not, as a rule, say any wonderful last words, and neither did my poor Poppy.

In the late grey dawn of the winter's morning there came a change, and while they all knelt round her—the broken-hearted father, the brother, the lover, who had loved her so well, and yet had left her—she passed away gently, quietly, peacefully, as she had lived.

"Poor Poppy!" I say; and yet, while we mourn for her, shall we wish her back again in life? I think not. She was too fragile a blossom for this hard, workaday world. As long as the summer

of love and kindness lasted she bloomed bravely, but the first blast of the dreary winter of harshness and mistrust laid her low. Her short, sweet life, her sad death, have not been in vain. For her sake, the poor prodigal brother, who had been the means of bringing her so much sorrow, has vowed, with God's help, to become a better man, to do his best in the future, to atone for the bitter past. Through Captain Ashpittall's influence, he has got an appointment in London, and there the poor broken-hearted father has gone with him—broken-hearted, and yet with a new peace and hope in his heart, for if Poppy has been taken from him, yet is not his first-born given back?

Kind old Aunt Dora and Aunt Sophie talk often through their tears of the dead girl's beauty and goodness. Mrs. Bosanquet tells the new rector "that she was little short of an angel." But it is Frank Ashpittall who misses her most. Poor Frank, who feels that a lifetime of sorrow can never undo the past, can never give him back what he has lost. He rose from Poppy's deathbed a changed man. He saw it all then—all his hardness, his jealousy, his suspicion; and every day, every hour he lives, he thinks of his lost love, and prays that he may be forgiven for that harsh judgment, and that one day he may grow worthier of that true, faithful girl's heart.

### Primrose Time.

THE birds are singing to their mates  
From every budding spray,  
And swift to heaven's golden gates  
The swallow wings his way;  
The rook to-day in noisy throng,  
Is building on the lime;  
The thrush proclaims in tuneful song  
'Tis primrose-time!

A maiden sits beneath the gate  
That bounds her father's farm,  
Her mind intent to fill the crate  
That hangs upon her arm,  
With hyacinth and daffodils,  
And violets in their prime;  
Each flower the air with perfume fills  
In primrose-time.

A stranger came and saw the maid,  
And though of high degree,  
His aimless stroll he straightway stayed,  
For she was fair to see;  
He thought to while the sunny hours  
All innocent of crime,  
Yet hearts are gathered oft with flowers  
In primrose-time.

And oft they met beside the gate,  
Or by the river's brim,  
Until she found when—ah, too late!  
Her heart was lost to him.  
He'd wed the maid he oft did say,  
When back from foreign clime;  
He loved—alas!—but rode away  
In primrose-time.

A year has gone, the snowdrop pale  
Has burst its winter sheath,  
And all throughout the woodland vale  
It weaves its dainty wreath.  
But still the lover cometh not  
Back from that foreign clime;  
He surely can't have yet forgot  
That primrose-time!

Alas! his sire had sternly claimed  
Allegiance to his birth;  
He felt no shame to be ashamed  
Whate'er the maiden's worth.  
Spring, summer, autumn, passed away,  
And now the winter's rime  
Has decked the trees with jewelled spray  
Ere primrose-time.

At last, at last! his hand is free—  
His sire has gone to rest,  
Where pride of birth can never be  
A passport to the blest;  
Then haste, true heart, seek out thy love,  
Pray thou be there betime,  
And angels waft thy prayers above  
In primrose-time.

Alas! 'tis there thy prayers must fly,  
Thou ne'er wilt see her more,  
She whom thou loved'st in days gone by  
Is on the distant shore.  
A mound beneath the old yew-tree,  
A wreath with loving rhyme,  
Is all that there is left to thee  
Of primrose-time.

### "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," &c., &c.

#### Book VII.

##### CHAPTER I. LEARNING TO FORGET.

It was a hard life and a reckless life to which Ivor Grant had bound himself, when he entered the Mexican cavalry.

Not till he was far out of sight of English land and English skies did he discover that the faithful lad, who had vowed such devoted service, was also a passenger in the same vessel, and was recklessly and obstinately determined to follow his fortunes, no matter where they might lead.

Ivor was deeply touched by the lad's pertinacity. "You may send me away, sir, but you can't prevent me following you," was all Tom would say to his remonstrances, and with something more akin to gladness than he had felt for many a long day, Ivor looked at the honest, rugged face, and knew he had one friend at least who valued him for what he was, not for what he owned.

His troubles weighed heavily upon him still. It seemed as if he shaped his actions and lived his life by some sheer mechanical instinct. Where men's lives were most needed and of least account, where the fiercest clang of warfare rang out, where recklessness and courage seemed but synonymous terms, thither he took his way, and his past military experience served him in good stead. He had no ambition, he had no hopes of any future better or brighter than this dull present; he knew that a soldier's grave under some foreign clay was all he could look forward to, and he almost prayed that that rest might come speedily, as the desolate days rolled on, and Time still held for him only those maddening memories of a happiness brief as any dream, and, like a dream, delusive.

In after years—looking back on this portion of his life—he used to wonder with a shudder how he had ever lived through those first awful months, performing the routine of duty, ready at any moment to face the hardships and perils of his calling, yet bearing within his heart, each hour he lived, the well-nigh intolerable anguish, that nothing seemed to lighten or to ease.

Days came and went; suns rose and set; duties and obligations pressed hard upon him, and clamoured for fulfilment; and he shirked nothing, avoided nothing, feared nothing, though there were nights when he could only stagger to his bed in barracks, or in camp, with a sick and heavy horror of the day and all that it had brought, and wonder dumbly how such misery could be borne, and yet not kill.

It seemed at last as if his own powers of endurance brought with them a sort of hopeless faith in himself, as if there must be something yet in life to live for, since that life was so hard to destroy. It was in such moments, his weakest, and, as he told himself, his worst, that the allurements and sweetness of his hopeless love were nearest to his heart, that he saw ever before his aching eyes that one sweet woman face before which all others paled into darkness and insignificance. How persistently it haunted him; how in the dark and lonely hours when he lay wakeful and gazing at the quiet stars, as she too might be gazing in that far-off land, he seemed to recall her voice, her looks, her smile; each meeting that had been so precious and so brief, down to that last interview in the quiet churchyard, when he had touched her hand in sorrowful farewell, and listened to her last, low, broken words.

At times, too, he looked at himself with a sense of pained unfamiliarity, as if that brown haggard face were not his own, and found himself wondering how the bright hair, which had been his mother's pride, could have become so thickly sown with grey.

"My youth has all gone now," he thought bitterly. "Well, I ought not to complain. It was pleasant enough, and I enjoyed it while it lasted. I wonder—I wonder how old I shall be before I learn to forget!"

He had a little picture of Beryl—a picture she had given him that happy springtime—which he always associated with rosy dawns and cowslip meadows, and the solemn baby-face of little Jack. It had never left him since, and sometimes he would take it out and gaze at it under the brilliant tropical midnight skies, until his aching eyes could see it no longer.

He had told her it was too sad for her. She had always seemed so bright and happy a creature then. He never looked at the face now but he seemed to hear her jesting words, the words that her eyes belied: "All women wear masks, you know. Perhaps my real self is a sadder one than you imagine, or I am getting a little tired of smiles."

A little tired of smiles! Ah, they had not lasted long—not very long. Was she tired of them now? Would she ever again be the radiant, beautiful goddess of his dreams—standing midway between



earth and heaven, in that brief charmed pause that held the daylight from the dawn? Never again—oh, never again! He knew that, better than any words could tell him; knew it as the picture faded from his sight in a mist of tears, that all the strength of manhood could not check—such tears as a man can shed but once in a lifetime for sake of some woman lost and loved “not wisely but too well.”

A rough life and a hard life had Ivor Grant led, fighting under a strange flag, and fighting, too, amidst and against fierce and half-barbarous savages.

He felt he had nothing in common with them, and they seemed to feel it also. Many a time, if it had not been for Tom, Ivor would have flung himself defenceless into the midst of carnage, so only that his life and his sorrow might end for ever. But the thought of that faithful friend who had followed his fortunes, or rather misfortunes, kept him from such utter desperation, and nerved him also to bear a life that was irksome and toilsome in the extreme—an incessant witness of tyrannies and cruelties, varied by fierce outbursts of warfare that let loose the worst passions of the impulsive, passionate race whose service he had joined—a race who fought like tigers, and triumphed like fiends; who reeled across a battlefield blind and drunk with bloodthirst and rapine, caring as little for the lives they took, and the bodies they trampled on and plundered, as they cared for the beaten-down grass, or crushed herbage, that marked their path to victory.

He had been wounded several times, but never very severely. At last, however, he was ordered on an expedition of more than usual danger, and to a part of the country quite unknown to him.

Halfway on the route his squadron was attacked by a force of the enemy that nearly trebled their own.

After almost superhuman exertions to make the best of his position, Ivor found that his men were growing utterly insubordinate. Some threw down their weapons, some clamoured for mercy; most of them fled like sheep, and Ivor himself received a wound that for once seemed likely to bring him that death for which his weary heart had prayed so long. He was left for dead, lying like a felled tree under his slaughtered charger, and there Tom found him after hours of patient search, when he came back with the reinforcements for which the fugitives had prayed.

It had been a horrible scene and a horrible time to the faithful lad, that rapid ride, that agonised search where the dead lay piled ten or twelve deep in many cases, under the burning midday sky.

And there among mangled limbs of men and horses he discovered Ivor at last.

For a few moments he thought he was dead, but as he drew him from out of that suffocating pressure, and bore him into the shade of an adjoining wood, Ivor opened his eyes and sighed faintly. Tom laid him down and gave him some brandy with which he had provided himself, and then rushed off to find the regimental surgeon, who was already going on his dreary rounds over that field of carnage.

Ere they reached him Ivor had again relapsed into insensibility, and in that state he was placed in the mule-cart which had been brought thither for the wounded, and taken back to the camp.

For long, long days afterwards he knew nothing of what went on about him. It was a gunshot wound that had laid him helpless at the mercy of his foe, and it held him helpless still, baffling the rude skill of surgeons, and wearing his life down to the last extremity of weakness. And Tom watched him, faithful to his trust; and at last a desperate resolve took possession of him. He must get his master away, get him to the nearest town where proper medical advice and attendance could be procured. He and a few of the more slightly wounded men had been left to attend to the sick while the rest of the troops pushed on, eager for revenge on the foe who had entrapped and then eluded them, and were now safe in one of their own lawless fastnesses in the wild mountains.

Tom had always been more famous for military insubordination than for military prowess. He considered that he and his master were thrown away upon the half-savage and brutalised beings, of whom the greater part of the army of Mexico was composed. True they had a kind of desperate courage and foolhardiness—they were fierce and bold when their blood was up, and could fight like lions; but then like lions they were equally ready to tear each other to pieces over a disputed carcase that formed their share of plunder, or the loot that was the only glory their brutal victories achieved. Over and over again had Tom wondered how that refined and cultured nature of Ivor Grant's could accustom itself or content itself in such a life, among such a set; and, when it was a question of life or death, when this valued and beloved existence was at stake, he wasted no time over imaginary points of honour, but one night took the liberty of helping himself to a cart and mule, and with Ivor carefully concealed under some straw and cloaks at the bottom of the said cart, he made his way to the nearest town.

Ivor was too ill then, and for long after, to heed or note what happened.

Indeed, Tom could never give any very clear account of how he got to Vera Cruz, but get there he certainly did, and receiving fresh assurance from each doctor he saw, of the necessity of getting his master to England—to England he resolved to take him.

It was not until he had reached the Mexican capital that the full danger of his actions seemed to dawn upon him. He knew that he was ostensibly a deserter, and that his life was in peril every hour. But he took the precaution of discarding his uniform at an early date, and gave out that he and his master had been set upon by brigands in one of the mountain districts.

In the disturbed state of the country his story was easily credited, and having once thrown off his military responsibilities, he troubled himself in no way as to penalties, or pains.

When Ivor Grant was sufficiently recovered to ask questions, Tom informed him that they had both been discharged as useless, and he was too wearied and too weak to trouble himself about details. The peace and quiet, the sight of the blue water, the scent of the cool salt breeze, were like magic to him. He drank in health and strength, he revelled once again in liberty; beside the martyrdom of those three past years, the present looked like a dream of paradise.

Unquestioning he accepted the strangeness of this freedom, thinking only to himself: “The world is wide, I can soon find other service if I try.”

Before they sighted English land he had another relapse, so serious a one that the ship's doctor was alarmed, and told Tom it was necessary to his master's life that the bullet should be found and extracted. As yet this had not been done, for the operation was too difficult and intricate a one for the rough surgical skill that Tom's limited resources had alone been able to command. Once in England, however, he resolved to find out the cleverest surgeon possible, and entreat and persuade him to attend to his master, even if he had not the means to pay for such attendance all at once. He did not doubt for a moment that he could raise funds. He remembered Beryl Marsden; he had a vague idea that she was rich; and there was Colonel Dunbar, his master's old friend—between them they would manage to do all that was necessary, he felt sure of it.

The one thing was to get him to London, and in face of all obstacles and difficulties, by sheer force of resolution, and, perhaps, a touch of that British obstinacy of which Tom had a full share, he succeeded in accomplishing this portion of his enterprise. His funds were at a very low ebb indeed, so low that he could only procure a very humble lodging; but Ivor was far too weak and exhausted to be scrupulous.

“So far, so good,” said Tom to himself, having seen his master comfortably in bed after the long dreary journey from Southampton.

Then, having administered some warm soup to the exhausted man, and seen him fairly asleep, he took himself out on a double quest—one, to find out if Colonel Dunbar was at his club in town, the other to leave Ivor's last valuable—a seal-ring—in trust, at the nearest pawnshop.

“The exchequer's low—very low,” Tom said to himself with a grim amusement at the position he occupied in regard to the management and administration of the said exchequer; “but I suppose 'twill all come right soon. They say when things is at their worst they begin to mend. I don't see myself as how things can be much worse with my master and me than they are at this here present moment. Whew! how it do rain in this blessed old country! 'Twas raining when I left it; 'tis raining now I've come back to it. Wonder if they've had a peep of the sun since I left? I shouldn't think so from the look of things. I—— Well I'm blest!”

The breaking off of his soliloquy and the subsequent exclamation were occasioned by an event so sudden and so unexpected that it drove all thoughts of wind and weather out of his head—drove them out with that sudden extinction of minor discomforts that a great surprise or a great joy brings, and it seemed as if both of these had met and mingled for one brief moment's space, as Tom, after all these years of hardship and trial, looked back once again at a face associated in his mind with the saddest and sweetest memory of his life.

#### CHAPTER II. THE POWER OF THE LAW SET AT NAUGHT.

It was four days after that interview in John Marsden's rooms. The winter night had closed in darkly, with stormy gusts of wind and rain, and the occupant of those gloomy chambers sat by the fire, shivering at every blast, and grumbling, “not loud, but deep,” at the abominations of the English climate.

The table beside him was littered with law-books and law-papers, and mysterious documents bound in red tape, and looking horribly uninteresting, though one and all those things represented the machinery of that mighty engine which chance had set at work

in his favour, and whose laboured beats bore for him the musical sounds of fortune.

It was as one of the noisiest and stormiest blasts was shaking the windows, and rattling against the doors, that a knock came to the door of his own room. He did not hear it, and, without waiting to repeat the summons, the visitor turned the handle and entered.

John Marsden started to his feet with a low cry of terror as a cold hand touched his shoulder, and he saw behind him a cloaked and shrouded figure—the figure of a woman.

"Have I startled you? I knocked, but no one answered," she said, speaking low and hurriedly, as if eager to get rid of the words.

"Good Heavens, Beryl! You! Whatever brings you here?"

She sank down on a chair beside the fire, and unloosed her heavy cloak.

"I—I have come," she said in the same nervous, hurried way, "to bring you the papers."

He looked at her in blank astonishment.

"You have grown sensible at last. Is that what you mean? Why couldn't you give them up sooner?"

"I don't know," she said wearily.

She had thrown aside her veil, and her face was white as death, but her eyes looked wild and fevered, and John Marsden noted, with a hock of surprise, how altered and how ill she looked.

"I have been very ill," she went on presently.

"When did you leave the Abbey?" he asked brusquely. She shuddered.

"Yesterday," she answered. "It has grown unbearable, insupportable. I—I could not stop, and I thought it was no use to hold out; the lawyers say the case is clear enough. These," and she handed him some yellow, faded papers, "are what they wanted. The certificate of my mother's birth and marriage. They were in my father's desk. I don't think he knew or even guessed that she was related to the Grants. It was a runaway marriage, you know, and her people never forgave her."

"And may I ask why you have thought fit to oppose what was your lawful right, and mine?"

"Yours!" Her white face flushed crimson; she looked at him with a scorn and defiance that no words could have portrayed. "I thought your wish for a reconciliation was not quite disinterested. You have played your cards very well, John Marsden."

"Yes," he said coolly, "I think I have; and I'm glad you've come to your senses. I didn't want to use force. Well, this settles the matter. There's nothing to prevent us from going down to Grantham Court and taking possession as soon as we like. When will you be ready?"

She shuddered, and half rose to her feet.

"I— Oh, don't ask me—don't force me to go. The place is full of haunted memories to me. You—you can't understand."

"No," he said brutally, "I can't, and I don't wish to. Put all that sentimental bosh out of your mind, for you've got to come there, and to come with me. I've a fancy for playing the country squire, and I've a fancy that you should see me do it."

She sank back again on her seat, and pressed her hands against her heart as if to still its laboured beats.

"Don't be too hard on me, John," she said in a strange, suppressed voice. "If it's the money you need, take it and welcome. I don't care for it. I don't need it. But I can't and live at the Court. I can't feel it is mine—not in the face of all the wills, and all the laws that ever were framed."

"But I mean that you shall do it," he said doggedly; "and the law is on my side, I fancy."

"Law!" she cried passionately; "it is always that—it is always that. It is well you don't say justice, well you don't call this selfish tyranny by its right name. Law! What does it care for a woman's sufferings—shame—agony; for the brutal force that seizes her life and holds it in a prison from which she cannot escape? You stand there, you call yourself my husband, and you know you have not one spark of tenderness, one thought that is worthy the name, one feeling that is due to the rights you claim. You have tyrannised over me, neglected, degraded, deserted me. You came with a hypocrite's pretence of sorrow, and won a promise that I believed it was my duty to give. I might have known better than to be deceived so easily, but for a time I was deceived; and now I see you in your true colours, now I know what your wish for reconciliation concealed; and since I know it, I have come here to-night to tell you one thing. You may have my property, my money—everything that the law gives—the law that men made for men—but do not force me to live under your roof. It cannot benefit you now—it is only added misery to me."

She looked so beautiful, so queenly in that outraged dignity of the womanhood she defended, that for a moment John Marsden stood looking at her perfectly stupefied.

He was not alone in his amazement—another spectator stood in

the doorway lost in reluctant admiration of the scene he had witnessed, but neither husband nor wife were aware of his presence.

"You—you—how dare you talk to me like that?" blustered John Marsden at length. "I tell you now, as I told you before, that very few husbands would have behaved as generously as I did. I could have taken proceedings against you. Why, I could have had a divorce, madam, had I chosen! I—I—"

"Yes?" she said calmly. "Then why did you not choose? Does it never occur to you that I might ask how those three years in India were spent by you?"

"She is superb!" muttered the listener under his breath. "To think of a woman like that being thrown away upon a wizened little ape with no more brains than an empty cocoanut!"

"That has nothing to do with you," said John Marsden defiantly. "A man can do what he chooses, especially if his wife goes and leaves him like you did."

"I wrote and asked you if I might return to India. You forget that, and your answer. If I had grown utterly reckless, if I had yielded to a temptation that lay close at my hand, into which you, the man who should have defended me, wantonly cast me for your own selfish ends, I fancy you would have had no right to complain of me to-day."

He was silent. Well enough he knew she spoke the truth. Well enough he knew that even the law, in whose strength he trusted so implicitly, would scarcely have vindicated conduct such as his in the eyes of the world.

"Why—why do you come and say all this now?" he said at last. "We agreed to be friends. I want nothing more of you. Can't you bury bygones, and let us be at peace?"

"I say it," she answered coldly, "because you have deceived me again. You left India with a settled purpose; you sought me with that purpose; you won me over by pleading my duty, and all the time you knew you only wanted to save appearances—that it was my money, my new position, which gave me any importance in your eyes. But for them you would never have troubled me. You and your hateful spy played your cards well, but not quite well enough to deceive me. When I thought you were poor, ill, lonely, that you were even a little sorry for all I had had to bear, it was a different matter. I would have come to you then, and, in time, I might even have grown more gentle and forbearing than I seem to have been. At least you are the father of my children, and I can't forget that. But what can I say of your conduct now, except that it is on a par with all that has gone before; that I cannot excuse it, I cannot forget it, that since it is the Court you desire, you may have the Court, have everything I possess—everything to which the law entitles you. But at least be content with that, and leave me in peace."

"Will you give me those papers?" he said huskily.

She handed them to him without a word. He glanced over their contents, then opened a drawer in his writing-table and placed them within, and locked the drawer again.

"Now, madam," he said defiantly, "you have given me your views of the case, listen to mine. The moment Grantham Court becomes ours—you need not start; I am quite justified in using that pronoun—the moment we are entitled to take possession, you will be prepared to accompany me thither. Considering you are the daughter of a clergyman, and have always set up for being a religious woman, your views as regards wifely duty seem rather lax. But that duty shall be enforced to the uttermost, so I swear. I am not used to being thwarted or contradicted, either by man or woman, and I'm not likely to submit to it from you! The matrimonial knot is not an easy one to slip out of, and I intend it shall be firm enough to hold you whether you desire it or not. Now, I have said all that is necessary. You may return to Vaux Abbey, if you choose; but hold yourself in readiness to obey me, whenever you hear that matters are settled, and that I am going to take possession of the Court."

"You fool!" The exclamation was so unexpected—so full of scorn and contempt, that Beryl Marsden was no less startled than her husband, as she too faced the doorway and saw from whom the interruption had proceeded.

"So, count, you are at your old work!" she said with cutting emphasis. "Do you still find it remunerative?"

The pale face flushed ever so slightly, but he advanced a few paces and addressed John Marsden with a cool disregard of Beryl's presence that was in itself an insult.

"You should never trample on a fallen foe, my good John," he said calmly; "and you should never lose your temper with a woman. Mrs. Marsden has become sensible, I presume, or she would not be here. For the rest, it will surely be to her own interest to look after her own property, if only to save it from the desecrating touch of alteration and—improvement. The Court is quite open to both."

She turned on him like a tigress.

"If you dare," she cried—"if you dare to touch a stone, to alter a room, to—"

His mocking laugh cut short her words.

"Dare! Strange word, madame. Do you intend to defy your husband? My good friend here can do what he pleases within and without the Court once he is the ostensible possessor. Perhaps, when you think the matter calmly over, you will come to the conclusion that it would be more advantageous to reside there yourself, painful as its associations may be."

She stood there with her hand on the back of the chair from which she had risen, and looked at the face of her antagonist. For one instant her courage seemed to fail; for one instant the light, and strength, and defiance faded out of her face, and her voice broke forth in a woman's last resource—appeal.

"What harm have I ever done to you," she cried piteously, "that you should persecute me thus?"

A flash that looked like triumph shone in Count Savona's dark eyes. To see her weak, strengthless, appealing, was a triumph he had scarcely expected.

"Madame," he said with a low bow, "I do not persecute you. Far from it. I am but an instrument of Fate, and I would advise you for the best, if you would only allow me. But, like so many of your charming sex, you are impetuous, you are self-willed, you will not listen to reason. You have chosen to look upon me as an enemy; you will not believe that I am your friend."

"No," she interrupted with a return of the old indignation, the old proud defiance; "your friendship, Count Savona, is little less dangerous than your enmity."

"It is my misfortune, madame, that you have always misjudged me," he said mockingly. Then he turned to John Marsden with a dark frown and a swift change of manner. "Have you said all you wish?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Marsden hesitatingly. "I—she—you have heard my decision, Beryl. You will be prepared to obey it when necessary."

She looked not at him, but at the glittering eyes of the count, and her courage failed. What could she do, one woman against two such merciless adversaries?

"When—necessary!" she echoed faintly. "Yes, I will be prepared to obey you when necessary."

She moved away unsteadily, in an odd, dazed fashion, like one in a dream. Indeed, in looking back in the after days, this scene did seem to her like a dream—an evil one enough, with a nightmare-like horror attending upon it that filled her mind with terror.

The count followed her to the door.

"I will see you down the stairs," he said politely.

She shuddered, and drew back as if he were some noxious thing.

"No," she cried impulsively. "There is no need. I—I mean I have a cab waiting."

"Very well, madame," he said, and bowed, and returned to the room, leaving her to make her way alone down the dark and narrow stairs.

As she reached the first landing something dark and shadowy seemed to shrink back into its gloomiest corner; something that in her perturbed state of mind she scarcely noted. She reached the outer door, and for a moment stood alone on the threshold, while the rain fell in plashing, noisy sheets, and the wind moaned and whistled around the dreary houses, and the dreary street.

The driver sitting shivering on his box noted that hesitation, that upward glance at the windows, that utter indifference to the discomfort of the elements, so significant of a preoccupied mind. And someone else noted it, a solitary figure, bronzed and worn-looking—the figure of a man in tattered foreign garb, who was passing through the street. Perhaps the fact of his so noticing it, or some instinct or impulse impossible to define, stayed his hurrying steps, and led him to approach the cab and the grumbling driver.

He laid his hand on the handle to open the door for the lady—he felt she was a lady even before the low sweet voice murmured scarce conscious thanks for the service done. Something in that voice seemed to startle him as he heard it. He leant forward eagerly.

"It is—it can't be! Why, yes—if it ain't the blessed little gentleman's mother!"

"Tom!" she cried, and her hands went out to seize his own, and her white face looked up to him in the flickering lamplight. "Tom, is it really you? Here—"

"It is, ma'am. Here I am back again, like a bad shilling, and after such a fight for dear life with those Mexican savages as ne'er a soldier in this here blessed old England ever dreams of."

"And—and your master?" she faltered, wondering why all that mountain of trouble seemed to be rolled from her heart and her life, at the bare thought of the proximity of that one most faithful friend.

"My master's very ill, ma'am," said Tom gravely. "It was just

life and death, and those foreigners they didn't know what to do with him, and none of them could fetch the bullet out, and some say it's in his lungs, and some it's in his shoulder, and some it's in his side, and the Lord knows where they haven't fixed it! And so, one day they says to me, 'Take him to England,' and what with prize-money and one thing or another, I scraped enough for his passage, and I worked my own, and—well, here we are."

"And you've been with him always—you've never left him all these years—you good, faithful Tom!"

She was weeping now, weeping softly and unrestrainedly in this mingled gladness and sorrow that had come to her.

"Of course I've been with him, ma'am. You told me as how nothing I could do to serve you would be half as much to you as if I was a true friend to Mr. Grant, and I'd lay down my life for him, ma'am, that I would—cheerful—any moment that would serve him."

"I'm sure you would, Tom—oh, I'm sure you would!"

She was sobbing so passionately that it hurt him to hear her, and the impatient cabman growled out an interrogation to know how much longer he was to wait.

"Don't take on so, ma'am, don't," entreated Tom. "Mr. Grant is sure to live. He's stronger than you think, and I'll write to you, ma'am, if you'd like to hear, and tell you how he gets on, and—"

"Yes, do, Tom—do," she cried, dashing the tears away from her eyes; "and look here—" She thrust a handful of gold and silver into his hands. "Take that, Tom. You must—indeed you must, and get him medicine, wine—anything he needs. He won't know and he won't question; but oh, Tom, he mustn't die—my last friend, my only friend. Oh, God will not be so cruel as to take him from me!"

"No, ma'am, not a bit of it," said Tom cheerfully; "he ain't a-goin' to die, never you fear. And now, where am I to tell this growling old idiot, who's so afraid of wetting his precious clothes, to drive you?"

"The Charing Cross Hotel," she said, and Tom touched his hat and withdrew from the cab-window, and made a mental note of the address, little dreaming how soon and how strangely that scene was to be recalled to his memory.

Meanwhile, in that dusky, dreary room upstairs, the two men were congratulating themselves on the success of their schemes. It was close upon midnight when the count rose to say good-night.

"You have the best of it now, my friend," he said, "but take care; don't drive her too far, for she's borne almost as much as she can. One thing more," he added with his cold, harsh laugh. "You keep a diary, I know. Before you go to bed, make an entry of this night's interview. If ever there was a desperate woman on the face of the earth, that woman's your wife. If ever there was a human creature who hated another human creature with a hate that has made men—aye, and women, too—murderers before this, that creature is your wife. It's a very narrow line that separates reason from madness, you know, and I never saw anyone nearer that line than the woman who left this room two hours ago. Well, good-night, my friend, and pleasant dreams of the Court and your new fortune."

The door closed. Within the room, where this drama of human passion had so lately been performed, only silence and darkness brooded like dumb witnesses of what had been.

The solitary occupant of the room locked away his papers, paused a moment or two to make some entries in his memorandum-book, then drew his chair near to the fire, and bent over it, rubbing his cold, thin hands together as if for warmth.

"A hard fight," he muttered to himself, "a hard fight; but I've got the best of it, after all. I never feared a woman yet, and I'm not to be beaten by one, no, not the cleverest or the—"

What checked the sentence on his lips? What suddenly seemed to chill his blood like ice, and stop the beating of heart and pulse in one second's space of deadly fear? He had heard no sound of opening door, or approaching footsteps, yet something was certainly standing behind him. The firm, nervous pressure of a hand was upon his shoulder. As his eye rested on that hand, he seemed to recognise in its brown, lean, slender fingers a sentence of doom long threatened and long defied, yet never, even amidst such defiance, quite forgotten, or quite unfeared.

There was a moment's breathless silence, yet a moment that seemed to hold an eternity of memory in its brief pause. The candles burning on the table had burnt down so low that their sudden extinction was scarce perceptible, and in the deserted streets the rising wind gave one long, sad moan like the last cry of a suffering soul. Was it echoed by another, or was it only fancy that repeated it? The darkness and quietness of the room had scarcely been disturbed by sound or struggle.

The paralysis of fear that had held that silent figure in its grasp

nerveless and immovable, seemed to hold it there still. Only it no longer leant towards the fire, but lay back in its chair with ashy face, and wide and staring eyes, and on the old wood floor something fell with a monotonous, dripping sound.

Something!

The room is full of shadows. Has one of them life, that it moves so stealthily through its darkest corners to the door? So light it is, and so noiseless in its movements, that neither sound nor echo betrays its presence.

The room is dark and quiet as ever; the night falls with storm and rain over the great city beyond; but once again, like pitying things, the shadows close around that solitary figure which now is voiceless, powerless as themselves.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## A Branch of May.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

Who keeps old May Day?

Half the world does not know what is meant by this. May Day is May Day, always old and always young, in a sense. There are, however, some people who see a difference when they hear a day called "old" or "new."

Villages, and even little towns, where the enlightening puff of the railway-engine does not come to blow old-world customs altogether away, are thus places where one will find this and sundry other holdings of bygone habits.

They have a Michaelmas Day, and they have an "old" Michaelmas Day, by which they eat goose on the 29th of September, and again, twelve days after, do the same. The country lads and lasses on the 1st of May in these places carry round their garlands and sing their May-songs, and they do the like on the 12th of May. It causes a double holiday-making, and a double harvest of pennies from the good-natured.

Not many years ago, there broke a May Day over a straggling little town that lay sleepily rejoicing in the fat valley beneath some low green hills. The hills sloped mistily away into the grey rosi-ness of the morning, and the valley opened to let the reedy Ouse overflow his shallow banks without let or hindrance. He made a winding trail of silver betoken his lazy self, but he had a shimmering crowd of attendants in the patches, and pools, and flashes of watery radiance that the green earth showed up to right and left of him.

Dew glistened on the young grass, and the golden light of the morning gave a buoyancy to the air. Birds were singing high in heaven; away in the distance there could be heard the mellowed ring of voices and of laughter.

By-and-by three young people—two youths and a girl—got over a stile by the roadway, and ran laughing down the shelving meadow to a bend where an old boat was moored.

"She's half full of water," cried the girl. "Why don't you have her seen to, Taff?"

"She is yours, the 'Lady Margaret,'" and the young man called "Taff" pointed to the boat's name, and gave a sideways jerk to his head. That action must be supposed to send the information to the further young man.

The girl Madge Westcott and Taff were evidently brother and sister, for both were fair, peculiarly fair, and flaxen headed, also each one owned a nose, celestial, "tip-tilted," or whatever the observer might be inclined to call it. The feminine nose was charming, however, whereas the masculine nose made one feel antagonistic at times. Now the man behind these two was a tall, slight man, in contrast to the shortish, plumpish figures of the other two, and his features were dark and straight. According to the canons of beauty he might pass a whole bench of judges; whereas, for the other two, one could scarcely dare to predict as much.

The boat had ignominiously stuck in the oozy mud.

"Give a hand," ordered Taff to Madge, who, being a girl, looked on whilst the men pushed.

"You are cool, I must say, Westcott," put in the friend.

The two were fellow law-students down at Greensmeade for a few days. This Lawrence Pigott had never been down before, but Taff's friends were always welcome at old Dr. Westcott's, even though they were numerous, and often changed by the said Taff. Each one of course had a conspicuous virtue in his introducer's eyes; now and again one came again on his own merits. But Taff himself liked variety; strange that he should have chosen the immutable law for his profession.

This May morning was Lawrence Pigott's second day in that rural spot; of course no one who had seen him had yet gone so far as to question the chance of his being one of the "fellows" who should win for themselves a second invitation.

"Cool," was his pointed word, and a little chivalric haughtiness reddened the pale darkness of his face.

"Ah, you know nothing about it," loftily returned Taff; "Madge is equal to me."

"What a compliment!"

Whereat Madge tossed her fair head and made a show of mock offence.

"I should be sorry if I were not more than equal to you," she said. "You and I," touching her trim self with a finger, and then pointing the same finger at her brother. "Could there be a comparison?" She still stood on the bank and made no effort to help as Taff had suggested.

"Rubbish!" Then Taff gave a shove with all his might to the boat. "If you want to get afloat this morning you'd better come, Madge," said he with meaning.

"My dear boy, do you not see I have a new dress on, and if I get it coated with mud I shall be painfully aware of the fact that a stained and besmirched dress will be my fate for a year?"

"You should not wear a new dress for boating," grumbled Taff.

"Would you have liked to present your only sister to your friends in a suit of brown shreds and sliminess—you know the brown serge?"

"Who sees what a girl wears?"

"The girl herself," coolly answered Madge. She smoothed her plump hand over the close blue serge skirt, and rather drew up her dainty, rounded figure. "There'll be an awful splash when she rights herself." The girl's face was a puzzled mixture of merriment and of care for the new dress. But she moved downwards as if she must do the thing which custom and fate allotted her.

"Keep back!" was the second quick command launched at her. Pigott gave this one, and threw out an arm to emphasise his words. "Now, Westcott, give it her!"

A creak, then a long slow swish and wash, and the Lady Margaret balanced herself in the water below the meshes of the reeds.

The young men straightened their backs, stretched out their arms, then fell "at ease." Scarlet cheeks on Taff's part attested the thoroughness of his work; Pigott was paler.

"You have a good sweep of river," he said, looking along the winding silver streak. He was utterly ignorant of the river and the country; a town man and a book man—a man whose life had known scarcely a holiday.

"Fine!" Taff tilted his straw hat back from his brow, and stepped on to the little craft. "We shall be able to pull up to Quetchley I should say—eh, Madge?"

"I doubt it. There was no rain yesterday, and the water is down a bit. A week ago you'd have done it, but now—there's the turn by Bailey's farm;" here she put her hand in Pigott's, and sprang into the boat. "We might try for it, though. Leave the boat with Baines, and walk home across the fields."

"And be back without keeping breakfast waiting?" asked Pigott.

"Yes. Well, we got up early, didn't we, for the express purpose? Nine is the hour, you know, and the pater is not particular about five minutes—not when Taff's friends are down, at any rate."

She nodded her head and bent to her work. She and Taff pulled. Lawrence would have been a novice.

So they floated on. What they talked about doesn't matter. It was full of life and of gladness, though, and the way they enjoyed themselves was perfectly easy and free from rule, even from the rule of straight sailing or pulling. The old Lady Margaret slipped along by one bank and then by another. Willows and may-bushes shadowed the shining water, more than once a flicker of the may-snow was dashed over Madge's dark dress as Pigott caught up at a branch and tried to break off a bunch of the flowers.

"Ah, you've gathered it!" and the girl put her mischievous nose to smell as he held it to her. "Don't take it home, though; it's a snare and delusion, like most prettinesses."

"No." Pigott looked doubtful, then laughed. "How do you mean?"

"Who carries the may into a house, carries ill luck"—don't you know that?" She jerked her head to the right. "There's Quetchley," said she, "over there, and round that corner comes our Hill of Difficulty."

"A superstition?" he asked, pulling the clustering blooms to pieces.

Madge shrugged her plump shoulders.

"I suppose so. Don't take it into our house, that's all. Carry it home, if you will—I would not," she said.

The young man threw the thing away with an amount of vigour that was quite uncalled for. The white flowers flew high, then fell, striking the water, and following along the wake of the boat. All his life this Lawrence Pigott had been, so to speak, fighting through the world, and his quick, easily-excited nerves rebelled against any more obstacles or any more fighting being set before him.

"I want a run of good luck, not bad."

He spoke quickly, and with a momentarily rising colour.

"And you've got it." Taff spoke with decision.

"Now, Madge, be ready, pull with all your might when I shout, and jump her over the bank."

"All right."

"Don't drown me," laughed Pigott, "or my beginning of good luck will look like the satire of my evil genius."

"Have you got an evil genius?" asked Madge. "Taff has let us suppose you were one of those extraordinary people who walk over the heads of deserving others." She gave a little jerk of her head in her brother's direction. "One of the people who succeed in everything. You are going out to be a judge in India, are you not?"

Pigott gave a long laugh.

"That is too cruel, Miss Westcott. My first clerkship, a judicial underling; but such creatures have been known to grow into judges."

He ended much more quietly than he had begun, and as his face sobered his eyes gave out a steady light of ambition.

"I know—" began the girl.

"Don't talk to the man at the wheel," called Taff. "Now, Madge, over with her."

The two bent, then Taff, with his muscles strained to their utmost, gave a sharp, strong pull, and seemed half to spring from his seat.

Madge likewise.

The old boat flew through the water. Crunch—scrape—stuck fast!

No pushing, or pulling, or tugging could stir her. Away stretched the shining meadows, over fields away rose the brown outhouses of Bailey's farm, but no Bailey retainer was in the growing grass by the river. From beyond a little knoll curled the blue smoke from the Quetchley chimneys, but no man could hear any shouts from the discomfited crew of the Lady Margaret.

The men could easily tuck up their trousers, and wade through the knee-deep water—but Madge?

They must carry her over.

Pigott was by far the tallest, therefore the fittest, as he explained, to keep the skirts of the new blue dress out of the water.

Of course they laughed a good deal. One does laugh at these adventures when one is young. Madge shook her ruffled plumes as she found herself carefully set down in the midst of the dewy grass; she did not at all find fault with her experience.

"You are ever so much better than Taff, Mr. Pigott. He would have dragged me over like a bundle."

"I had the new dress to think of," and the young man's dark eyes laughed.

"Now we must be quick," and Madge dismissed personalities summarily, "and get on to a path. There is one close by. We must not stand and spoil the mowing grass. Do you think you'll take cold? You are not used to this sort of thing," she added.

"I? No. I never took cold but once in my life."

"Bosh! Cold!" and Taff strode on barelegged still.

They had lost the short cut by Quetchley, so they were late in getting home. The town-clock chimed the half hour after nine as they came into the one Greensmeade street.

The golden May sun came streaming down it, bunches of greenery—nay, in some cases, they seemed to be young trees fastened by the cottagers' doorposts—were fixed to overhang almost every doorway.

"Is this for May Day?" asked Pigott.

"The boughs? Yes, of course. You'll see them all along the street, and if you'll stay till old May Day you'll see the same thing over again. Hark, there's a garland coming!"

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you know? Dear! what a heap of good things you Londoners miss! How do you keep May Day?"

"Not at all. In the days of my youth the chimney-sweep used to get up some jack-in-the-green business, and go about with a lot of tawdry tinsel and finery, but that is now a thing of the past. Now, what is your garlanding?"

"See for yourself."

And some little girls came along with a doll dressed in wonderful village finery, seated under a canopy of boughs, and with wreaths of spring flowers all about. The doll was their Queen of the May, and standing before the big grocer's shop of the town, they began their May song.

These things date from far-back times; they only survive, as we have said, in the places the railway does not touch.

Here is what they sang in a minor, almost tuneless sing-song:

#### MAY SONG.

A branch of May I have brought you,  
And at your door it stands,  
It's well set out and it's well spread about,  
'Tis the work of our Lord's hands.

Man, as man, his life's but a span!  
He's cut off like a flower,  
He's here to-day and he's gone to-morrow,  
And we're all dead in an hour.

Death! ah, death, if strikes so sharp,  
It strikes unto the ground,  
And there's never a surgeon in all England,  
As can cure this dreadful wound.

Take your Bible in your hand,  
And read it through and through,  
And when the Day of Judgment comes,  
The Lord will remember you.

Now, I've sung my little song,  
No longer can I stay,  
So it's "God bless you all, both great and small,  
And "I wish you a merry month of May!"

At the end came a curtsy for pennies.

"Quite a poetic May Day!" was the ending of some talk of Pigott's, as he entered the sunny breakfast-room.

"Poetic enough to do without breakfast—eh?" and Dr. Westcott laughed good-humouredly.

"We might have been drowned," gave Madge as an apology.

"Drowned? you've never been in the water?" and her mother peered at the girl over her spectacles.

"I? Oh no. But they have."

"How very foolish!"

Three days later, the very day when the young men were to have ended their holiday and should have gone back to London, Taff to study and Pigott to go to outfitters and such like folk who should prepare him for his Indian life, this last-named gentleman was helpless and racked with the pains of rheumatism.

He was in for rheumatic-fever, very probably, the doctor said, and could by no means be moved.

Taff had to travel alone, and had a message to carry to Pigott's mother and sister.

"I'd give anything to hide it from them," wailed the unhappy Lawrence; "but if I do not show up at home they will know there is something wrong. Say that your mother is a tyrant, Westcott, and I am only kept by her orders."

"Tell no stories, Taff."

"Ask the ladies down. There is more than one spare room in the house," was Dr. Westcott's addition.

"I'll be up in a day or two," and Pigott could not help a groan coming to decorate this assertion of his.

His prophecy was a false one.

When old May Day came, the sunshine and the garlands and the old May songs were lording it over the outside world of Greensmeade, but a very different order of things ruled within Dr. Westcott's house.

Lawrence Pigott lay dying, so they said. He was under no sleep of unconsciousness, but lay vividly awake mentally, yet so utterly prostrate under the exhaustion of fever that there was no hope of his rallying. So Dr. Westcott had told his mother, so two other doctors had agreed; there had been a young new comer called in, who, with the hardy assertion of youth, disagreed.

Madge Westcott had run downstairs with this young doctor, and, having seen him to the door, was back and on tiptoe entering the hushed and shadowed room.

One needs not to call up a picture of the room. There was a widowed mother there seeing her hope fade away before her eyes; there was the gentle young sister whose life was to have been glorified by the brother's glory; there were the friends—the new friends, but the tried friends surely now.

Now and again bits of sentences broke from Pigott's lips.

Then like an unnatural burst of sunlight upon a grey evening there broke the gay, quaint, minor chanting sing-song of some children under the window.

"A May song," said Lawrence.

"Send them away, Madge," ordered Mrs. Westcott in a whisper, but with decision.

"No, I like it."

So they let things go on as they might.

"So many days," were the next vague words. "Have I been ill so long? Twelve days you said."

"Yes," put in Madge with a bluntness she had taken up that morning. The girl was not unfeeling, but some people have an instinct which compels them to act in what looks like a stoical way. "Yes, you said you would not stay here for old May Day, and as you would not do it willingly, you have had to do it unwillingly." With this she turned hastily and went out of the room.

A slight flush came over Pigott's face.

He did not say any more, but after seeming to listen, his eyelids drooped as the children's song faded into the distance of the street.

The sleep of health had come to him.

One is not cured of rheumatic-fever in a day, so there was more time for Lawrence Pigott to stay in Greensmeade. However, he did



at last go away with his mother and sister, and after that for a while the course of the existence of the two families drifted them apart.

Never again, though, could they be altogether two distinct families. Taff chose, and Mary Pigott chose, to enter upon what the old folks called an imprudent engagement. Taff had not even passed his final law examination, much less had he earned the money wherewith to keep a wife and to begin housekeeping upon. But these two trusted the future, and trusted each other.

Lawrence went off to India.

There he was for a year working on, but not, so far as the Greensmeade people knew, making a name for himself. Taff had told many things about his friend, many of them so prophetic of greatness that the most exalted promotion would have come as news of an expected sort.

Lawrence always wrote cheerily. But, if he told details to his mother, she kept them to herself, nothing but satisfied generalities went down to the Westcotts.

So a second year went by.

In that year Taff became a full-blown solicitor, and he also managed—he was a very lucky young man—to alight upon a good practice. Some people do happen to hear of the right thing at the right moment, and also they are often the owners of the right amount of decision to take the opportunity that comes. David Westcott was one of these people. It would not be long therefore before he would crown his good fortune by making Mary Pigott his wife.

The Greensmeade household was full of talk about Taff and his doings. Madge was still at home, and though just about that very time she also had what her prudent mother told her was a most flattering offer, and what no girl should refuse hastily or without due consideration, she still had refused it. To stay at home, and to take care of the old folks when they should be old, was, she declared, her vocation. She did not see the advantage of marriage—no, she would be Madge Westcott to the end of her days.

At this her mother said some words of motherly, yet worldly-wise contempt, and having said them—wondered. Was her daughter Madge setting her heart upon a dream, an imagination? Who had there been to catch her young girl's fancy?

So do mothers, even the clearest-eyed of them, grope in the darkness.

A little time more passed, and again the rejected suitor came forward. Again, too, Mrs. Westcott talked to Madge, bidding her think well and wisely, and, as she said, "not cast away an honest lover and a noble gentleman for any sentimental fancy."

Madge certainly did not look like a sentimental maiden; indeed, there was a blushing abruptness in her off-hand answer.

"I am not so foolish, mother," was her cry. "No Westcott yet was ever guilty of too much sentiment, so rest your dear heart in the belief that I have none at all. Not even the small amount that would be necessary before I could marry Mr. Ashurst. He'd want some love, and I have none—literally none."

"Stuff! You do not know what you are talking of, child!"

"Yes, I do, mother. And if you are kind, you will see Mr. Ashurst instead of me."

There was evidently no help for it, and the mother did see the gentleman, and gave her unwilling answer.

Into this family discomfort Taff's letters came like a healthy, vigorous breeze. One that had been full of his plans, and of his reasons for persuading Mary to marry him at once, ended with this sentence:

"First-rate news from Lawrence. He has got promotion, but sends word he is coming home. Queer, that; I should stay and take the work at once."

A week later there was more from Taff. Mary and he were to be married early in June.

"No more news from Lawrence; it looks as if he might have started. He is a touch-and-go fellow, and he may turn up any day. His mother is full of the idea of seeing him, but cannot see any more than I do why he comes. Like a woman, she has come to the conclusion he is ill."

She was wrong. Her son had never been better in his life.

By this time the second year was just completed since that May Day when our story began. The quaint old May songs had been sung more than a week ago, and the green meadows were parted and at the same time linked together by snow-white hedgerows. The May was out as it rarely was so early, but then April, that year, had absorbed the coldness of the young May, and had left her only the sunshine and the flowers.

Madge had been writing to Mary Pigott. She had been told what she was to wear as bridesmaid, but she wanted to change the order, and she wanted a little of her own way. So, you see, the trouble of her unwelcome lover had left her still practical, and by no means wounded.

Two years passing over her fair head had left some marks. Perhaps, after all, but vague marks. She was a bit graver, a degree softer; she could flash a gay word and sing over her work, but she could think better, and she could face life more wisely.

Now we see her again her round alert figure looked very much the same. Being so warm she wore a cotton dress instead of a warmer serge one, but it was still of the same dark-blue colour, and it still was of the same daintily trim compactness. Having finished her letter she sauntered out through the long garden, went out at its lower gate, crossed a by-lane, and was in a meadow.

One side of the meadow trended downwards to the river; in that direction ran a line of pollard-willows, the white greenness of their leaves showing in the play of the light breeze. In the opposite direction was a worn pathway, which led to other continuing paths and the high-road. This made a short-cut from the top end of Greensmeade to the railway-station two miles off. In the evening one would have seen a line of railway labourers making their way home to the Greensmeade cottages—not so in the middle of the day. No one was to be seen.

So Madge strolled on. The walk was entirely without an object, and simply taken in the sweet, leisurely love of being out in the fresh summer air. Sometimes her hands clasped together, sometimes they hung by her side, and swung as she walked.

All at once the sweet lazy freedom of her was gone, and she started.

A man had got over a stile at the far-off corner of the field, and was coming along the path. If her walk had been the perfection of laziness, his was the picture of decision and quick purpose.

It was Lawrence Pigott.

He had taken her hands before she had called up her practical common-sense. She was angry with herself for being so surprised; why should she be surprised?

Consequently she burst forth with some wild words:

"Is it your ghost, or is it yourself, Mr. Pigott?" she cried.

The hands answered. "Myself, I think," were the quiet words.

He had looked as quietly into her eyes, and the wildness was quenched out of her.

"Who ever dreamt of your coming?" she at last gasped, fighting hard for a careless manner.

"You knew I was coming to England, did you not?"

"I suppose we did—some time."

"And coming to England means coming to Greensmeade. Madge, you know why I come?" He had loosed her hands, but now seized them again.

Her old wild self leaped to the front.

"To be at Mary's wedding, I suppose?" she asked.

"You think that?" he smiled. "And yet I only heard that such an event was close at hand when I came home last night. Taff was there, and Taff was everybody."

"And you, poor man, were—nowhere! Kind of you to look us up under the circumstances."

"You do not believe for an instant that I had no reason of my own?" burst out the young man. How handsome he was; how the Indian sun had tanned his pale darkness and bronzed him into strength! He was a lover for a girl to be proud of. "Mother told you I had got promotion; that meant many things to me. One particular thing it meant which swallowed up all the other good things—you know, Madge?"

"Sir!" and she grew rosy-red. "What do I know? How do I know what—what—"

"I knew my wife was in England, so I came for her."

Madge was rosier. Her last flash was a very weak one.

"Indeed," said she, "I did not know—"

He loosed her hands, but he drew her to him.

"Madge, my darling, you know it all! I am sure you know it all! You will come back with me? I could not send and ask my wife to come to me; I must fetch her. You will do it?"

They walked in at the old garden gate soon after, and Madge, slipping her hand within his arm, said, with a toss of her fair young head:

"It is wonderful how you men take things for granted. Have I ever yet said I will be your wife? Now, have I?"

"I shall tell the doctor that you have given me to understand you will be—"

Lawrence did not seem to trouble himself about the mere form of a word.

Greensmeade that year paid no heed to its May Day merry-makings, for there was a greater topic to fill every mouth. Madge Westcott was engaged, and Madge Westcott would be married in less than a month.

Who can wonder that the people forgot politics, and even the prospects of the hay-crop?

Mary Pigott was a victim. Instead of having her own quiet little wedding in the London church, she had to make a second bride down at Greensmeade, and to accept Dr. Westcott as her father. How could her brother give her away when he had to stand and have his own bride given to him?

Greensmeade talks of that double wedding to this day!

## The Editor's Note Book.

THE *Times* thinks that the second reading of the Franchise Bill by an overwhelming majority will be hailed by the country with great satisfaction, but it may reasonably be doubted whether outside of professional political circles the country cares very much about the matter one way or the other. And it must not be forgotten that the majority is considerably discounted by the fact that it included the whole of the irreconcilable Parnell party, and that the Bill has yet to be navigated through the dangerous shoals and quicksands of Committee, to say nothing of the House of Lords, before it gets safely into port.

POLITICAL authorities differ as to what will be the absolute effect of the Bill, but it seems to be agreed on all sides that electoral power in Ireland will be thrown more than ever into the hands of the worst and most ignorant class of voters. In this case we may look for the presence in the House of more men of the stamp of Mr. Healy, whose wilful disobedience last week to the orders of the Speaker—not to mention the rules which govern the conduct of gentlemen—was as disgraceful an outrage as can well be imagined. It is to be hoped that the House will take warning in time.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT's London Government Bill is too large a measure to criticise on a first introduction to it, but at first sight it seems a carefully-considered measure, and as well adapted to the particular circumstances of the case as could have been expected. The two most sweeping provisions of the Bill are those which deal with the abolition of the Court of Aldermen and of the Metropolitan Board of Works, and of these the former is sure to give rise to considerable opposition. The Gas, Water, and Licensing questions are all left to be dealt with by the new Municipality.

In the present state of public business it is almost too much to expect that the Bill can possibly become law this session. It is obvious, however, that the measure, possibly amended and altered, must pass before very long. It will then be for the citizens of the metropolis generally to decide how it is to work. If they send the right men to the new Municipal Council, there may be reasonable expectation of an improvement. If on the other hand the representation is allowed to fall into the hands of men of the ordinary vestry type the last state of London will be worse than the first.

In the interest of travellers on the Continent it is to be hoped that justice will speedily overtake the forgers of the fictitious bank-notes which have been put into circulation abroad. Bank of England notes, and especially those for ten pounds, are not only more convenient to carry than gold, and less troublesome than circular letters of credit, but command in many parts of the Continent a considerable premium in consequence of the facilities they afford for making remittances by post to England.

A QUESTION which was recently put in the House of Commons has again aroused the old controversy about prison labour between the economists who object to prisoners being employed on useless and unremunerative work, such as oakum-picking and the treadmill, and the champions of the outside labour market, which is declared to be grievously interfered with by the competition of prison manufactures.

THE largest firm of mat-makers in London, who are also the largest contractors for prison labour, have written to the papers, averring that the proper system is to let the labour of prisoners to a manufacturer, and stating that during the twelve years in which they have held such contracts, they have actually increased, instead of reducing, the numbers and wages of the free working-men in their employment. I think it would be very difficult to persuade any working-man that this increase is not in spite of, rather than in consequence of, the employment of convicts.

THE loss of the "Daniel Steinmann" steamer near Halifax, once more points a moral which repeated disasters have made very familiar. The captain says that the fog had been so thick for two days previously, that he had been unable to take any observation, that "there must have been an extremely strong easterly current," and that his "compasses must have been subject to some attraction," but it does not appear that until a light was sighted—which, by the way, the captain mistook for another—the thickness of the weather materially interfered with the progress of the ship.

UNDER these circumstances caution would seem to have suggested lying-to until the fog lifted, at all events enough to enable the captain to be sure whereabouts he was when he approached the land, but then the custom which regulates such matters does not look favourably upon skippers, whose caution overpowers their desire to get across the water in at least the average number of days.

ALL accounts of the University Boat Race last week agree in saying that a marked falling off, both in the attendance on the river banks and in the popular interest in the event, was noticeable. That this was to be attributed to the weather cannot fairly be said, as not many years ago the race was rowed in the presence of an enormous number of people in a blinding snowstorm. The fact is that the reaction, which was inevitable after the manner in which enthusiasm about the race was worked up and overdone by the newspapers, has come at last. It will not be long before people look back with absolute astonishment at the ridiculous fuss which was made about the race ten or a dozen years ago.

THE managers of the London theatres were placed in a somewhat invidious position on the occasion of the funeral of the Duke of Albany. On application to the Lord Chamberlain they were informed that no order would be issued, but that it would be left to each manager to do as he thought best. Almost without an exception, they took this as being the old story, "No compulsion, only you must," and closed their theatres.

WHY a particular class of public entertainers should in this way be heavily fined on such occasions is a puzzle to which no feasible explanation can be given, and it certainly seems hard upon London theatrical managers, and upon the many hundreds of people in their employment, that they should have to prove their loyalty at the expense of their pockets, knowing very well that large numbers of the people who would otherwise have furnished their audiences are simply being driven to pass the evening at the music-halls.

HOWEVER, if these things have to be done at all, it is just as well to do them with a good grace—a fact which Miss Mary Anderson might have remembered with advantage. The circumstances connected with the closing of the Lyceum Theatre on the day of the funeral showed a curious hesitation. First of all, Miss Anderson announced that the public would be so dreadfully inconvenienced by the closing of the theatre that it would be kept open; at the eleventh hour it was stated that the lady would be prevented from acting by sudden indisposition; and next morning the *Observer* contained a letter, signed "Mary Anderson," couched in somewhat gushing terms, and regretting that the melancholy event should have prevented her appearing on what was necessarily the last night of her engagement.

CONSIDERING that the American lady owed a great part of her fashionable popularity to the marked favour shown her by the Prince and Princess of Wales, it cannot be said that she—or perhaps I should say, her advisers—displayed on this occasion either tact or courtesy.

THE "sacred lamp of burlesque" seems to want cleaning, or trimming, or something of the kind, if its fire is to be kept alive by the ministering priestesses of the Gaiety Theatre. "Camaralzaman" had but a brief and sickly existence, and now "Our Helen" has come to terrible first-night grief. Has even the Gaiety public at last been educated up to the point of discovering that a three-act burlesque is about as tedious a form of entertainment as the ingenuity of man has ever yet invented?

Now that Mr. Irving's American tour has come to an end, the full measure of his success becomes apparent. Very conflicting reports reached this country, especially during the earlier days of the enterprise, and no doubt it was some little time before American playgoers accustomed themselves to the actor's peculiarities, but, as time went on, his artistic triumph became assured, and the financial success, which was never in much doubt, developed into something phenomenal.

AFTER a short summer season at the Lyceum Mr. Irving and his company will return to America; a policy which, except from the point of view of dollars, does not seem to me very judicious. Actors as great as Mr. Irving, and with quite as large a following, have found before now that it was unwise to leave their places vacant. There is no public in the world more loyal to its favourites than the London public, but it is quite capable of transferring its affections from a memory to a fact, and to take up with a new favourite if the old one withdraws himself for too long a time.

NOVELS and plays "with a purpose" are so universally distrusted, that the pill is usually gilded and made to look as much as possible like something else before it is presented to the patient, but artifice such as this does not commend itself to the management of the Standard Theatre. The Easter novelty at this house is described as "A Bitter Wrong. A Wife in England, No Wife in France. A Dramatic Protest Against the French Marriage Law."

It is to be hoped that this precedent will not be extensively followed. A five-act tragedy on the Deceased Wife's Sister, a farcical comedy on the Government of London, or a three-act burlesque drama to inculcate principles of teetotalism, would offer rather an appalling prospect to playgoers.

## The Black Man.

THE vast continent of Africa is about five thousand miles in length, and more than four thousand five hundred in breadth. Its area is nearly thirteen million and a half square miles, and it is inhabited by upwards of a hundred and fifty millions of people, chiefly Moors, Arabs, and negroes, with many mulattoes, besides, in these days, a considerable number of Europeans. The mixture of races is most evident among the Felatahs, who occupy the country extending from Sahara in the north, to the Kong Mountains in the south, and from the sea in the west, to the kingdom of Borna and Mandara in the east—a space equal to a fourth of Europe or a tenth of Africa. From the tribes of Felatahs have been brought iron spear-heads with wooden shafts, heads of javelins, arrows, double-edged swords, ornamental beads, and pottery ware, exactly similar to the articles which were dug up at Canterbury and held to be relics of the Pagan time in Britain. Their rude manufactures, with double-handed bellows and a handleless hammer, still yield an iron so tough, that the best blades that come from Sheffield they call "rotten iron," because they will chip and break.

Africa contains civilised, as well as uncivilised negroes. The language of all negro races is, indeed, unwritten, but in Monrovia, the capital of the negro republic of Liberia, there are many natives who can read and write. To the commander of an English man-of-war, for example, when he entered the harbour, this letter was brought by a boat that put off expressly to bring it :

"GENTLEMEN OF THE MAN-OF-WAR,—I shall be happy to see you on shore. Mrs. H. sends her love, and will be happy to wash your clothes.—I have the honour to be, gentlemen, yours affectionately,  
"J. H., Colonel of the Liberian Militia."

But on the whole this high degree of civilisation is not frequently attained.

The notion of a Deity held by an African negro on his own soil is utterly rudimentary, and wants even a name. The general idea is of a vague ghost, without personality or character, and the name may also mean the firmament or the sun. Of the suggestion of death there is everywhere extreme dread, though it is often blindly and fearlessly risked. "He is finished," say the East Africans of a dead relative. "All is done for ever," say those of the west. In Bonny, European intercourse has suggested the phrase "He is gone for devilly." Food is set by the grave, and in the case of a chief, slaves are killed for sustenance and companionship on the way to the spirit world; and for weeks, and sometimes, perhaps, even for years after a death, the place of burial is dreaded, because the ghost of the dead, always believed to be vindictive, is supposed to haunt it. A village has been broken up by the death of one whose ghost was an especial source of terror. But after some time there is no more faith in the ghost. In this matter, as in all others, there is no reflection, no reasoning out of conclusions. But the dead man is held to be altogether extinct. Ask a man where is the spirit of his great-grandfather, and he will reply that he does not know, "It is done." There is occasional particular belief as to a certain man's spirit, that it has gone into a bird or gorilla; but, attempt to get upon traces of a belief in transmigration generally, the answer is "No." It is beyond the ordinary power of a negro to reason from the particular to the general.

Everywhere is there a belief in witchcraft, which is as often regarded as the cause of a death as of a recovery. There is the utmost vagueness in the fetishism that ascribes a sort of divinity to serpents, birds, rocks, mountains, peaks, waterfalls, feathers, teeth, claws, skins, and brains of animals, etc. In Eastern Africa they have statues for idols, but only one tribe has been found in the west that has advanced so far as this—the Wanyka, and they say that their images came from the east. The tutelary deity of the Brass district is the boa-constrictor; of Bonny it is the iguana; and these creatures are held in such reverence that they are allowed to come into the houses and eat anything that comes in their way. It is death to injure one of these reptiles, and if one be found dead, it is rolled up in a white cloth and tied in a mat for solemn burial, attended by gun-firing and rum-drinking. By the same people a dead slave is only sewn in matting, and then hung without ceremony to the crocodiles and sharks of the river.

The ju-ju, king or priest, is the authorised fountain of superstition. The people of New Calabar had special reverence for a spirit supposed to live beyond the river borders in the Oru, which they describe as the long ju-ju country. The ju-ju of that place is a woman, who knows everything, and lives in a valley set about with hills. When a great crime has been committed, and the guilt of the accused is doubtful, accused and accuser are said to have been sent together to this oracle. Having reached the sacred ground, and arrived at a certain bush, the attendants remain behind, while the accused and accuser advance together. Accusation is then made in a loud voice, and a mysterious voice in the air demands whether he be guilty. Denial, of course, follows, and the accused is commanded by the strange voice to go back. If innocent, he is able to go home; but, if guilty, the superstition was that his feet are glued to the ground, and while he struggles to get away, water springs up beside him, and rises till it covers his head. When he has thus been killed, the water sinks into the earth again, sucking his corpse with it as far as the neck, but leaving the head above ground.

At the Egbo meetings, in the Old Calabar district, suspected persons are tried by the ordeal of the esere, or poison bean, which is supposed to kill only the guilty. It nearly killed Professor Christison, of Edinburgh, when he tried on his own person its properties, so that the risk of being found guilty and executed is much greater in this way than the trial trip to the long ju-ju country.

The negroes have no system of language, nearly every tribe having its own tongue. "The Tower of Babel," says Captain Adams, "might have been built in any of these districts;" yet in Western Equatorial Africa the tribes were found not sharply pointed by landmarks from each other, but with their villages intermixed. Interior to the Cameroons, the Old Calabar, and the Bonny districts, are a people called Qua. But the Quas of the Cameroons can't understand the language of the Quas of Bonny. As we speak of Equatorial Africa, let it be noted that negroes living under the equator are not blacker than those farther from it. In a damp and moist country, especially when it is mountainous, the negroes are less black, though not less distinctly marked with negro features, than in a dry climate. Damp also causes more hunger, and a longing desire for a meat diet, and tends, therefore, in Africa to the support of cannibalism. Mr. Hutchinson is reported to have said, that he had seen it stated in a Sierra Leone newspaper, by a missionary in that colony, not that he had heard of, but that he had seen, hampers of dried human flesh carried about on men's backs to be sold for eating during the progress of a war between two considerable negro tribes.

At Bonny, secretly, but within sight of our ships on the river, cannibal ceremonies were maintained at a comparatively quite recent period. The horrors of one, Mr. Hutchinson, concealed in a hut, was able to see unsuspected, and he says: "I can assure you of a fact in connection with one of their reprisal executions for cannibal purposes, that occurred during the temporary stay of Mrs. Hutchinson and myself at Bonny. We were stopping on board a palm-oil hulk, when one morning there came to the vessel, for some trading object, the very ju-ju man whom I had seen at his bloody work some time previous. It seems that he had repeated this operation on the day before the visit now recorded; and on Captain Shaw, who had charge of the hulk, asking him how he could dare to look in the face of a white lady, who had heard of his eating the head of a man the day before—for I must tell you that the head is a part claimed as a tit-bit by the executioner—he replied with the most imperturbable sang froid, expressive of profound contempt for all culinary art, 'I no eat him, for my cook done spoil him; he no put nuff pepper on him,' meaning that the sauce had not been to his taste."

The cannibals are generally tall and well made. The Wabembe, says Captain Burton, on the north-west shore of Taganyaka Lake, have abandoned to wild growth the richest land; too lazy to fish or hunt, they devour all kinds of carrion, grubs, and insects, and, like the Fans described by M. du Chailu, will eat the bodies of men who have died of sickness. A tribe living in the interior is said to come down to the shore to catch people living near the sea, whose flesh they suppose to have a brinier and choicer flavour. On the other hand, other tribes bury the dead bodies of their enemies for a week, to give them a gamy flavour before they are eaten. The love of putrid meats and the want of salt bring on leprosy, elephantiasis, ulcers, and other diseases of the skin. Scrofula abounds, and longevity is rare.

There are considerable differences in degree of intellect among the several negro tribes, and also among the people of the same tribe. They are generally skilful in making iron implements, but even among the best tribes of the interior—who possess looms and weave palm-fibre into a good cloth—there is little achieved by mental labour or forethought. They have imagination, with considerable power of speech, sharp trading, and an ingenuity for lying and cheating that cannot belong to a merely stupid people. Though often treacherous, they are hospitable, and have affectionate impulses, and their women show great tenderness of heart.

Polygamy is the rule, but it is accompanied with the most determined exclusion of blood marriages. The tribes are split into clans, almost always of the clan of the mother, and descendants of one mother to the remotest ascertainable degree are forbidden to intermarry, such marriages being held abominable. But this is the only recognised bar. A son inherits at his father's death all his mothers-in-law as wives, who must make themselves useful to him, the wife being bought, sold, and inherited, her position in West Africa being a sort of slavery. In East Africa, however, Dr. Livingstone tells us of a tribe in which the custom prevails that when a man marries a woman of a neighbouring village, that he should go to her house to live, and occupy himself in carrying home firewood to his mother-in-law. There, if a woman beats her husband, she is brought to be tried in the Palaver House, and if found guilty, is condemned to carry him home on her back. This is her triumph, because all the women along the road cheer her, and cry: "Give it him again! give it him again!" On the whole, where the virtual slavery of the woman is most certain, and she is liable to the domestic whip, her position is comparatively good. She has her way in the household, and seems to be the happier for the company of other wives. The husband being accounted a bad man if he shows partialities, the wives rarely disagree among themselves, although they and the women generally cause many wars and quarrels among the men.

The Africans are highly ceremonious, but in the personage to whom most ceremony is due—an African king—there is a special way of exciting relish for the reverence that is to come. Both Du Chailu

and Captain Burton, writing of the west and of the east, met with occasion for describing it. Captain Burton, in the "Land of the Moon," writes "that the chief was travelling towards the coast as a porter in a caravan. When he heard of his father's death, he at once stacked his load, and prepared to return home and rule. The rest of the gang, before allowing him to depart, beat him severely, exclaiming partly in jest, partly in earnest: 'Ah, now thou art still our comrade, but presently thou wilt fine, flog, torture, and slay us!'" So, when one of M. du Chaillu's negro friends was voted king, some spat in his face, others beat him with their fists, some kicked and pelted him, whilst the unfortunates who could not join in this exercise, assiduously cursed him, his brothers and sisters, his parents and grand-parents, to his remotest ancestors. They exclaimed: "You are not our king yet, for a little while we will do what we please with you. By-and-by we shall have to do your will," this being the authorised coronation ceremony of an absolute king.

## Balzac's First Book.

WHEN Balzac was at the beginning of his career, and known only to the few who had chanced upon his brilliant sketches in the Paris newspapers, it so happened that one of these sparkling effusions fell in the way of a Paris bookseller and was published. The bookseller had, or thought he had from long experience, a shrewd idea of what would take with the Parisian public. He folded the paper and laid it down with an air of decision, saying as he did so: "I will offer that fellow three thousand francs for a novel. I may have to pay more, but I'll try three thousand to start with." Next morning the bookseller started out to find Balzac. His quest took him into an obscure street in one of the oldest and poorest parts of the city. As he turned into the dingy thoroughfare, he said to himself as he looked about: "Ah, indeed, he must be a plebeian; I will offer him two thousand francs—no more." Somewhat weary, the bookseller at length found the house; it was high, dingy, and not too clean. "Oh, I shall say one thousand five hundred," was his resolve as he crossed the threshold. M. Balzac lived on the fourth floor, and his visitor climbed the rickety stairs. "Aha! one thousand francs; not a sou more," was his mental determination. But when he stepped into the shabby room and saw a young man dipping a penny roll into a glass of water, three hundred francs, just one-tenth the sum first intended, was the offer that sprang to his lips, and for this amount he received the manuscript of what was afterwards considered a masterpiece.

## Cookery.

### A FRENCH LITTLE DINNER.

THERE are times when in an ordinary English household it is difficult, if not impossible, to get even a small dinner properly cooked. During the spring cleaning, a little washing, the chimney swept, or the "day out" of one of the servants, it is generally found necessary to have cold meat for the family, and politely to request the master of the house to dine "in town." Indeed, the occasions on which this request is preferred become so frequent that he never feels able to calculate on dining at his own table. If the business of eating were as seriously regarded as it ought to be by English people, such a state of things would not be allowed to exist. It should be for no light cause that the master of the house is required to eat either club or restaurant dinners, or the mistress and children to exist on cold meat or scraps. It was once our privilege to dine with a French neighbour in what she called "gipsy fashion," and by way of showing what can be done under difficulties, we will relate our experience.

This French lady and her husband had lived in a quiet way, keeping but two servants, a French cook and housemaid, and were on the point of leaving England. Madame had been in town all day, and it was not until late in the evening that we were able to see her on some little matters connected with her departure.

"Now," she said, "do stay and dine with us in 'gipsy fashion'; the housemaid left yesterday, being placed; there is only cook to wait at table, and as she has been busy packing all day, she has not changed her dress. The wine-glasses are packed, and we have but one decanter left; but do stay, if you can put up with things."

We protested, but stayed, and, as will be seen, had a little dinner to remember, not to say some food for reflection. Every dish was perfect in its way, and if we omit the *pâté de foies gras* and the truffles, the cost of this exquisite little dinner would be considerably less than that of an ordinary joint and pudding at a well-ordered English table. We give the menu; it had been composed for two, but was amply sufficient for four persons. Probably the *rechauffé* for the morrow's breakfast suffered from the unexpected numbers of the dinner-party, but as madame's cook always had eggs and gravy in the house, there was no need to be uneasy on that score. With these materials a clever cook can always extemporise a little feast.

### MENU.

Bread Soup.  
Herrings with Mustard Sauce.  
Pâté de Foies Gras. Brain Fritters.  
Veal à la Casserole. Macaroni à la Milanaise.  
Omelette au Confiture.  
Stilton Cheese.

### BREAD SOUP.

This was merely a good brown *bouillon*, perfectly clear, with some pieces of bread cut very thin and put into it just before serving, apparently only to justify the name of the soup. As a rule soups are not made so strong in France as in England, and are not regarded so much as nourishment as a preliminary to, and preparation for, the good dishes of the dinner, and no doubt from a dietetic point of view this is correct.

### HERRINGS WITH MUSTARD SAUCE.

Put a tablespoonful of the finest salad-oil into a dish, pass the herrings through it on both sides. The fish must not be opened, and, with a little care, can easily be properly cleansed. Lightly pepper and salt the herrings, which should have soft roes, and let them lie for an hour. Place them on a gridiron over a very slow fire, turn them often until done; they will take from fifteen to twenty minutes. To make the sauce for four herrings, take half a pint of white stock, stir into it, whilst boiling, an ounce of fine flour and a teaspoonful of French mustard mixed smooth in a little cold water, continue stirring over the fire until thickened, add an ounce of butter, and a large pinch of parsley finely chopped, pepper and salt to taste. Stir the sauce until the butter, which should be broken into little bits, is dissolved, and be careful it does not boil after this addition. Lay the herrings on a hot dish, pour the sauce round them, and serve.

### PÂTÉ DE FOIES GRAS.

"Whilst we wait for the fritters," said our host, "let us dally with this morsel of *pâté*." It was made by Humel, and was exquisite. We give the name of the maker, in case any of our readers should be tempted to indulge in this delicacy. "And now," continued monsieur, "we must have a glass of this Chambertin which goes so well with the *pâté*;" and, as we tasted, we came to the conclusion that those who can afford *foies gras*, must also afford Chambertin.

### BRAIN FRITTERS.

Procure an ox brain, carefully wash it, and boil it for a quarter of an hour in well-seasoned stock. When the brain is cold, cut it into slices as thin as possible, dip each of them in batter, drop them as you do them into fat at a temperature of four hundred and thirty degrees, or that which will brown instantly a piece of bread dipped into it. To make the batter, mix two large tablespoonfuls of fine flour with four of cold water, mix in a tablespoonful of dissolved butter or of fine oil, the yolk of an egg, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Let the batter stand for two hours, and when ready to use, beat the white of the egg to a strong froth, and mix with it. Do not fry more than two fritters at once; as you take them up, throw them on paper to absorb any grease clinging to them; serve on a napkin or ornamental dish-paper. If this recipe is closely followed, the fritters will be light, crisp, delicate morsels melting in the mouth, and form besides a very pretty dish. Garnish with fried parsley. Take care the parsley is thoroughly dry; put it into a small frying-basket, and immerse it for an instant in hot fat. Turn it out on paper, dry, and serve.

### VEAL À LA CASSEROLE.

For this dish a piece of the fillet, about three inches thick, will be required, and weighing from two to three pounds. It should be cut from one side of the leg without bone; but sometimes butchers object to give it, as cutting in this manner interferes with cutlets. In such a case a piece must be chosen near the knuckle, and the bone be taken out before cooking. For a large party a thick slice of the fillet, weighing about four pounds, will be found advantageous. With a piece of tape tie the veal into a round shape, flour, and put it into a stewpan with a small piece of butter; fry until it becomes brown on all sides. Then add half a pint of good gravy, nicely seasoned with pepper and salt, cover the stewpan closely, and set it on the stove to cook very slowly for at least four hours. When done the veal will be exquisitely tender, full of flavour, but not the least ragged. Take the meat up, and keep hot whilst the gravy is reduced by boiling, without the lid of the saucepan, to a rich glaze, then pour over the meat and serve.

### MACARONI À LA MILANAISE.

Boil a quarter of a pound of the best Italian macaroni in a quart of water, with a little salt, until tender. When done drain it as dry as possible, put it into a stewpan with two or three spoonfuls of good gravy, an ounce of butter, and an ounce of grated Parmesan cheese. Stir over a slow fire for five minutes. Have ready some truffles, cut in slices, and stewed for a quarter of an hour in gravy; mix them with the macaroni, and serve.

### OMELETTE AU CONFITURE.

Break three eggs into a basin, beat them with a small pinch of salt, a teaspoonful of sifted sugar, three tablespoonfuls of milk, and a few drops of extract of vanilla, for four or five minutes. Have ready



in the omelet-pan, an ounce of fresh butter. When it is beginning to get brown, pour in the omelet mixture, hold the pan still over a moderate fire for half a minute, then, with a silver fork, keep stirring in the middle. When the omelet is beginning to set over the whole surface, and it is taking colour on the under side, shake the pan round and round, and when finished, spread a tablespoonful of apricot preserve on it. Shake the pan, hold it close to the dish, and slide half the omelet on to it. With a jerk turn over the other half, so that the omelet presents the appearance of an oval golden-coloured cushion. Take care not to cook the omelet too much. It is proper to have it rather underdone, or lightly set, on the inner side.

## Epsom Races.

THERE is no certainty as to when racing began on Epsom Downs; but most antiquaries believe that it was in the reign of James I., who loved a good horse, and liked to sweep up a stake. Certain it is that in 1648, six hundred Cavalier gentlemen assembled at Epsom Downs, under pretence of a horse-race, and marched from there to Reigate. Major Audely, with five troops of horse and three of foot, overtook them at Ewell, had a skirmish with them at Nonsuch Park, and charged and routed them on a hill near Kingston. The Duke of Buckingham, a noble, brave, and handsome youth, set his back to an elm-tree, and there fought desperately at bay, till he was struck down. At Kingston the Cavaliers rallied, and drove back the Puritan cavalry.

The Epsom races can only be clearly traced back as far as the year 1780, when the famous Madcap ran and won, and proved the best plate horse in England. That was also the year of the first Derby, when nine started, the race being won by Sir C. Bunbury's Diomed, ridden by the famous S. Arnall, who won the race many times after this first victory. The races were at first held in the spring and autumn, and being then comparatively local, began at eleven, and were conducted in a quiet, leisurely way, the company usually trooping off to the town for a general dinner after the two first heats had been run, and returning to another tranquil race after having enjoyed their wine.

In 1825, sixty thousand persons were thought a grand assemblage at the Derby. The London, Dorking, Worthing, and Chichester coaches brought down a good many visitors, but there were no trains to pour their two hundred thousand at once upon the town. The day was not the carnival then it is now; no green boughs, false noses, or paper feathers enlivened the noisy, jostling procession. It must have been a sober trotting along of long-coated men in cocked-hats, out for a mere day's fresh air, and a picnic.

Durdans, near Epsom (once the seat of the Heathcotes, but now the property of the Earl of Rosebery), was built by Lord Berkeley from the ruins of Nonsuch, and very full of old memorials the place is. Pepys mentions (Sept. 16, 1660) going to St. James's, to see the Duke of York, and finding him starting with the king, queen, and Prince Rupert to dine at Durdans. Evelyn, too, mentions, in his quiet, amiable way, going to Durdans, in 1665, and finding an assembly of savans—Dr. Wilkins, Sir William Pelly, and Mr. Hooke—"contriving chariots, new rigging for ships," and of all things in the world—what was no doubt a sort of bicycle—"a wheel to run races in." He adds: "Perhaps three such persons together were not found elsewhere in Europe for parts and ingenuity." Wilkins was the man who tried to establish a universal language, and so nullify the fatal curse of Babel; Hooke was an astronomer, who was jealous of Newton, and claimed to have discovered the law of gravitation; and Pelly was one of the most active founders of the Royal Society.

The great days of Durdans were when Frederick, Prince of Wales, the son of George II., came to reside there. It was this patron of dancing-masters and toadies who first gave rise to the saying, "That whether there was peace or war abroad, there was sure to be family discord among the Guelphs." His sisters despised him; his strutting, little, demoralised father pronounced him a puppy, fool, and scoundrel; his mother cursed the hour in which he was born; and the prime minister described him as a poor, weak, irresolute, false, lying, contemptible wretch! While still a lad he drank and gambled. "Oh, the tricks of pages!" said his mother to his father. "No," replied the bear-leader; "I wish to Heaven they were—they are the tricks of lacqueys, rascals." One day, looking out from a window at St. James's, he saw Bubb Doddington, a noted character of the day, roll by. "There," said the estimable prince, "there goes a man they call the most sensible fellow in England; yet, with all his cleverness, I have just nicked him out of five hundred pounds." He joined the Opposition to spite his father and Sir Robert Walpole, and earned his father's undying hate by removing his wife when she was in actual labour from Hampton Court to St. James's, from whence he was very soon "quoited" to Kew. His mother, on her death-bed, refused to insult his father by seeing him.

During the '45 Rebellion, he showed some feeble desire to lead the army, being jealous of his truculent brother, the Duke of Cumberland; but the fool's ambition subsided into having a model of Carlisle Castle made in confectionery, and bombarding it with sugar-plums at the head of his maids-of-honour and mistresses. Eventually the poor creature died from a cold caught by putting on a thin silk coat in the

month of March. In a fit of coughing he broke an internal abscess, cried out, "I feel death!" and almost immediately expired. The bitter Jacobite epitaph upon him was only too just:

Here lies Fred,  
Who was alive and is dead;  
Had it been his father,  
I had much rather;  
Had it been his brother,  
Still better than another;  
Had it been his sister,  
No one would have missed her;  
Had it been the whole generation,  
Still better for the nation;  
But since 'tis only Fred,  
Who was alive and is dead,  
There's no more to be said.

Some traditions of Fred still linger about Epsom.

An obelisk (the flint of which went to face St. Martin's Church, in the town) that formerly stood at the end of an avenue of walnut-trees in the Common Fields, marked the spot of Fred's only victory. The prince one morning, walking alone in his white silk coat, espied a specially sable sweep sitting contemplatively under one of the trees, perhaps fatigued with the ascent of the palace chimneys. Fred, indignant at such an unmannered churl coming between the wind and his nobility, bade him begone, and at once. The weary sweep, espying a top or a footman—he hardly knew which—refused point-blank. The prince flourished his clouded cane, which the sweep immediately wrenched from his hand and threw away, then stripped and offered combat. The prince, with a spark of the spirit of his grandsire at Dettingen, threw off his silk coat and fell to. Tradition, generally loyal, affirms that the sweep was beaten; but there certainly are calumnious reports that the sweep conquered, and set his black foot on the wizen neck of his royal antagonist. Other local historians make George III. (when a boy) the adversary and conqueror of the sweep—such is history. Certain it is that young Prince George was much here at the time when the populace were so jealous of his mother's unwise intimacy with handsome Lord Bute. Soon after Fred's lamented death, a Mr. Belchir rebuilt Durdans, but a fire destroyed the place, and one of the Heathcotes reared the present structure of red brick bound with stone.

## Public Suicides in China.

THE most barbarous of all the death-rites which have been observed in China was that of immolating human beings at the tombs of the departed great. As many as one hundred and seventy-seven men have been buried alive in the tomb of a single individual. This horrible custom does not prevail at all now, of course, but the same false and inadequate notions of the sacredness of human life do prevail universally. But of all Chinese customs the most remarkable has been the prevalent, public, fashionable suicides, conducted in public with every show of pomp, and sometimes actually under the general direction of a mandarin. A gay procession would be formed, and a delighted throng would follow the prospective victim to a scaffold which had been erected with great care. The seats commanding the best view of the sacrifice would be sold, and there would be a grand turn-out of the suiciding party's friends, as well as of the public at large. Perhaps it would be a young widow, who had resolved to end her miserable existence on account of the death of her husband, a widow not being privileged to re-marry in China. The occasion would be treated as a regular holiday by the natives. For a time the woman would chat pleasantly with her friends, partaking of a bountiful feast with them on the gallows. Then, having caressed a little child that was placed upon the table before her, and adorned it with a necklace, she would take a basket of flowers and scatter the blossoms gaily among the crowd, after which she would cheerfully place her head in the noose and swing off into eternity. As a rule, suicides are now performed without such publicity, but they are very common.

## Teaching at Home.

ENGLISH LITERATURE. PART II.

A GENTLEMAN was one day deploring to a lady friend, what seemed to him the very defective education of some young nieces, in whom he was interested. The young ladies in question had been most carefully brought up, were charming, amiable, and accomplished, but seemed to be utterly and hopelessly ignorant of the ordinary affairs of life, knew nothing about the value of money, and were quite unaware that an income, which was reckoned by hundreds, would not supply the same luxuries as one which was counted by thousands.

The lady, having listened sympathetically to her friend's complaint, remarked: "I should like to ask you one question. Do your nieces ever read novels?"

"Never," was the reply; "their parents do not approve of them, and have taken care that their daughters should never read any."



"Then," returned the lady, "the best thing I can suggest is, that they should go through a course of novels immediately."

I am not in a position to state whether the advice was followed, but my experience leads me to think it was sound; no young woman, I imagine, could read through, say, Mr. Trollope's novels, and retain such unconsciousness of the difference between hundreds and thousands.

THE value of fiction as a means of education is not always sufficiently appreciated; yet, when rightly used, there is no greater help to be had anywhere, than in the imaginative literature with which we are so richly blest.

NO doubt it is very proper that our children should learn about their forefathers and feel they are English down to their finger-nails, as they thrill over the Spanish Armada or Battle of Waterloo. It is well, too, that they should learn the outward aspect of the world they live in, and geography may be made a most improving and interesting study. But there is a certain direction to be given to the taste and feelings, which can not be made the subject of formal lessons, and here the help of literature is invaluable.

FEW habits of mind are stronger than that which betrays the child of refined bringings up into a feeling of scorn for the "common people" around him. A child of ten or twelve in the private box or dress circle of a theatre will sometimes look with a sort of contempt and disgust at what he considers to be the vulgar creatures in the gallery, indulging in oranges and ginger-beer between the acts; but granted that he has average quickness of feeling, and let him read how Kit's mother and Barbara's mother went to the play, and it will cure him of despising his fellow-creatures more than any direct moralising could do. His contempt will give place to amusement, and he may feel a touch of tenderness as he wonders whether some chubby-faced urchin aloft has any resemblance to "little Jacob."

I WOULD specially recommend Scott and Dickens as the two novelists who will be most useful for young people, and they will also be found more popular among them than any of our other first-rate authors. Dickens's works are particularly good for home-bred girls, who are apt to be deficient in the sense of humour, and are too often afflicted with a painful narrowmindedness, which disposes them to think everything wrong which they do not see done at home. The power of looking on the comic side of things is a great corrective to this frame of mind.

In both of these authors, moreover, vice is portrayed in a manner which would not sully the purest mind, and the love-scenes occupy a very subordinate position, and do not offend against the feeling of reserve, which is very strong on this subject among healthily natured boys and girls.

NOVELS consisting chiefly of descriptions of "society," in the narrow sense of the word, are not generally good reading for children. In many cases such books give a very one-sided and incorrect picture of society, and, even when well drawn, are not particularly interesting to quite young people. Miss Austen and Thackeray, for instance, can only be appreciated by those who have already some knowledge and experience of society beyond what children usually acquire.

THE books that children can enter into and profit by are those that give the universal rather than the temporary aspect of human nature, which, I suppose, explains how Shakespeare can be so largely understood and enjoyed by boys and girls.

THE modern tendency of making Shakespeare into a lesson seems to me rather a mistake. It is little good trying to give children anything like a critical knowledge of the plays—you only teach them to parrot other people's ideas; and, after all, the best use we can make of our greatest poet is to enjoy him. As Shakespeare wrote his plays to be acted, it seems probable that the stage will best enable us to understand them. Certainly this is the case as far as children are concerned, and where parents have it in their power to do so, I should recommend them to take their children where they have a chance of seeing one of Shakespeare's plays fairly well acted. The fashion of afternoon performances greatly facilitates this, especially in the case of delicate children, who cannot stand late hours.

IT is also a very good plan to encourage children to act among themselves. Of course no one would propose their acting through a play, but schoolboys of twelve and fourteen find the short scene from "Julius Cæsar," or "Pyramus and Thisbe," most interesting to act, and where there is a nice little sister to undertake Titania, the fairy scenes from the "Midsummer Night's Dream" are most effective, recruits being enlisted from among the "nursery children" to play the fairies. The statue scene from "A Winter's Tale" is a very telling one, and even bits from the "Tempest" are not beyond amateurs who bring a little ingenuity to the task. The preparation of two or three scenes will help to provide occupation for a holiday season; nor is it necessary to victimise one's acquaintance by inviting a party to witness the performance. A fond grandmother, or an indulgent aunt, added to the other grown-up members of the household, will be quite sufficient audience to give zest to the affair, and it is well that the children should get

their pleasure from the acting itself, rather than from any admiration that their acting may excite. The praises of mothers and grandmothers are understood even by children to be chiefly the results of affection, and have a very different effect from the injudicious flatteries of chance acquaintances, who, for their parts, are only too happy to escape the infliction of looking on at the performances of other people's children, unless the said children are unusually gifted. The habit of reading aloud is an excellent one to cultivate, and children get a truer and more improving knowledge of literature by listening to what the great writers have actually written, than by learning any number of "primers" describing their works.

THOUGH I have dwelt so much on the advantages to be derived from fiction, I by no means recommend that the pupil be confined to it.

BOOKS of travel and adventure, like Miss Bird's most interesting volumes on the Sandwich Islands, Rocky Mountains, and Japan, or Kane's "Arctic Voyages," Waterton's "Wanderings," and parts of Wallace's "Malay Archipelago," may all be made interesting to children; not forgetting to have an atlas at hand to turn to in case of need. Where access can be had to an old library, many of the earlier travellers will well repay looking through. Captain Cook, for instance, and Mungo Park, having an abundance of interesting adventures.

SOME of the essays of Elia are generally liked by children. "The Vicar of Wakefield," Defoe's "History of the Plague," many of the papers out of the *Spectator*, particularly the allegorical ones, the one on popular superstitions, and the Sir Roger de Coverley ones, selections from Pepys's and Evelyn's diaries, "Don Quixote"—which though not English, may be termed European—and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," are all specimens of our earlier literature within the compass of the understandings of children between ten and fifteen.

IN poetry, such pieces as Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome," Aytoun's "Lays of the Cavaliers," Lockhart's "Spanish Ballads," are much preferred to moralisings over butterflies and buttercups, and other kindred subjects. Hood's poems, both comic and serious, are general favourites, and so is Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner." I never knew a child to read "Paradise Lost" of his own free will, though exceptional children may have done so; and the only writings of Milton that generally suit them are the "Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and "Comus." The last is one of the loveliest poems in our language, and a strong cast of amateur actors could hardly choose a better piece to revive than this charming old masque.

BYRON has such a bad reputation among English people that they are apt to deny he is our third greatest poet, a position unhesitatingly accorded to him on the Continent, where he is, moreover, generally looked on as a hero and a patriot. But though one might hesitate to place his works in a child's hands, there is no reason why one should not read to them such splendid stanzas as "The Isles of Greece" out of "Don Juan." "The Prisoner of Chillon," again, is quite unobjectionable, and I have known it to be listened to with breathless interest by quite young children.

THE great thing is to read with your charges yourself, whether they are your pupils or your children; enjoy together the generous sentiments and bright fancies with which our literature abounds; exchange confidences on the subject of your favourite authors, and while they get the benefit of your larger experience, you will find your own interest increased by contact with the fresh young minds whose enthusiasm and powers of enjoyment are as yet undiminished by the cares and disappointments of life.

## Household Gardening.

THE time is approaching when many tender plants that are preserved in rooms and greenhouses during the winter will have to be transferred to beds, borders, or window-boxes for flowering during the summer months. Zonal Pelargoniums, Heliotropes, Calceolarias, Lobelias, Salvias, Ageratums, Verbenas, Petunias, and Golden Feather rank amongst the most popular of what are termed "bedding plants" for embellishing gardens from June to October. Hardy perennial border-flowers are attractive and interesting, but few of them flower continuously for three or four months, and they are not for certain purposes and positions so effective as the more tender plants referred to. Of these, Pelargoniums, or, as they are popularly termed, Geraniums, are the most popular, and in the majority of gardens indispensable.

### ACCLIMATISING PLANTS.

All plants of a tender nature, no matter what they are, that have been wintered under glass, must have a gradation of temperature to prepare them for exposure to the drying effects of the sun in the day and the cold at night in the open air.

They should first be removed from the greenhouse or window to a frame, keeping them close for a few days, then admitting air more

and more freely until the lights can be drawn off entirely, for an hour or two at first, then for a whole day, and eventually at night. In this way the plants are gradually inured to the change that awaits them, and do not suffer by a violent transition from heat to cold.

Those who have no frame in which to place the plants preparatory to full exposure, should take advantage of mild weather for standing them out of doors in the warmest and most sheltered position at command, shading them for a time from bright sun by day, and always from frost and cutting winds at night.

#### THE DANGER OF SCORCHING.

Many persons when they first place plants in the open air, think that the more sun they can have, the better. This is a great mistake. Numbers of plants are seriously injured, if not ruined, by the practice referred to, and a moment's reflection will show the reason of their collapse when what may be termed the philosophy of the subject is once explained.

The leaves of plants that have been long under glass during the dark days of winter, are naturally thin in texture, being comparatively destitute of that tissue and substance which are present in plants that grow under the full influence of light and air in the summer months.

Those thin or flimsy plants have only a small amount of moisture in the leaves, and this the sun extracts in an hour or two when the foliage is exposed to its rays. When this occurs the leaves first wither or turn limp, then curl at the edges, turn brown, shrivel, and die. They scorch just the same as a piece of paper is scorched by placing it in contact with the heat from a fire.

This scorching of the leaves of plants first placed in the open air must be avoided by shading them for a time from the heat of the sun; the leaves must, in fact, be kept green, and this will be evidence that they are not scorched, but in a condition to perform their functions in maintaining the health of the plants. This is an element in acclimatising plants, or preparing them for the open air, that is worthy of being kept in remembrance.

#### WATERING BEDDING PLANTS.

When plants are first placed in the open air, and the weather is bright, with brisk, drying winds prevalent, the evaporation from the soil in the pots, also from the foliage, is far greater than was the case when the plants were in a greenhouse, room, or frame, and consequently more water is often needed by the plants outdoors than in.

This is a matter that must be carefully attended to, for if the soil is permitted to get quite dry, and to remain so for any length of time, the roots of the plants will at once shrivel, and growth will be arrested. At the same time the soil must not be made soppy with an excess of water, or the roots will decay.

Early in the morning, say about nine o'clock, when the day promises to be bright, all plants that may be placed outdoors should be examined, and those, and those only, that show symptoms of dryness be given water. This will keep them fresh throughout the day, and at the same time any excess of moisture will pass off before night, extreme wetness then rendering plants liable to injury by even slight frosts, that often occur at this season of the year.

Thus it will be seen that the three main points to be attended to in acclimatising plants, or preparing them for a sojourn in the open air, are shading, sheltering, and watering. Those who act the most thoughtfully and judiciously in these matters will succeed the best in the important work in question.

#### A SLIGHT HOTBED.

Those who have the means for stacking up a bed of fresh horse-stable manure or leaves, or, what is better, a mixture of both, and can place a frame on it, covering the surface of the beds with sawdust, cocoanut-fibre refuse, or light soil, will have a great advantage in raising seedlings of such tender plants as Balsams, Egg Plants, Zinnias, Ice Plants, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Vegetable Marrows, etc., for planting out in June.

When beds of fermenting materials are made in February or March, they have to be built four feet high for affording and maintaining the requisite heat, whereas, made now, a height of two or three feet will suffice, as only a gentle, not a powerful heat is needed.

If manure and leaves cannot be had, useful beds for the purpose in question may be formed with tan, or spent hops, which are plentiful in some districts; but hotbeds so formed must be enclosed with boards, as they cannot be built the same as with manure.

A deep frame half-filled or a little more with the refuse in question, leaving just sufficient space between the surface of the bed and glass roof or covering of the frame for pots to stand on, will be found very useful for raising a number of seedlings, also for afterwards growing to a fruiting state a Cucumber or Tomato plant.

#### RAISING TOMATO PLANTS.

Whenever a night temperature of from fifty-five degrees can be provided, and a very light house or frame, the raising of plants of this popular fruit is an easy process.

Fill a five-inch pot with light rich soil to within an inch of the rim, water it well, and an hour after sprinkle a few Tomato seeds on the surface, then scatter a little fine soil over them, and place a square of glass across the pot. In the temperature named, the soil being kept

moist, the seed will germinate in a few days, and a number of young plants will soon be obtained.

When these are an inch or two high, they should be potted singly in small pots, which, however, should only be three parts filled with soil at first, and more can be afterwards added, and the plants will emit shoots from the stems, and will thereby be considerably strengthened. By the first week in June, the young Tomato plants will be strong yet sturdy, and in fine condition for planting either under glass or against a warm wall or fence in the open air.

The varieties of Tomatoes are now very numerous, and they vary somewhat in colour and quality. Three very good and distinct sorts are Carters' Dedham Favourite, crimson; Greengage, citron; and Stamfordian, scarlet. These, or any of them, well grown, will give satisfaction, being productive, handsome, and of superior quality.

Many persons have the means for growing Tomatoes if they have strong plants for planting at the right time; but they lack the requisite convenience for raising the seedlings. In such cases it is far the best plan not to attempt the work, as plenty of strong plants can be purchased in May or June at a trifling cost.

#### RAISING CUCUMBERS.

Plants of these cannot be successfully raised where the temperature falls below sixty degrees. This ensured, and a moist, genial atmosphere maintained, the seeds will germinate and the plants grow freely in fresh loamy soil, not pressed too firmly in the pots. Two or three seeds placed edgewise in the soil in a three or four inch pot, will suffice; the plants to be afterwards potted off as advised for Tomatoes. Purchasing strong plants is, however, often the cheapest and best plan for the adoption of amateurs.

Amongst the best and most productive Cucumbers for frames and houses, are Carters' Model, Cardiff Castle, and Telegraph. The best for growing outdoors is the Stockwood Ridge.

#### RAISING VEGETABLE MARROWS.

These are raised exactly the same as Cucumbers, but will succeed in a lower temperature, or similar to that recommended for Tomatoes. Strong plants are, however, plentifully offered in the markets towards the end of May, in case any persons who attempt raising plants for themselves fail in their object.

The most useful variety of Marrow is the Large Cream, but a new variety, Muir's Prolific, is of superior quality, the fruit being of medium size. Further particulars relative to the culture of the crops under notice will be given in a future issue.

## A Lesson in Boxing.

JIMMYSON is very proud of his muscle, and the other day he took a friend from the country to the gymnasium to show him something about the manly art.

"Yes," said Jimmyson, "I may not look it, but when I get the gloves on I'm quite a slogger, an amateur Tom Sayers, as it were."

"You surprise me," said the man from the country. "I had no idea you were so proficient."

"I know a little about boxing," continued Jimmyson, "though I do say it myself."

Then he struck at an imaginary adversary, assumed a number of positions, offensive and defensive, and showed off to excellent advantage. Presently he saw a little, dried-up fellow, who had on a pair of gloves, but who looked awkward and uncomfortable.

"Do you see that chap?" remarked Jimmyson. "Watch me paralyse him. I'll show him something about boxing."

"My friend," he observed to the other, "those gloves don't seem to fit you; it seems you don't know how to put them on."

"Oh yes, I do," said the other.

"Are you sure?" asked Jimmyson.

"I believe so."

"You should wear them like this, and hold your arms thus. Let's have a little friendly bout, and I'll show you how," and Jimmyson winked to the man from the country, and whispered that the fun was about to begin.

"You want to box," said the little man.

"Yes, a round or two. I'll stop whenever you say so," and Jimmyson smiled again as he thought how he would knock the other out of time.

He made a blow at the little man, but missing him he found that he was almost knocked off his feet by a whack on the side of the head. Whew! how the other made his arms fly! Jimmyson was like a child, and in a moment his eyes were blackened, his nose was bleeding, and he imagined that some one was pounding him, under the impression that he was a beefsteak. Finally he received a blow that sent him sprawling fairly into the arms of the man from the country, who tenderly held him from falling.

"Now, look here, my hearty," said the little man, "the next time you offer to show a champion of the light-weights how to box you'll know it. You'll stop when I say so—eh? Very kind of you, I'm sure."

Jimmyson stayed at home next morning, in bed. He has resolved to quit the gymnasium if professionals are admitted.

## Odds and Ends.

HERR JONAS LIE, in his biography of Ole Bull, gives, among many others, the following good story. A man who had a patent varnish for violins, brought his invention to Ole Bull and begged him to try it. He said that it gave ordinary instruments the sweet quality of a Cremona fiddle. Ole Bull tried it, and found that it did really improve the tone, and promised to use a violin prepared with it at a concert he had to give at the house of the Duke of Riario. There was a great deal of fashionable company collected at this concert, and the heat of the room melted the famous varnish, which was really a preparation of assafetida. The smell which it exuded was so maddening that an ordinary man would have stopped and have excused himself; but Ole Bull merely closed his eyes, turned his face away, and played with an energy which became more frenzied the more intolerable the stink became. He enjoyed an overwhelming success, and when the duke rushed forward to seize his hand in congratulation, the appalling odour of assafetida struck him in the face, and Ole Bull had to explain in what an agony he had been performing.

A CURIOUS personage died recently in Paris, the Count Napoleon Bertrand, son of the companion of Napoleon I. at St. Helena. The count was a very eccentric man, and every year he used to hire a room in an hotel, and go to bed for three months, after having given orders for food to be brought to him once a day, and not a word to be spoken by the servant. He was asleep during the siege of Paris. One day the bread was so abominable that he flew into a rage, and forced the waiter to tell him that the reason was that the city was besieged by the Prussians. The count was stupefied for a moment. At last he got up and wandered about the hotel for a time, saying to himself: "Paris besieged—besieged! What ought a Bertrand to do?" After a few minutes' reflection, he added: "I will go to bed." And he went to bed and slept out the siege.

It is very seldom you hear of a German having asthma, but we know one who had this ailment. He sent for the doctor the other day, and he gave him a prescription, and told him to take a walk on an empty stomach. But this part of the business he did not quite understand, and consequently got no better from taking medicine. The next time the doctor called he found his patient in a high temper. "I vash so sick as never vas all night. Now, doctor, I don't want no voolishness mit me; I dell you dat right away." "But I am not fooling you," replied the doctor. "Have not you taken the medicine?" "Yaw; but it vash no better ash water." "But have you taken the walk on an empty stomach, as I told you?" "There, there ish vere ter voolings comes in. Whose stomach must I walk on?"

A CERTAIN sea captain who had considerable interest, with his brother officers, and the cook aboard his vessel, were once to be tried for an offence against the laws of the navy, of such a nature as put their lives in jeopardy. The cook displayed every mark of fear and apprehension for his safety. The captain, on the contrary, seemed in very good spirits, and said: "Cheer up, man; why should you be cast down? I fear nothing, and why should you?" "Why, faith, your honour," replied the fellow, "I should be as courageous as you are, if we were to be tried by a jury of cooks."

SOME people are very stupid. There's Gragle, for instance. Good fellow, but woefully dull. In conversation with a friend, he remarked: "I regard the use of beer as the true temperance principle. When I work all day and am exhausted, nothing helps me like a glass of beer. It assists nature, you understand." "It makes a regular fool of me," the friend replied. "That's what I say, it assists nature." And even after the friend scowled at him, Gragle didn't realise that he had said anything inappropriate.

A COUNTRY fellow entered one of the banks, and, walking up to the counter, exclaimed: "Here I am, I want you to take a fair look at me." Without a word further, he strode out. The next day the same customer appeared, uttered the same words, and again disappeared. The third day, at about the same time, he walked in, and advancing to the teller's desk, threw down a draft payable three days after sight. "Now," said he, "you've seen me three times, I want the money for it."

A NOTED physician once sent his man with a box of pills to a patient, and a hamper containing six live pullets to be left at the house of a friend of his. Unluckily the messenger bungled over his errand and took the hamper to the patient and the pills to his master's friend. Imagine the consternation of the patient on receiving along with the fowls the following prescription: "Two of these to be swallowed every half-hour."

It is often easier to make great sacrifices than little ones. It is easier to do battle for a grand idea than to give up a prejudice. Yet it is the little things of life that contribute most largely to its fret and worry or to its peace and gladness; and he who possesses the true spirit of conciliation knows that no right is too small to be respected, no kindness too trifling to be rendered, no part of life too insignificant to command consideration.

PHYSICIANS assert that a well-balanced brain contributes to long life, while a passionate and turbulent one does much to abridge it, and that if persons knew how many dangers in life they escaped by possessing mildness of temper, instead of the opposite disposition, how eager would be the aim of all men to cultivate it.

As a part of the marriage ceremony in Servia, the bride has to hold a piece of sugar between her lips as a sign that she will speak little and sweetly during her married life.

JOHN PYM, the Republican statesman, said: "I had rather suffer for speaking the truth, than that the truth should suffer for want of my speaking."

ALL brave men love, for he only is brave who has affections to fight for, whether in the daily battle of life or in physical contests.

A MAN would never be too confident of anything if he always remembered how often he had been mistaken.

How different are the ready hand, tearful eye, and soothing voice from the ostentatious appearance which is called pity!

If the waves threaten to engulf you, don't add your tears to the amount of water.

THE French comedian Perlet was extraordinarily thin. At last he became such a skeleton that he consulted a physician, who recommended him to try some baths in the Pyrenees. Having obtained leave of absence from his manager, he betook himself to the mineral springs, where he bathed unremittingly, but all in vain; he did not increase in size. "Patience," urged the doctor; "there is nothing like our baths for making people fat." One day, as Perlet was waiting philosophically in his bath for an *emboupoint* which never came, he heard a conversation in the next room, from which his own was divided by only a thin partition, and which was occupied by an enormous woman, fat as the Hottentot Venus. "Doctor," said she, "I am getting tired of this." "Why?" asked the *Æsculapius*. "I have been here two months." "Well?" "Well, I am as enormous as I was when I came." "A little patience, madame," urged the doctor; "there is nothing like our baths for making people thin." Perlet, hearing these words, sprang out of his bath, dressed, rushed home to his hotel, ordered his bill, and left for Paris by the next train.

"I THOUGHT," said the senior Boggles, as he produced a suspicious-looking flat bottle from his son's valise, "that there was nothing but your surgical instruments in this bag." "That's what I said, dad." "Then, sir, what do you call this?" "That? Oh, that's my eye-opener, dad; very useful instrument, very useful; indispensable, I assure you."

"I DON'T understand why women dress that way," said a man, pointing at a lady who passed along the street. "I don't either," replied a bystander. "That woman," continued the first speaker, "is dressed ridiculously. Her husband must be a fool." "I know he is," said the bystander. "Do you know him?" "Oh yes. I am the fool myself."

A TICKET-OF-LEAVE man found in the street a gold bracelet set with emeralds. Next day he read in the papers a description of the article, with the additional notice: "Mademoiselle X. requests the finder to bring it to her address, as she greatly prizes it." "What bosh!" said the man; "as if I didn't prize it as much as she does!"

AN old fellow in Maine who had lately buried his fourth wife, was accosted by an acquaintance who, unaware of his bereavement, asked: "How is your wife, cap'n?" To which the captain replied with a perfectly grave face: "Waal, to tell you the trewth, I'm kinder out of wives just naow."

A YOUNG man went to call at a country farmhouse to see his sweetheart, who had charge of the dairy. When the old man opened the door he asked him timidly: "How is the milkmaid?" The farmer slammed the door and replied: "Our milk isn't made; it's got from the cow."

MODERN poets may well complain that all the similes have been used up before their time. "White as snow," "white as a lily," "white as ivory," are now general property; but a Welsh poet has an entirely new image. He boldly calls the maiden of his love "white as lime."

"WHAT is included in your curriculum?" Young Hopeful: "Our what, father?" "The curriculum of your college." "Well, to tell the truth, I don't know. You see, being the stroke oar and the captain of the boat club, I have not much time for botany."

A FRENCH lion-tamer quarrelled with his wife, a powerful virago, and was chased by her all round his tent. On being sorely pressed he took refuge in the cage among the lions. "Oh, you contemptible coward!" she shouted; "come out, if you dare!"

A PHOTOGRAPHER advertises: "In consequence of the daily increase of accidents by railway, the public are earnestly requested to call at —, and have their portraits taken, that some memento of departed friends may be left to sorrowing survivors."

"WHAT an appearance old Scrimp presented when he declined contributing towards the minister's salary!" said one church member to another. "Well," was the reply, "I thought he was too mean to present an appearance even."

ON leaving the theatre, Guibollard goes into the cloak-room to get his topcoat. "Your number?" asked the woman in charge. "My number? Oh, just look in the pocket of my topcoat; I put it there for fear of losing it."

A SCOTTISH student, supposed to be deficient in judgment, was asked by a professor, in course of his examination, how he would discover a fool. "By the questions he would ask," was the prompt and highly suggestive reply.

It is rather hard on the fair young autograph-collector to write to an absent-minded poet for his autograph, and then have him send her a nice little note in reply, all printed on a type-writer.

"ONE half the world don't know how the other half live!" exclaimed a gossiping woman. "Oh, well," said her neighbour, "don't worry about it; 'tisn't your fault if they don't know."

A REPORTER who attended a banquet, concluded his description with the candid statement that "it is not distinctly remembered by anybody present who made the last speech."

A LITTLE beggar-girl in London got hold of the wrong paper, which certified that "the bearer is a widow with five children, in destitute circumstances."

AN Irishman, having been told that the price of bread had been lowered, exclaimed: "That is the first time I ever rejoiced at the fall of my best friend!"

"THIS summer, ladies are going to dress their hair as they did a hundred years ago," says a newspaper. This makes some of the ladies pretty old.

A PHILOSOPHER who went to church where the people came in late, said it was "the fashion there for nobody to go till everybody got there."

SINCE there is no lead in lead-pencils, no soda in soda-water, and no relation of lamps to lamp-black, what is going to be done about it?

A MAN carries the borrowing principle a little too far when he asks us to lend him our ear.

THE man who made an impression on the heart of a coquette has become a skilful stonemason.

THE Hindoo widow is the only one that cremates. The others remate.

## Correspondence.

## NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

## ANSWERS.

**BEATRICE.**—The origin of mottoes of particular families is often of historic interest. It is said "Grip fast" of Leslie, Earl of Rothes, was gained by Bartholomew, the founder of the family, who was a noble Hungarian, and came to Scotland with Queen Margarine, 1067. He was much esteemed by King Malcolm Ceanmore, whose sister he married. He was Chamberlain to Queen Margarine. There being no carriages in those days, her majesty used to ride on a pillion behind him. On one occasion, while crossing a river, the queen nearly falling off, Bartholomew cried out, "Grip fast!" The queen replied, "Gin the buckle bide!" there being only one buckle to the belt by which she held on. After this his exclamation was given as the family motto, and two more buckles were added to the belt.

**COUSIN LOU.**—"Polenta" is made as follows: Put one pint of water in a stewpan; when it boils add a little salt and stir in with a stick sufficient coarse yellow maize flour to make it very thick; continue stirring till the mixture is well cooked, which you can tell by its rising in bubbles, then take it out with a spoon on to a napkin and mould the paste into the shape of a ball; let it cool a few minutes, then cut it in slices, which lay in a dish, sprinkle each layer with Parmesan cheese, and pour two ounces of dissolved butter over it; it may be eaten in this manner, or put in a brisk oven and baked. The polenta, when it comes out of the stewpan very hot, is nice served with sausages or little birds; the latter laid on the polenta, and gravy over them.

**EXERCISED.**—The Government would not interfere with any private mode of sepulture, provided it were not proved to be injurious to the health of surrounding inhabitants. In the case of the late Captain Hanham, the crematorium was erected in the grounds of Marston House, in anticipation of his death, by that gentleman himself.

**EX-PUPIL TEACHER** cannot do better than search the columns of the *Schoolmistress*, a weekly penny periodical for those engaged in female tuition, published at 15, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street. All books necessary for the purposes "E. P. T." mentions are therein advertised and recommended. Lessons on all required are continuously given in the *Schoolmistress*, and will furnish your friend with all she requires, of the best material, and in the best style.

**G. B.**—Whit Monday, 1st June, 1863.

**G. D. L.**—The word is spelled in both ways—*Ailanthus* and *Ailantus*—and is derived from *Ailanto*, the Malacca name for one species, signifying tree of heaven. The *Ailanthus glandulosa* is a handsome tree of India and China, attaining a height of sixty feet. It is planted in France and Germany to shade public walks, and has been called false varnish-tree. In Japan the produce of silkworms fed on this tree is very large, and the material, though wanting the fineness and gloss of mulberry silk, is produced at far less cost, and is more durable.

**HARRIET H.**—The following are two of the verses of the poem you want. It is to be found in a volume entitled "Wind Voices," by Philip B. Marston:

Pure souls that watch above me from afar,  
To whom as to stars I raise my eyes,  
Draw me to your large skies,  
Where God and quiet are.

Ah, this I fear shall never chance to me,  
And though I cannot shape the life I would,  
It surely still is good  
To look where such lives be.

**MUSIOUS.**—1. There is a very good little catechism of music published by Robert Cocks and Co., at a shilling. There is also a very good book on Harmony by Dr. Stainer, which contains questions at the end of each chapter. It is published at Novello's, in Berners Street, and is either 1s. 6d. or 2s. 2. "Piffarari," and "The Maypole Dance," by Sydney Smith, published by Edwin Ashdown, Hanover Square. "Spanish Album," and "Spanish Dances," by Mofkowsky, published at Augener's, in Regent Street. "A Village Dance," by Oscar Beringer. 3. We believe the "Limerick Races" is published by Chappell and Co., Bond Street.

**OLD LADY.**—We are glad to be able to print the little poem for which you ask. It is by Edmund Waller, and bears date 1645:

Go, lovely rose!  
Tell her that wastes her time and me,  
That now she knows,  
When I remember her to thee,  
How sweet and fair she seems to be.  
Tell her that's young,  
And shuns to have her graces spied,  
That hadst thou sprung  
In deserts, where no men abide,  
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth  
Of beauty from the light retired;  
Bid her come forth,  
Suffer herself to be desired,  
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die, that she  
The common fate of all things rare  
May read in thee,  
How small a part of time they share  
That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

**OPAQUE.**—See "The Family Doctor" on "The Care of the Hands," *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 103.

**PERPLEXED HOUSEKEEPER** can darken her mahogany furniture by using a special polish, applied on the top of the French polish: One pint linseed-oil, one ounce rose-pink, one ounce of alkanet-root, beaten up in a metal mortar; let the mixture stand for a day or two, then pour off the oil, which will be found of a rich colour. To apply the staining polish, fold a piece of flannel into a sort of cushion, wet it well with the polish, then lay a piece of clean linen rag over the flannel; apply one drop of the coloured oil. Rub in a circular direction, lightly at first, then with the grain of the wood. Polish with old woollen rag.

**SAVOURY.**—There are several kinds of Ramequins. We give you two good recipes; the first is Gouffé's, the second Lady Harriet St. Clair's. 1. "Put in a stewpan two ounces of butter, half a pint of water, a seasoning of salt and pepper; boil, take the stewpan off the fire, mix in a quarter of a pound of flour, and stir with a wooden spoon over the fire for five minutes; then add a quarter of a pound of grated Parmesan cheese and three eggs, one at a time. Put the paste on to some baking-sheets in portions about the size of a small egg; brush them over with egg, and put a little heap of Gruyere cheese, cut in small pieces, on the top of each. Bake the puffs in an oven heated to a light brown-paper temperature, and serve them hot." 2. "Melt one ounce of butter; mix into it a spoonful of flour and a little salt; stir for a few minutes over the fire. Have ready boiled half a pint of milk and a quarter one of cream. Pour this on the butter and flour by degrees, and work it perfectly smooth. Take the pan off the fire and add half a pound of grated Parmesan cheese, a little pepper, a very little powdered sugar, the yolks of eight eggs, and the whites of two well beaten. When well mixed add the other six whites, beaten to a froth. It should then be about the consistency of cream. Fill paper cases, but not quite to the top, and bake in a slow oven eighteen minutes."

**SEEKING D.**—The words are spoken to Fedalma by Don Silva in "The Spanish Gypsy":

Dear, I trusted you as  
Holy men trust God. You could do nought  
That was not pure and loving—though the deed  
Might pierce me unto death. You had less trust  
Since you suspected mine. 'Twas wicked doubt.

**TURNCOAT.**—

Their feet through faithless leather met the dirt,  
And oftener changed their principles than shirt.

These lines occur in Young's "Epistle to Mr. Pope," line 277.

**VEGETARIAN.**—The *Agaricus* is a large and important genus of fungi, characterised by having a fleshy cap or pileus, and a number of radiating plates or gills, on which are produced the naked spores. The majority of this species are furnished with stems, but some are attached to the objects on which they grow by their pileus. Over a thousand species are known, and are arranged in five sections according as the colour of their spores is white, pink, brown, purple, or black. Many of the species are edible like the common mushroom, and supply a delicious article of food, while others are deleterious and even poisonous. Several treatises have been written on the subject of the *Agaricus* as an article of diet, but the difficulty of distinguishing those which are harmless from those which are poisonous is so great that there is little hope of their being brought into general use.

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FAMILIAR IN THEIR MOUTHS AS HOUSEHOLD WORDS.—Shakespeare.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS,

No. 157.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 1884.

[VOL. VI.]

## Lisle's Courtship.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

### CHAPTER I.

"AND now to see Lisle in all his glory," thought I as I swung up the avenue to Lisle's new abode, in Lisle's own new dog-cart, driven by Lisle's own new coachman, behind Lisle's own new bay horse. For since I had last seen him, Lisle's ship had come in, in the shape of a coffin for his old uncle, and George Arthur Lisle reigned at North Arlington in that uncle's stead.

"I am monarch of all I survey," he wrote to me; "the old chap's will there is none to dispute, so now that I have got things straightened up a little, just come down on the 15th and stay as long as you can. There is a fancy dress ball on the 17th, and if the frost holds, you will be able to skate the soles of your feet off."

Such an invitation was not to be resisted. Lisle as an Etonian, Lisle as an undergraduate, I had known; but Lisle as a man of property I had not known. He was evidently as much delighted with his new possession (left to him over his father's head by his crotchety old uncle) as a child with a new toy. He had, I heard, offered it to his father immediately, but that parent, emulating the generosity of the son, had insisted on his keeping it, being extremely satisfied with his own home in Cliveshire, and thinking, as most Cliveshire people do, that to leave it would be to leave the very focus of politics, enlightenment, and art, the one great centre on which the eyes of the inhabitants of all the other less favoured counties are enviously fixed.

It was a dark winter evening, and nothing was to be seen of the house as I drove up, save a blaze of ruddy light in the hall. In a moment Lisle had rushed out, and was shaking me warmly by the hand, a process which he continued for some time, and from which he only desisted to clap me with equal warmth upon the back.

In another moment I was swept into an armchair by a blazing fire, and Lisle was pouncing upon a tray in the corner, on which I descried a decanter and steaming jug of hot water, flanked by a promising looking tumbler with a spoon in it. Oh, a bachelor's house, what a comfortable thing it is! The reflection naturally suggested another, not so pleasant, and I said as I held my hands to the blaze:

"If a certain report is true, I suppose there will soon be someone here who will put a stop to this sort of thing, and introduce tea in its stead."

Lisle rattled the tumblers.

"Yes," I went on; "I heard a report that you were going to be married."

"Ahem!" said Lisle; "I've heard a report of the same kind myself, but I don't know if there is any truth in it."

"Not quite made up your mind, perhaps?" I hinted delicately.

"Not made up my mind! I should rather think I had, though!" retorted Lisle. "My mind has been made up some time."

"Young lady, perhaps, not quite made up hers?"

"Yes, I expect she has," returned Lisle with increasing warmth. "I expect she has made it up one way or the other. She has had time enough."

"Then where is the difficulty?" I enquired, for I saw from Lisle's expression that difficulty there was of some kind.

"Why, the difficulty is," growled Lisle, throwing himself into a chair, "to know what to do next."

"Well," said I courageously, "if I were you, my dear fellow, I should—it's a bold step, no doubt—but, upon my word, I should propose!"

"Propose!" repeated Lisle in great scorn. "Heavens above, Mostyn, do you take me for a fool? Propose! Didn't I propose to her last week in the drawing-room at South Arlington, with a confounded brute of a canary-bird making such a row I couldn't hear a word I was saying? Propose, indeed!"

I gaped.

"Parents?" I hazarded at last.

"Parents—no, she has no parents," replied Lisle. "That is," he added, correcting himself, "none except her mother. Oh, Mostyn," burst out the disconsolate lover in a melancholy tone, "I'm the most wretched fellow going! I have got into a hole, and there is not a soul to talk it over with. Hugh is here, of course; he came this

afternoon; but what is the use of a fellow who thinks of nothing from morning till night but cog-wheels and iron cranks, and who is soldering a tin pail at this moment in the workshop? He's no good. Now, you, Mostyn, old fellow, friend of my childhood, and all that——"

"Well, fire away, then," I said, laughing, which he did immediately and at great length.

He confided to me, as if he were conferring a benefit upon me, the young lady's name. It was O'Neill—Miss O'Neill. Her christian-name was——

"Her christian-name," interrupted I with that innate knowledge of Irish character so peculiar to the free-born Briton, "is Patsy."

"Patsy!" retorted Lisle with a snort of contempt. "Patsy, indeed! Sounds like a bit of butter at the end of a knife. Her name is Averil."

"Averil—ah, beautiful!" murmured I.

"Ave for short, you know," added Lisle gravely.

"Just so—Ave for short. Go on."

Lisle went on to say that Miss O'Neill was the heiress of the adjoining property of South Arlington, and possessed of a mother with a mania for chickens and new-laid eggs, whose manner to her friends was cordial, or very much the reverse, according to the state of the poultry-yard.

If the hens had been laying well, she would be in a good-humour, but in the moulting season she was very uncertain, and if the cocks had been fighting—well, in fact, she was devoted to her fowls. She had just got a new one, a double-barrelled Brahama Poultra Cochinn Fowler—so Lisle said—which she seemed to care much more about than her daughter.

"What a hopeless sort of woman to have anything to do with! But to return to Miss O'Neill. You proposed to her last week?"

"Friday at three o'clock," replied Lisle. "Started from here at half-past two, got there at three. Shown into the drawing-room. Nobody there. Suddenly thought now was the time. No intentions at starting, merely afternoon call, you understand. Felt very undecided. Thought I would wait till another day. Door opened. Miss O'Neill without her mother. Thought I had better not wait till another day, but get it over at once. And really, Mostyn," continued Lisle confidentially, "once started, do you know, it was not half so bad as one would think. I was quite surprised at myself. I never thought I could have done it so well."

"And what did she say?"

"Oh, she did not say anything at first. You see I was talking all the time. And at last when I came to the point, she did not say anything either. I begged her to give me an answer, if it was only one word. I could hardly hear myself speak for the canary. Then she turned away her head and said something, and for the life of me, Mostyn, I could not make out what it was. At that moment the door opened, and in marched Mrs. O'Neill with an apronful of little chickens. They had all got croup or something, and she looked daggers at me, and sent Averil out for some chopped egg. I waited as long as I dared, and tried to take an interest in them, and said I had had an egg myself for breakfast. But she did not come back, and at last I caught up my hat and took my leave, not knowing if I were accepted or rejected."

"Of course you called next day and learned your fate?"

"Of course I called, but I did not learn my fate. I only saw Mrs. O'Neill, and directly she came into the room I knew by her face something was wrong. Whether it was only the chickens, or disapproval of me, I could not tell, but her manner was so icy that I dared not utter a word of what I had come about, and after ten minutes I could bear it no longer, and I bolted."

"Without seeing the young lady?"

"Yes; I heard her once in the hall, but she did not come in. That looked bad, didn't it? It's a confoundedly awkward position, Mostyn, not knowing if one is accepted or rejected. What am I to do?"

"Why, of course you must ask her again. It's the most obvious thing in life."

"I'll see myself at Jericho first," exclaimed Lisle with warmth. "Ask her again! Second edition of the canary-bird. No, I thank you. If you can't give a fellow better advice than that, you had better 'coil up,' as the Americans say."

"I don't know what else to suggest."

"Anyhow you must think of something, for I am not going to do that. I'll tell you what I'll do. She is sure to be skating at the South Pool to-morrow, and we will all three drive over, and you will see her, and notice how she goes on, and then after that (you always were a sharp fellow, Mostyn) you might be able to judge, or anyhow to suggest something, for you know I can't go on like this much longer."

"And this will be your first meeting since your interesting



confession?" said I, flattered. "Yes, when I see you together, I don't think I can fail to make out which way the wind lies. All the same, Lisle, the obvious thing is to ask her again."

"Catch me!" growled Lisle under his breath.

## CHAPTER II.

"NEVER mind the breakfast-bell," Lisle said to me, as we went upstairs to bed. "It does not mean that anyone is down. The old butler, who is a very punctual old chap, only rings it when breakfast is ready to come in and he is getting tired of waiting. He rang it five times the other day. It pleases him, and it doesn't hurt me."

Accordingly the next morning I allowed the bell to ring several times before I thought it necessary to go down. As I went down the passage I passed a door, from within which came the sound of a deep voice, singing in melancholy and sepulchral tones:

"Drink, puppy, drink, and let every puppy drink  
That is old enough to lap and to . . ."

Here the voice failed to get up to the note required, and after a praiseworthy attempt, which was not altogether successful, began again.

I hurried downstairs.

"Good-morning, Mostyn. Splendid day. Eight degrees of frost," exclaimed Lisle in his cheery voice, stamping his feet and slapping himself the while, as he stood before the brisk fire in the dining-room.

"Oh, then it was not you who were singing in that entrancing manner as I came down!"

"Not I. It must have been Hugh. He generally tunes up in his bath. Eggs and bacon, Mostyn, or some fried ham, or one of these things—what do you call 'em?—fish puffs."

"What an eye you have for breakfasts," I said admiringly. "One might be at Cambridge."

"I rather pride myself on my breakfasts, certainly," replied Lisle complacently. "Now that is one of the things a woman can't understand. My dear mother used always to think that so long as there was cold meat on the sideboard, and a boiled egg, with a spoon beside it, on the table, it was as much as mortal man could require."

Here we heard a step in the distance, and a sound as of a funeral dirge.

"Hugh, I declare!" cried Lisle, as the door opened, and Hugh, a tall, pleasant-looking lad of nineteen, appeared.

"Good-morning, my boy. Have some eggs and bacon? Splendid stuff for filling up a vacuum."

"Good-morning, Mostyn," said Hugh with dignity, ignoring his brother's insulting allusion to his favourite hobby. "There has been a good frost. I hope you have got your skates with you."

"Oh, as to that," broke in the incorrigible Lisle, "I dare say if you have forgotten them, Hugh will turn you out a pair in no time, with this engine he has brought home. He will get a bit of old iron-railing, and the top of an Albert biscuit-box, and put them into the boiler, and get up steam, and the thing will be done in no time—eh, Hugh?"

"Shut up," said Hugh, elongating into a smile the largest mouth I had ever seen.

"He's such a fellow for iron," went on Lisle to me. "I know if ever he is in love he will make his fair one a cast-iron fan, or pave the way to her affections with a donkey-engine."

"I say, George, look here—shut up, I say," said Hugh again, whom nature had not endowed with much power of repartee.

"Unless," continued Lisle, unheeding, "he is prematurely cut off, owing to over-exertion of the inventive faculties. He looks pale, doesn't he? Just the sort of chap to invent a screw and die young—eh?"

Here Hugh, plunging suddenly into the conversation, managed after a desperate effort to change the subject.

After breakfast Lisle carried me off to the stables, and then showed me the house, of which, with its long, panelled passages, its pictured, octagon drawing-room, and its fine stone hall, any man might have been proud. But all the while that he was doing the honours inside and outside the house, I could see he was inwardly chafing to be off to the South Pool, where he hoped to meet Miss O'Neill, and he gave a sigh of relief when at last we were all three seated in the dog-cart, and he could gather up the reins, and tell the groom "to let go his head."

There was not much conversation, for Lisle was apparently intent on his driving, and Hugh began to sing to himself in a low, monotonous voice, softly keeping time with his woollen-gloves upon his knees.

"There is the pool," said Lisle at last, pointing to a large piece of water at a little distance, "and there she is on it too, by Jove!"

How Lisle could ascertain that fact, when the bank prevented

our seeing anything but a number of heads gliding up and down, was to me miraculous, but on a nearer survey it appeared he was right.

"You get out with Mostyn. I'll drive the horse up to the farm," said Hugh good-naturedly; but Lisle, who seemed to have become suddenly nervous, said he would take the horse up himself, and join us in five minutes.

"Keep your eyes open," he whispered to me as I got down, and I nodded assent.

"Hugh Lisle, by Jove!" exclaimed a chorus of voices as we reached the bank, and in a moment Hugh was surrounded, and warmly shaken hands with.

All seemed to hail his arrival with pleasure. Young ladies came skimming up to shake hands; little boys on their skates for the first time, roared to him to come and see how they were getting on; while little girls, holding on to his coat, begged that he would devote his morning exclusively to pushing them up and down on chairs.

"And who is this lost sheep at whose return there is so much rejoicing?" said a clear, ringing voice. "Mr. Lisle, junior, by all that's wonderful! Oh, ye cranks and boilers! I have been taken by surprise. Support me, somebody. I feel faint."

"I would have written if I had thought," replied Hugh with a perfectly grave face, but with a twinkle in his eye. "But, cheer up, Miss O'Neill. Erin go bragh! There, I learned that especially for you. I don't know what it means, but I knew you would like it."

"You learned that?" cried Miss O'Neill, clasping her hands: "you learned that—by heart?"

"I did."

"And this," said Miss O'Neill, addressing the company in an emphatic manner, "this, gentlemen and ladies—I mean ladies and gentlemen—including the distinguished-looking stranger on the bank whom Mr. Lisle has omitted to introduce to us—this, I repeat, is the man who informed us that he could commit nothing to memory. What a touching instance of youthful modesty have we before us!"

"I never said I could not commit anything to memory," retorted Hugh, who seldom relished being made conspicuous. "I only said I could not remember it when I had."

There was a general laugh, and Miss O'Neill assured Hugh that she sympathised with him entirely, that having been precisely her own case in her youth, and that when once she had really got anything into her brain, wild horses could not extract it again from that retentive organ. A cynical young Cantab murmured something about that often being the case with women, when they had once harboured an idea, but he was not heard.

At this moment a small knot of boys made a rush at Hugh, demanding clamorously that he should come and show them some new figure—the last Birkenhead tip—in the way of skating. Hugh, be it known, was attached to a great shipbuilding yard at Birkenhead, where for a considerable premium he was having his eyes opened to the internals of steamboats, and machinery in general.

He accordingly leisurely proceeded to dazzle us by a suicidal exhibition mainly performed in the air, and on the toe of one skate, which took our breath away.

"It was only the 'hop threes,'" he explained simply, when it was over. He had seen a man do it at Birkenhead.

"I can't even do a common 'three,'" said Miss O'Neill, shaking her head. "I can only manage my inside and outside edges."

"Can you do your outside edge backwards?" said Hugh slowly, looking intently at her, as if her life depended on her answer.

"A little."

"Ah, then I can teach you a 'three' in no time. Come and try. There is better ice lower down."

At this moment Lisle came up to us on his skates, and raised his cap nervously.

"Let us go, then," she said, giving her hand to Hugh, and bowing to Lisle. Lisle and I watched them skate away together.

Miss O'Neill was a tall, fine-looking girl with neat ankles. She wore her hair, her female friends lamented, "just like a man," though anything more unlike the *chevelure* of a man than Miss O'Neill's curly crop of brown-gold hair could hardly be imagined, especially when surmounted, as it was on the present occasion, by a closely-fitting crimson cap, or, as my sisters would in their superior knowledge call it, a *toque*.

"Going off like that looks bad, doesn't it?" said Lisle grimly, watching the graceful retreating figure.

"Not in the least," replied I encouragingly; "perhaps she is—I do not stick at trifles, but for the life of me I could not suggest, as I meant to have done, that she might be shy!"

We followed them slowly down the pool to a quiet corner, where Hugh had begun his instructions.

"There is no difficulty," he was explaining eagerly; "you start on your inside edge forwards, and finish on your outside backwards."

"Just exactly what will happen, I should think," growled Lisle

in an undertone. "I say, Mostyn, can't you call off Hugh, and stop him making a fool of himself."

I did not see that Hugh was doing so, but just at that moment Miss O'Neill, having been persuaded to try, and assured by Hugh that a fall was out of the question, lost her balance as Hugh roared, "Turn—now turn!" and turning with a vengeance, came down with a whack which made the ice ring, and caused several other inexperienced skaters to start, look round, and lose their balance also.

Miss O'Neill was up, and holding by Hugh's arm in a moment, and laughed merrily as we eagerly asked if she were hurt. She declared she should have been had she not fallen on her head, which, however, was proof against anything.

"I came a howling cropper though, as I suppose you would call it in your dreadful slang!" she said, turning lightly to Lisle, and addressing him for the first time.

"I have left off talking slang," replied Lisle dryly. "It has become too effeminate."

"That accounts then for your powers of speech having become so limited," laughed the young lady, and she joined a knot of children at a little distance, and was soon seen running races with Hugh, each pushing a child on a chair before them, while the interesting little creatures kicked their legs, and urged their drivers to greater exertions.

"What in the name of Fortune could have induced you to speak to her like that?" I said to Lisle, as she went off.

"Don't you see she is doing all she can to torment me?" growled Lisle savagely. "But I don't care, I won't go near her all the rest of the day;" and turning a deaf ear to my vehement expostulations, he joined the main body of skaters, and performed great vines and serpentine with a gloomy and fixed countenance.

When, however, after an hour or so, Miss O'Neill was observed to be taking off her skates, or rather, to speak correctly, to be allowing an ardent Eton admirer to perform that office on his knees, Lisle expressed an opinion that the ice was getting cut up, and we might as well be going home. I agreed, and Hugh reluctantly complied.

"Could not we stay just half an hour longer?" he remonstrated, wiping his brow. "I've been skirmishing up and down with those little Browns, and they have gone at last, the little beggars, and I want to practise my new cut."

"Just as you like" said Lisle, with an air of exalted indifference to anything or anybody. "I don't care if we go or stay."

After that, Hugh felt that further remonstrance was useless, and, after one heavy groan, unclasped his acmes with a fairly good grace, and floundered up the bank after us.

"Can I order your carriage for you at the same time?" said Lisle, acting for the first time that day like a reasonable human being, and approaching Miss O'Neill, who was now on the bank too, with her skates slung upon her arm.

"Thank you, I will walk up to the farm and get in there," replied the young lady briskly. "It is not far."

Lisle took her skates from her, and we started, I falling back a little immediately, and obliging the obtuse Hugh to do the same, by evincing a great interest in the mechanism of his acmes, and wishing to be instructed as to the principle on which they were constructed.

"Well, you see this bar," began Hugh, tearing off his knitted gloves, and forgetting everything in the interest of the explanation, "you see this bar running across the sole of the foot. Well——"

"And pray, Mr. Lisle, junior," said Miss O'Neill, stopping, and turning to Hugh, "pray in what character may you be going to appear at the ball on Friday?"

"Me! Oh, I'm going as a mechanic," replied Hugh, as we all four walked on together. "One of the foremen has just got a new working suit, and he lent it to me for a bit of iron tubing and half-a-crown."

"Elegance combined with economy," exclaimed Miss O'Neill; "and if you come in with a screw loose anywhere about you, the costume will be complete. Now, Mr. Lisle," turning to George, "it is your turn. In what character are you intending to dazzle us?"

"I have not yet made up my mind," replied Lisle in measured tones, and looking straight before him.

I thought he must have forgotten that he was expecting his dress from Nathan's that very day.

"Can I suggest anything?" said Miss O'Neill mischievously. "A clock is very nice, and very uncommon too; one of those tall, old-fashioned clocks, you know, that one sees in cottages. One has nothing to do but stand in a dark corner and strike now and then. Or, perhaps," she continued, "you might prefer a character out of ancient history. Let me see. Could not you go as Noah? That would be very easily done. You would never have to go into the ball-room at all, but simply install yourself in the boathouse on the mere below the house, and let off a dove at intervals."

"You have not told us yet in what character you are going yourself," I struck in, seeing with astonishment that Lisle, usually so quick at banter and repartee, was not even attempting to parry Miss O'Neill's thrusts.

"Ah, you will see when the time comes," she replied, laughing. We had reached the farm, where her pony-carriage was already waiting.

"Good-bye, gentlemen, till Friday night," she said gaily, as she got in and took up the reins.

"You're coming to the ice to-morrow?" asked Hugh eagerly.

"No, *mon ami*, I am not, but console yourself, the little Browns will all be there. Adieu, adieu!"

"Erin go bragh!" shouted Hugh, as the pony-carriage rattled away, and he was rewarded by a grand flourish of the retreating whip.

### CHAPTER III.

LISLE had come home in such a bad temper, swearing at the horse, and blowing-up the unlucky groom sky-high who came to take it round, that I avoided all reference to Miss O'Neill and the events of the morning with the greatest care, and strolled off after luncheon to smoke in the workshop, and watch Hugh, who was putting the old lathe in order. He recounted to me in a fragmentary and rambling manner many adventures that had occurred to him at Birkenhead in the way of strikes, midnight attacks by navvies, and the like, all which he seemed to consider were in the natural course of events, which they may be at Birkenhead, for aught I know to the contrary.

"I would rather be caught by machinery than by navvies, any day," remarked Hugh deliberately, as if the choice had just been offered him, "though machinery can be very awkward if you don't take it the right way. I've been on trial trips when I had to take diagrams on a pair of perpendicular engines. That's dangerous if you like, especially if you're seasick, as I was. Perpendicular is not the word, though. But you know what I mean. Engines where the guide of the piston goes through the cylinder-cover."

Hugh's great mild eyes were fixed doubtfully upon me.

"Oh! ah! Yes. Just so," I said. "Cylinder-cover, don't you know."

"They were perpendicular, anyhow," resumed Hugh, "and there was a chopping sea, and I was awfully seasick and giddy. The cylinder-covers got black hot, and I had to crawl along the top of them to take the diagrams. Touchy work, that. You have to look pretty sharp, I can tell you; for, if you get above the piston guide, you will be knocked to smithereens by it through the skylight, and if you fall off you will get smashed by the crank."

With these and many similar anecdotes Hugh regaled me until I judged it safe to return to Lisle. By dinner-time the ill-temper of the latter had completely evaporated, and, though he remained somewhat silent and gloomy for one of his very cheerful temperaments, still he was able to take a healthy interest in the unpacking of his fancy dress after dinner, which Hugh did in the study, in order that we might inspect it by candlelight.

As the evening wore on, Lisle, at my instigation, and after repeated admonitions from Hugh to "boil ahead," summarily related to his brother what he had told me at greater length, and explained the difficulty in which he at present found himself. Hugh received the narration with an expression of solemnity, unbroken even by a "my golly!" (his favourite expression), while he glanced with a mixture of awe and admiration at his brother, who had been capable of such a feat as to make a proposal, "and to a woman too," as he afterwards confided to me. The subject of what was to be done was again discussed, and we both entreated Lisle to propose to her again, and, as Hugh expressed it, give her another chance; but Lisle was obdurate.

"Write to her, then," suggested Hugh, "and tell her to answer back one way or the other, and get her mother and the clergyman, or someone, to sign the letter. Get it in black and white, George. That is the way we do business at Birkenhead."

But Lisle turned a deaf ear to the voice of the charmer.

"What do you expect us to do," said Hugh sleepily. "I am sure, my dear fellow, I would do anything in life to help you, if I could only see my way."

Lisle growled, and we relapsed for a while into our pipes and silence.

"I have it!" said Lisle suddenly.

"What?" I cried, starting up.

"I've got it," went on Lisle, unheeding. "It's the simplest thing in life. He shall go to-morrow."

"Who? Where?"

"Hugh," replied Lisle; and, getting up, he shook his brother's arm, crying: "Hugh, I say, wake up, will you? I've thought of something."

"Well," said Hugh, rubbing his eyes, "what's the matter now?"

"I've thought of something," repeated Lisle, conscious that so notable a fact would bear repetition, "and you must do it, Hugh. Didn't you say, a few minutes ago, you would do anything in life for me?"

Hugh did not seem to recall it.

"You always were a good chap," said Lisle affectionately. "I know you will help me at a pinch."

"Oh, mercy!" gasped Hugh, wincing. "What is it you want me to do?"

"Only to drive over to South Arlington to-morrow," replied Lisle; "surely you won't stick at driving three miles for my sake, Hugh?"

"There's something behind," said Hugh uneasily.

"We'll talk that over to-morrow," replied Lisle. "I have not got it quite clear in my head yet. Of course it would be no good your just driving there and back. That would not help me much, I should think."

"I know there is something behind," said Hugh with a groan; "there is now, isn't there, George?"

"Good-night!" said Lisle.

The next morning as I dressed I could hear no matutinal dirge issuing from Hugh's apartment. His mind evidently misgave him on the subject of South Arlington. Presently, shortly after the second ringing of the breakfast-bell, a door banged, and I heard Lisle's brisk step in the passage. It stopped at Hugh's door.

"Let me in, I say," shouted Lisle, rattling the handle.

"Can't," came a deep response; "I'm in my bath."

"Bother! You're always in your bath. Look here!"

"Well!"

"Leave off that splashing, will you, and listen?"

"Look sharp then, it's precious cold."

"Put on your new brown suit with the giraffe buttons," said Lisle emphatically, with his mouth evidently and needlessly applied to the keyhole; "and mind you shave right up to your ear this time. You didn't yesterday. Do you hear?"

There was a growl of assent, and the splashing was renewed with a vigour that precluded any further conversation.

"What can your motive be in sending Hugh over to South Arlington, instead of going yourself?" I asked Lisle as we sat at breakfast, before Hugh had come down.

"My dear Mostyn," replied Lisle, who was in the most charming spirits this morning, "I intend by means of Hugh to find out whether Miss O'Neill has accepted me or not."

"You could do that just as well, if not better, by going yourself, or by writing."

"But I will not go or write, as I have said before. I won't give her such a pull over me. She would be always throwing it in my teeth when we were married that I had to ask her twice. And so," continued Lisle, "I mean to get to know, without having any hand in it myself."

"And how on earth is that to be done?"

"How!" repeated Lisle in a tone of triumph, somewhat muffled by buttered toast. "Ah, that is another thing. It has to be done, but how?"

Here Hugh entered in what he told me afterwards was his best Sunday-go-to-meeting suit, and with a chin which Lisle complimented him on being "as smooth as the top of the governor's head."

The exquisite shave, however, of Hugh's chin did not make the contrast between it and his upper lip as marked as could be wished. Hugh's moustache was in that stage in which it was quite invisible to the naked eye against the light, and in the light had the somewhat unhappy effect of leading the beholder to believe that the use of soap-and-water had been accidentally partial. Still, Hugh in his brown suit looked as pleasant and gentlemanly a lad as I have ever met. He was not handsome like his brother, but I doubt whether to many people Hugh's was not the pleasanter face of the two.

"When have I to go to South Arlington?" he asked uneasily, as he settled down to his breakfast.

"The dog-cart is already ordered to be round at half-past eleven," said Lisle, with an emphasis on the "already," as if to show the victim that all the arrangements had been made, and to struggle was useless.

"I don't care if I do go," observed Hugh with a very feeble laugh.

"That's all right," rejoined his brother cheerfully.

"Of course you'll come too?" continued Hugh doubtfully.

"I shall not have the pleasure of accompanying you," replied Lisle composedly. "I purpose showing Mostyn the grounds this morning."

"I think I'll stop and see the grounds too," said Hugh with great alacrity.

"There would hardly be time before you started," replied Lisle.

"But why should I go at all?" broke out Hugh. "What in the name of fortune am I to do when I get there, I should like to know?"

"Listen to me," said Lisle, and after explaining his reasons for wishing to find out how matters stood without applying to the young lady herself, he went on slowly: "What you have to do now in order to find this out is—to propose to Miss O'Neill yourself."

The egg-spoon on its way to Hugh's mouth was stopped in mid-career, and slowly lowered into his coffee-cup.

"Now don't speak, either of you," said Lisle, raising his hand: "but listen to me. I have been turning it over in my mind all night, and it's as simple as possible. If you are half sharp, Hugh, it need never get to a proposal. All I want you to do is to make Miss O'Neill think you have come to propose. What is the good of that, you want to know? The greatest possible good. You make a sort of beginning, say you have come for a particular reason—as you have—and drop something about your feeling sure she is aware of your attachment, etc., and then, seeing what is coming, she will stop you at once, and say: 'Surely you know I am engaged to your brother?'"

"A very good idea," I struck in, "and then, Hugh, you have only to say you were fully aware of this already, and had come to tell her how delighted you were, new sister, etc., and the thing is done, and you rattle home as fast as you can."

"But what if she doesn't stop me when I've got as far as that? Suppose she lets me go on?" suggested Hugh suspiciously.

"Well, in that case you would have to go on," said Lisle decidedly, "and make her a regular offer. You must get at the truth somehow. Of course, when she refuses you, you must try and look as cut up as you can, and then beg her to tell you if there were anyone else who had been beforehand with you, and to whom her affections were already engaged. If she owns as much as that, it is enough for me. If she does not care for me, I am at least certain she does not care for anyone else. I've watched her too closely."

"I won't do any such thing," broke out Hugh with a sudden burst of righteous indignation; "I vow I won't. Proposing is next door to marrying, and I don't want to marry her, or any woman living. Silly, screaming things, who hang on to you when they see a bit of machinery at work."

"And then," continued Lisle, "not a soul except Mostyn would ever know, and I would tell Miss O'Neill myself afterwards how you were put up to it by me, and make it all right. I can't face her at the ball to-night unless I know how the land lies. I can't, indeed. Come, Hugh, don't turn rusty, but help me at a pinch, there is a good fellow."

Hugh had risen, and was standing looking out of the window. Lisle went up to him, and put his hand on his shoulder. Hugh shook his head and left the room. Lisle followed him, and I remained alone. As they did not return, I dispatched my breakfast, which I had till then almost forgotten, and, unwilling to disturb them, lit my pipe and paced up and down on the terrace before the house.

It was an extraordinary idea, this. Would it succeed? I was naturally doubtful about any plan not proposed by myself, and yet—

I must have been pacing up and down some time when Lisle joined me.

"He has promised to go," he said, linking his arm in mine. "I wish to goodness he had gone and come back, that is all. I don't know what I shall do for the next two hours."

I, who had the prospect of passing those two hours *tit-a-tit* with Lisle, wished they were over too.

"I've lent him my gold pin," continued Lisle, "and my new dogskin gloves. I thought he ought not to go in those knitted things—eh, Mostyn?"

"Of course not."

"He is sure to find her in, I think," went on Lisle uneasily. "She does not often go out in the morning, and it is just the time her mother is always in the chicken-houses."

"It's uncommonly good of him to go," I said.

"Yes, he's a good fellow, is Hugh," replied Lisle carelessly. "I have never known him refuse to do a thing I have asked him; he thinks a lot of me."

As Lisle finished speaking, there was a sound of wheels, and the dog-cart came round to the front door.

"Bless my soul! I had no idea it was so late," cried Lisle, rushing into the house, and upstairs.

He presently returned with Hugh, who shrugged his shoulders despairingly at seeing me, while Lisle helped him on with his ulster, and told him he might drive himself all the way if he liked. But Hugh's mind was not in a state to receive comfort even from a box-seat, and he shook his head dismally. We watched the dog-cart roll quickly away, and then turned indoors.

Oh, Heaven, what a time I had of it that morning! It was in vain I suggested that Lisle should show me the grounds, as he had proposed. No; there was nothing to see at this time of year, and the fields were as hard as a bone. Would he have a game of billiards, then? No, he would not. The table was undersized, and a bad one into the bargain. What would he do, then? Would he try on his fancy dress? It might be as well to see if it were all right, and all the buttons on. No, he would not. Perhaps (with an awful frown) he might never wear it at all. Perhaps he might never go to the ball. No; he would do nothing but stand on the hearthrug, tread on the tails of the dogs, and effectually prevent any effort on my part to read a book, write a letter, or otherwise employ myself. At last he providentially remembered he had to write and blow up his tailor about his last suit, and he grimly set to work to indite an epistle which would have struck terror to the heart of a Poole.

"There, that will teach him to make them baggy at the knees again," he growled, throwing me the letter to read.

"Good gracious, Lisle," I said, "you mustn't send that. They'll have you up for libel."

I induced him to tear it up and begin another.

"Quarter to one," I murmured to myself. "Thank Heaven! Hugh may be here any moment now."

As Lisle closed and stamped his second letter the front door was heard to open and shut, and Hugh's step came across the hall. I looked at Lisle. He had dropped the letter, and was staring fixedly at the door.

It opened, and a shadow, a ghost of the former Hugh, entered, and sank into the nearest chair.

"Well?" cried Lisle and I both together.

"I did as you told me," murmured Hugh in a sepulchral and almost inaudible voice. "I asked her, and——"

"And what?"

"And she accepted me!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

AN awful silence followed Hugh's last words. I looked from Hugh to Lisle, and back again. Lisle was pale, but Hugh was paler. It might have been an hour, or it might have been three minutes afterwards (I expect it was somewhere between the two), when Lisle struck his fist on the table, and said—well, it was a short and expressive monosyllable, but I will not repeat it here.

"I must be saved," gasped Hugh hysterically. "I did not do it of my own accord."

"I cannot believe it," I said. "Thank Heaven, the plan was none of mine!"

"I don't believe it," said Lisle abruptly, but with an imploring glance at his brother. "Hugh, it's impossible."

"It's true, though," groaned poor Hugh. "I wish it wasn't. It's the most dreadful thing I ever heard of. Why, I suppose I'm engaged to her."

The thought was overpowering, and Hugh hid his face in his hands.

"What on earth is to be done?" said Lisle, looking at me as a shipwrecked sailor might be supposed to do at a sail on the far horizon. "Mostyn, what can we do?"

"You must do something, and that quick," broke out Hugh in a hoarse voice, without raising his head. "I won't bear it. I was led, I was pushed, I was driven into it by you two. You two got me in, and you two must get me out."

"I can't say I think you are the one to be pitied," remarked Lisle almost savagely. "I don't see what you've got to complain of."

"Yes, I am—yes, I have," replied Hugh, raising a pale, desperate face. "I never wanted to marry her. I don't want to marry her now. I don't want to marry anybody."

If Hugh's distress at this overwhelming calamity had been a shade less genuine I must have smiled.

"I suppose half the county will know it to-night," said Lisle sarcastically. "Of course at the ball you will dance with no one but her."

"I won't go to the ball!" almost screamed Hugh, running his hands wildly through his hair. "I won't see her. I'll go up to London and break my leg."

Why going up to London seemed in Hugh's mind to imply breaking his leg I do not know, except that, perhaps, being Clique-shire bred, he considered any journey beyond the limits of his county as preposterous, revolutionary, Whiggish, and fraught with more danger than the trip to Jericho, which we are all so frequently recommended to take by our friends.

At this moment, just when our feelings were wrought to the highest pitch, the door opened, and—I regret to have to write it, but the prosaic fact remains the same—the butler announced that luncheon was ready. Luncheon! what had we to do with cold pheasant, and veal pie, with Stilton cheese and Bath Olivers, at a crisis

like this? It was an insult! Yet life is chequered, so to speak, with luncheons, with meals in general. They follow us through our whole life, and not unfrequently hasten us into the grave. A dish of lampreys has been known to have a deleterious effect, and the genus lobster has caused many an order for family mourning at Messrs. Jays'. Who, too, has not been dashed from the heights of romance to the dead level of prosaic existence by a dressing-bell? Who, when returning from a prolonged saunter in the Lovers' Walk with that nice girl in blue, has not been harassed by the thought that they will, on their return, be late for luncheon, and have to take their places with unconstrained countenances, after every one else is seated, and under the very eye of the blue girl's mamma.

On this occasion, however, I hailed the announcement of the butler with fervent thankfulness. The momentous subject was for the time abandoned, and I plied Lisle and Hugh with unimportant questions and remarks during the meal, gradually leading the conversation (if that can be called conversation which is sustained by one person) round to the subject of machinery, in the hope of interesting the latter. The mention of iron was to Hugh as the trumpet to the war-horse, and though he responded but feebly at first, he gradually took fire, and was soon deep in an explanation of the principle of something or other, and illustrating his meaning by drawing geometrical figures with his nail upon the table-cloth as he went on.

When, however, luncheon was over, Hugh recollected himself with a sigh, and his face settled into a look of the deepest dejection. Gradually we extracted from him a detailed account of the whole transaction—how he had arrived; how he was shown into the drawing-room where Miss O'Neill was trying over some new music; how she received him with great good-nature, and told him her mother was in the chicken-houses, and so she must try to make herself doubly agreeable. Hugh then related how, after waiting as long as he dared, he, as he styled it, began. How when he had got to the place where she ought to have interrupted him, he came to a full stop, and waited, but he waited in vain. Miss O'Neill said nothing. She looked up at him suddenly with a curious sparkle in her eyes, and then, fixing them on the ground, remained silent, though he could see she was smiling.

"At last," said Hugh with a heavy sigh, "I went on, and made her a regular offer. When I had done speaking I suddenly felt what an awful thing it was, and it came over me like a flash how attentive she had been to me on the ice the day before. If I had thought of it, I never would have asked her. She looked up, and just said 'Yes.' You might have knocked me down with a sledge-hammer."

"Are you certain?" I enquired. "Was not the canary singing?"

"I am quite certain," asseverated Hugh; "if you'll bring me the biggest book in the world, I'll swear upon it! And the canary was not singing at all. It was only hopping up and down on its perches. Miss O'Neill had covered the cage with a duster when——"

"When she saw you driving up, I suppose," said Lisle, "in order to prevent further mistakes. Go on."

"When she began to practise," said Hugh dubiously.

"And what did you say when Miss O'Neill accepted you?" I asked.

"I said she had better think it over before she quite made up her mind," replied Hugh simply. "I'm not sure I didn't advise her to take a day or two to decide, as she might think better of it."

"Really, Hugh!" I exclaimed, nearly choking.

"And I begged her to try and think if there were not anyone who had been beforehand with me, and whom she liked better."

"And what did she say to that?"

"Oh, she laughed, and said she had decided, and she was sure she should never have reason to repent her choice. She laughed a good deal, and she looked awfully pleased. I should really have told her how it was, if it had not been for that; but she looked so beaming I had not the heart to do it. And then," Hugh coughed, and cast a deprecating glance at his brother, "then, George, after that, I really could not help it, but——"

"You kissed her, I suppose?" said Lisle sharply.

"No, indeed, I didn't," replied Hugh eagerly. "I held on to a chair. She did it of her own accord."

I could bear no more. It was unfeeling, unkind, but I could not help it. I laid my head on the table, and laughed till the tears came into my eyes. When I recovered myself Hugh's mouth had lengthened almost to his ears, and though Lisle grumbled something about "an unsympathetic beggar," his face had assumed a more natural expression than it had worn since Hugh's return.

Little remained for the latter to tell. On taking his leave, he had again begged Miss O'Neill to take time, and desired that for the next few days she would not mention what had occurred to her mother, hinting that he had not consulted his own parents yet, and

that most likely they would not consent. With this ardent and loverlike assurance Hugh bolted, and though he fancied he heard Miss O'Neill's voice calling him back, rushed out of the house, and into the dog-cart, and whipping the horse into a hand-gallop, returned the way he came.

#### CONCLUSION.

At North Arlington on that afternoon there were great searchings of heart. Of course the two brothers absolutely refused to go to the ball. A certain conjecture had, however, occurred to me as I turned over Hugh's narrative in my mind, which gradually became a settled conviction. I hinted it to poor Lisle, who was marching up and down between two lines of frozen pear-trees in the kitchen-garden in a pitiable condition. I whispered it to the still more wretched Hugh, who had sought solace from his woes among the shavings of happier days in the workshop, and with a trembling hand was rubbing up his little model engine with an emery-paper. I worked upon the feelings of both; I reasoned, I cajoled, I held out hopes, I promised to mount the breach myself in their behalf. I carried the point; I stood over Lisle while he ordered the dinner to be served half an hour earlier (for we had a long drive before us), and desired the butler to lay out in my room the fancy dress, outgrown by himself, which he had promised to lend me for the occasion. In short, I prevailed.

After dinner, which was a gloomy performance enough, I was with Lisle's aid soon transformed into a gentleman of the last century, and received the pleasing assurance that Apollo's back was nothing to mine, and that I was killing.

"You're quite correct," said Lisle admiringly; "canary waist-coat, blue swallow-tailed coat, lace ruffles, rapier, and black satin etceteras. Beware of the etceteras, and remember to sit down quietly. I took a chair too rashly once, and the result was that I had to buy another pair."

Lisle then rushed away to adorn likewise, and presently reappeared every inch an earl, resplendent in white satin slashed with crimson; an exactly similar dress, according to Nathan, to one worn by Essex, Earl of Leicester. He was followed by an intelligent but blighted-looking young mechanic, and we were soon comfortably installed in the brougham that Lisle had inherited from his invalid old uncle, and rolling luxuriously in the direction of Skipton Manor, the house at which the ball was being given. There was little or no conversation, the thoughts of each continually reverting to the very painful subject of which by some tacit agreement we avoided speaking, and I was glad when at last the carriage came to a standstill, and shoutings, and lanterns, and stamping of horses, and footmen in white silk calves prancing on shadowy flights of steps, announced that we had arrived at our destination.

Then came the usual rush up the steps, the usual "hustle" with one's coat, the usual bawling of one's name, the usual graceful slide forward to the entrance of the ball-room, the bow of introduction to the lady of the house, who on this occasion almost filled the door, clad in the richest iron-coloured satin, and evidently got up as a cannon-ball—a new and quite original style of dress for a stout lady, which might be more generally adopted.

A valse was being played as we entered the ball-room, and I looked round for Miss O'Neill. The room was already crowded, and I did not see her, and soon became absorbed in watching the dancing and the different costumes. Here, a tall feeble curate was timidly holding on to a great bouncing Dresden shepherdess; there, a strapping young mechanic—Hugh himself, I declare!—was whirling past with a handsome young Queen of Scots, barely escaping a collision with Mephistopheles and a charity-school girl.

At last, as the valse stopped, Lisle, who was not dancing, jogged my elbow, and I saw Miss O'Neill advancing towards us on the arm of a policeman. Though Miss O'Neill was not the sort of girl I admire, still even I could not deny she looked wonderfully handsome. There was a sparkle and a colour about her, and a look of Irish wit and mischief that would have made a plain face attractive. As she came up to us, and, after shaking hands, raised her pretty eyebrows, and enquired after Hugh, I felt more sure than ever that that certain conjecture of mine was not far wrong.

It is needless to say that nothing would induce either of the brothers to ask her to dance, and though she afterwards went up to Hugh, and in the most engaging manner offered him a dance, he assured her he was engaged—as indeed, in one sense, he believed himself to be.

I at once begged for the dance which he had declined, and as I spoke the music struck up. I offered my arm with some trepidation. I was fairly in for it now. As she took it, her eyes met mine with a bright, frank look that set me at ease with her at once, and before the dance was over we were rallying each other about our different nationalities as if we had known each other all our lives.

"And so you would have known anywhere that I was Irish?"

laughed Miss O'Neill, seating herself in a low garden-chair in the conservatory, whither I had led her when the dance was over. "Thank Heaven, I have not become so degenerate by living in England that I am mistaken for a native!"

"No, indeed; though I dare say many of your friends have grossly flattered you to the contrary."

"The Lisles don't," said Miss O'Neill. "Mr. Lisle once told me I was very Irish."

"He has made the same remark to me," I observed with nonchalance.

"Has he?" and Miss O'Neill flashed a sudden, enquiring glance at my face.

Our eyes met again. I do not know what there was about that mutual glance, but she saw that I knew, and that I knew she saw.

"You see, Miss O'Neill," I said, taking the bull by the horns at last, "I am entirely in the confidence of the Lisles. I know everything. As you abhor bloodshed, murders, duels, and suicides, I conjure you for Heaven's sake to tell me which of the brothers you honoured by accepting, and then to forget that I asked you such a question."

No one could have been more astonished at such brazen effrontery on my part than I am myself as I look back upon it. It makes me tingle still whenever I remember it. But it succeeded.

"Which?" replied Miss O'Neill with perfect frankness, and in no wise offended. "I accepted both, yet they neither of them seem very eager to come forward, do they?"

"I thought as much," I exclaimed, surprised, nevertheless, at the correctness of my own surmise; "but in that case may I ask—"

"No, Mr. Mostyn, ask nothing, but listen to me. I suppose not the least among my indiscretions is speaking to you now in this way, in a grove of white camellias, under a very insecure-looking Chinese lamp. Oh dear, I am afraid I have committed nothing but indiscretions all my life!"

I thought it most probable she had, but I murmured something unintelligible to the contrary, and she went on:

"And now, pray, don't judge me as you would a countrywoman of your own, with a pursed-up mouth, and a prim, 'Let me refer you to papa;' or, 'Pray enquire of mamma;' or, 'Gain first the affections of my uncle and guardian;' or, 'Before proceeding farther, give proofs of the soundness of your religious principles to my maiden aunt'—don't compare me with these exalted creatures, I beg."

"Oh, not for a moment," I replied hastily.

And so to my attentive ear, Miss O'Neill recounted how she had accepted Lisle, and how much amusement his embarrassment had caused her, which she had not been at any loss to trace to its true source. How, when Hugh arrived, and began to enter the first stage of a proposal, just at the moment when she was about to stop him, and inform him of her engagement to his brother, the idea flashed upon her that he had been sent for that very purpose, and she suffered him to proceed, and then accepted him; partly, as she said, to see what he would look like, partly because the idea was irresistible, and partly to bring things to what she termed a crisis.

"You certainly succeeded," I remarked.

"Mr. Mostyn, if you had seen Hugh's face you would have done the same," replied Miss O'Neill. "The look of suspicious horror—it was irresistible. And when the blow fell—oh, I shall never forget his face as long as I live, and how he begged me to think better of it, and assured me he did not think his parents would consent. I nearly died of laughing when he had left the house."

"It was no laughing matter when he returned home, I can assure you," I replied somewhat absently. My eyes were fixed on the door of the conservatory, where Lisle was standing, pale and irresolute, twirling a fan (evidently not lost by Miss O'Neill) in his hand. Her eyes followed mine. At last he came slowly towards us, tall and handsome, through the green foliage. The music had struck up afresh, and the conservatory was deserted. As he drew near I saw him suddenly start violently, and a look of horror come over his face. Miss O'Neill rose hastily. In a moment he had rushed forwards, and caught her in his arms, just in time to shield her and her inflammable dress from the paper Chinese lamp, which, a mass of flame, fell directly over where she had been sitting, striking him on the shoulder.

It was all over in a moment. There was a flare-up, and a quick stamping out, and a smell of burning, and when I looked up Lisle's moustaches were not a pair, and the white feather in his cap was singed and black.

Two little gloved hands were laid on his arm, and a trembling voice gasped out:

"George, George—dear George! you're not hurt?"

The pale, quivering face that was raised to his spoke volumes.

He turned to her, and read in the clear, anxious eyes a truth that any man might have been proud to read.



"Hurt!" he said rapturously, bending towards her, and imprisoning both the slender hands. "Hurt! No, my own, my darling, my—"

I thought my services were no longer required, and I fled, noiselessly closing the conservatory door behind me. Lisle was on the right tack at last.

Hugh came up to me as I left the conservatory.

"All right, old fellow," I said; "you're not to be married this time, but take care how you propose to young ladies in future."

I thought Hugh would have burst into tears, the relief was so great. His face worked, but gradually settled down into a smile—a radiant and peaceful smile.

"Oh, Mostyn," he said with a deep-drawn sigh, "if you only knew what being engaged felt like! It's an awful feeling. I fell asleep this afternoon in the workshop, and I dreamed that Miss O'Neill and I were married, and going away for our honeymoon on a pair of oscillating cylinders. Oh, Mostyn, old chap, you have taken such a weight off my mind;" and Hugh shook me solemnly by the hand, and begged me to come and stay with him at Birkenhead, that he might take me over the works, and show me the man-of-war undergoing repairs in the docks. I agreed to everything, and hastened off after my long-neglected partner for the time being, an angelic-looking nun, who was sitting on an ottoman, in a not too angelic frame of mind at my remissness. However, I succeeded in conciliating her by dancing with her a second time, and observed to my no small amusement Hugh mingling again among the dancers, but carefully selecting for his partners only married women, being evidently afraid for the time of ladies who were not, as he termed it, "bespoke."

After a time two more people in whom I was interested entered the ball-room, and began to dance. They made a tall and handsome couple, and not a few eyes turned to watch them, Hugh's among the rest, with a look of fervent thankfulness I shall never forget.

"I am an engaged man," said Lisle, as we drove away from the door an hour later. "Mostyn, I am an engaged man."

"And I'm not," came a deep response from the back seat, accompanied by a triumphant chuckle.

"And I am to go over there to-morrow," continued Lisle—"do you hear, Mostyn?"—and Mrs. O'Neill is to be told as soon as ever her next setting of chickens is off, which she is expecting every day, and— I say, Mostyn, I do believe you are going to sleep, you unsympathetic beggar."

"Mostyn is a brick," I heard Hugh reply as in a dream, "and I am going to give him my little model engine."

## Hush!

HUSH, love, hush!  
Surely the silence is fully blest,  
Surely we may be content to rest,  
We two alone, alone together,  
In the golden hush of the summer weather;  
Hark to the gurgle of the thrush—  
Hush, love, hush!

Hush, love, hush!  
Sweet and dear though the words would be  
That the parting lips would say to me,  
It is better, better far, to lie  
And read them all in the dark blue eye,  
And answer them only with a blush—  
Hush, love, hush!

Hush, love, hush!  
Since all too loudly and too soon  
The voice of the world will jar the tune,  
The perfect melody that makes  
The silence thrill with the note it wakes.  
See, sunshine sleeps where the grass is lush—  
Hush, love, hush!

## "My Lord Conceit."

(A SERIAL STORY.)

By the Author of "FRAGOLETTA," "DAME DURDEN," &c., &c.

### Book VII.

#### CHAPTER III. "WILFUL MURDER."

THE sun has broken gaily forth, and driven away the rainclouds, and over the London streets and London houses he pours out his beams in a perfect flood of radiance.

He pours them, too, on all the dingy, dusky houses around Lincoln's Inn Fields, making them look only duskier and dingier by reason of such generosity, and the jocund rays flit hither and thither,

and peep through cobwebbed windows, and play at hide-and-seek in mysterious passages, and seem to mock the frowning houses that look so close, and grave, and dismal, as if they were standing tomb-stones of men's secrets and men's lives, as perhaps they are. And dancing, and fitting, and prying in this fantastic fashion, the sunbeams come at last to that shadowy chamber with its dark and quiet windows still closed to the daylight, and all the dismal tragedy that daylight will unveil.

And following the sunbeams, comes the old crone who has charge of the chambers, and looks after her solitary lodger. She comes in, armed with brooms and brushes, and goes to the window and draws up the blind, and in rush the sunbeams like live things at play, and race and chase each other through the room, in very mockery of what their presence brings to light.

For the old woman does nothing to the chamber that day, but the brooms and brushes fall with a hideous clatter, and the quiet house and the quiet street seem alive in a moment with shrieks of terror, and tread of feet.

The news spreads far and wide; spreads only by the utterance of one hideous whispered word—a word that carries its own weight of terror along with it—a word that travels far and near throughout that day, and brings investigation, surmise, question, wonder, all in its train, and so leads on from point to point, from theory to theory, from evidence to inquest, from inquest to further evidence, from further evidence to proof, shadowy and impalpable at first, but growing, and strengthening, and widening the circle of its condemnatory history, as a pebble thrown into still water widens the circle whence it first touched that water's surface.

And what say the enlightened jury after duly investigating the body? And to what points the evidence hastily collected by enlightened members of the force, and whence spring the witnesses who appear on the scene?

The majesty of the law is at work again on behalf of John Marsden, and the mighty engine works faster and surer now than it did, or seemed to do, when he was a living man to benefit—not a dead man to be avenged. At the close of the previous day the living man had sat in his solitary chamber brooding over the wealth and prosperity in store for him; the close of this day sees only a dumb, helpless form lying stark and straight upon its narrow couch, over whom no tears are shed, no loving memories cherished, and whose fate will be briefly summed up by a coroner's jury.

What was the evidence collected by the intelligent member of the force, X 57, after the discovery of the body by the old woman who attended on John Marsden?

First, that the body had been stabbed in the back; second, that the wound had been caused by some long and narrow instrument—probably a dagger; third, that the deceased had been visited in his rooms the evening of the murder by two people—a man and a woman—the man a foreigner, who was in the habit of coming very frequently to see the deceased; the woman a stranger, closely muffled, who came in a cab, stayed for some quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, and then went away in the same cab.

The intelligent member of the force had pricked up his ears at the sound of a foreigner—it fitted in with the dagger wound. A burglar or a robber would not have had such a weapon in his possession; the intelligent, therefore, made a note of this, and proceeded to act upon his suspicions. The name of this foreigner? The woman did not know—had never heard it to her knowledge—knew he was a foreigner because he looked like one—had overheard her master call him Count.

His address?

Wasn't sure of his address, but once her master had said he was going to dine at the Travellers' Club with this friend. Thought he might be found or heard of at the Travellers' Club.

Evidence at the Travellers' Club.

A foreign count? Several there.

Did one of them ever bring a gentleman of the name of John Marsden to dine?

Can't say. So many strangers came to dine. Would ask the waiters.

Waiter produced who had heard the name. A gentleman had dined only last week with Count Savona.

Ah, thank you, my friend. We are getting nearer. The Count Savona's address, if you please?

Private address unknown. But the Count called every day for his letters. Was expected that morning.

The intelligent leaves another intelligent to inform the Count he would be wanted to give evidence at the inquest to be held next day on the body of John Marsden, deceased.

Does the count come?

Certainly he comes. He is shocked; he is grieved. He is desolated and astounded at the awful occurrence. Inwardly in a very raging fury of baffled wrath and vengeance. All his schemes

to end thus! His careful plans, his beautifully-arranged project, to be foiled at the very moment of completion! Ah, could all the oaths in the Italian language or any other languages he knew, relieve his feelings or chain back the demoniacal rage in his breast! He tried them inwardly as a sedative. But he was outwardly very calm, very dignified, very collected. His evidence was the most important yet brought forward.

Did he know the deceased?

Certainly. Had known him for some months. Saw him last on the evening of January 16th. He was perfectly well, and in his usual spirits. He was about to become possessor of some considerable amount of property, and on the evening of his death had been discussing its details with witness. The property was to come to him through his wife.

Wife! There is a slight stir of curiosity among the jury. Deceased had a wife, then? Where was she all this time?

Witness could not say. They had not been living together for some years. Had been very unhappy, in fact.

The intelligent, who keeps his eye fixed on the foreign count's face, thinks to himself that he is a very artful card indeed.

The witness has a statement to make. Very well, let him make it.

The wife of the deceased called on her husband at his rooms on the evening of the 16th January. She came to bring some papers necessary to the establishment of her claim to this property—papers she had hitherto refused to produce. She and her husband were disputing violently when witness came on the scene. Subject of dispute? The husband asked his wife to return to him, and she refused to do so.

How did the dispute end?

The wife made use of some threats, and left, still declaring her resolve that she would not return and live under her husband's roof—unless forced to do so.

When did she leave the rooms?

As near as witness could recollect, it was about ten o'clock, or a little later. He wished to see her downstairs, but she declined his offer, saying she had a cab waiting for her.

Did he hear the cab drive off?

Not for some time. He had wondered at the delay, fancying that perhaps Mrs. Marsden was paying and dismissing the man.

Intelligent thinks: "He's a deep 'un."

Could he give information as regards Mrs. Marsden's address?

Not her present address. She had been staying with some friends at Vaux Abbey, in Devon. But he had been informed by her husband that she had come to London simply to deliver up these papers.

And had parted with the deceased in an unfriendly manner?

In a most unfriendly manner.

What time did witness leave the deceased?

At half-past eleven. He remembered looking at his watch as he left the house.

Did he shut the outer door?

Yes; closed it after him as he usually did. He supposed the woman was about to lock and bolt it.

Had he heard her about?

No; could not say he had. The night was stormy, and it was difficult to hear anything except the noise of wind and rain.

Could he specify any threat Mrs. Marsden had used in his presence?

He could not. It was more her manner—her desperate look, her anger, that had impressed him.

Could he swear positively that Mrs. Marsden had left the house before himself?

No. She had only refused his escort, and said she had a cab waiting.

Any more witnesses?

No.

Then telegraph to Vaux Abbey for Mrs. Marsden's address. Answer prepaid. More delay—more conjectures. The intelligent keeps still that watchful guard over the foreign count, convinced in his own mind that he is deeper than ever.

In course of time telegram arrives from Vaux Abbey: "Mrs. Marsden is at the Charing Cross Hotel."

Messenger dispatched to Charing Cross Hotel. Returns with Mrs. Marsden, to whom the intelligence has been communicated.

How does she behave? No scene, no tears, no hysterics. Only a sad-faced, quiet woman who hears what is required of her, and answers all the questions asked, readily and composedly.

What does she say?

Deceased was her husband. They had not met for three years.

Were they on good terms?

No; they had not corresponded or seen each other during the time she had mentioned. He had returned to England ostensibly for a reconciliation—really, because he had discovered that she was entitled to some property.

Was it true they had had a serious disagreement on the night of the 16th of January?

Yes.

Would the witness state the particulars?

The witness does so, corroborating Count Savona's statement in a remarkable degree.

The jury exchange glances, and begin to fidget nervously on their seats. Things began to look serious.

After leaving her husband's rooms, did the witness return to her hotel in the cab waiting for her?

For the first time there is hesitation in the low, clear voice. A flush of colour stains Beryl Marsden's white cheeks; then, very unsteadily and briefly, comes the unexpected answer: "No."

Any objection to state where she went in the cab?

She dismissed the cab, and went for a walk.

A walk—in the storm and rain of such a night as that night? Did she visit anyone—go to any other friend?

No.

What time did witness reach her hotel?

Is not sure. Thinks it must have been late. The hall-porter admitted her, and she saw no one else.

How late? Past midnight?

Yes; it must have been past midnight.

And she had been taking a walk through the wet streets, and in the pouring rain, by choice, until that hour?

Yes.

Any statement to make? Any reason to suppose the deceased had any enemies?

No—no reason. For the last three years had heard nothing of his life or doings.

Did she know whether he possessed any foreign weapons—such as daggers, knives, etc., used by natives?

Could not say so positively. In India he had possessed such things, plenty of them.

But she had seen nothing of the kind in his possession during any of their meetings since his return to England?

No.

Would swear to that?

Certainly, as well as to all the other statements she had made.

The coroner sums up.

"Well, gentlemen, you have heard the evidence of the deceased's wife, his landlady, his friend, also the medical opinion as to the cause of his death. There is no question of suicide here, gentlemen, it is a case of violence—a dastardly deed. The unfortunate man must have been stabbed in the back while sitting quietly in his chair. There is no question of robbery either. The state of the room and receptacles proves that. Also the fact that the money and valuables on the person of the deceased were untouched. Without doubt this is a crime with a motive, gentlemen, though what that motive was we have as yet no evidence to show. You will, therefore, gentlemen of the jury, find a verdict in accordance with the evidence you have heard.

Verdict found:

"Wilful murder, against some person or persons unknown."

The intelligent hears it, and resolves to keep his eye on that foreigner. Of course it was he who did it. The very fact of trying to throw suspicion on the murdered man's wife is only another proof of deep-laid villainy. A woman do such a thing, and such a woman—a slight, pale, fragile creature, who looks as if a breath of wind would blow her away? Preposterous! The intelligent isn't going to be hoodwinked like that. Perhaps this will be a Government affair, a reward, or two rewards, for the widow is rich, and may well be liberal if only to clear the slur from her own character.

The jury are dismissed, the coroner goes his way, and the intelligent walks thoughtfully through the streets, oblivious of little boys and area-beggars, as he ponders over what he will do next; whether he will apply for a warrant, or on his own responsibility arrest the foreigner. If he waits for the advertisement of a reward someone else may be beforehand. After all he had best interview the widow and discover if she is willing to offer one. To-morrow the case will be in the papers; to-morrow—perhaps even to-day—Scotland Yard will be eager for a finger in the pie. Yes, he had better go to the Charing Cross Hotel, state his suspicions, and see what is to be made out of the case. It must come to a trial, and then what a chance for him! All sorts of Alnaschar-like ideas float through his brain. He seems to tread on air, and reaches the hotel in a state of gentle elation.

Is Mrs. Marsden at home? She is.

The answer very short and snappish, for the hotel dignitary is offended at the idea of policemen coming to interview a visitor at their hotel twice in one day.

Will the dignitary kindly take up a note and say the bearer waits?

It is done. The answer? Mrs. Marsden will see the bearer. Kindly step up to her private sitting-room.

The intelligent draws a long deep breath, and a self-satisfied smile is upon his lips. The interview is very brief, but when he descends the stairs, and leaves the hotel and the offended dignitaries behind him, that bland smile has left his lips, and a dark frown knits his intelligent brow.

What has Mrs. Marsden said? Mrs. Marsden has listened quietly to his explanations, and annihilated his scheme by a few terse words.

"Count Savona could not have murdered my husband, for it is greatly to his benefit and advantage that he should live."

Blow number one.

"I have already sent to Scotland Yard for a skilful detective, and intend offering a reward of two hundred pounds for the discovery of the murderer."

Blow number two.

The intelligent thereupon takes himself off in a huff, swearing inwardly against all women as a set of impetuous fools.

#### CHAPTER IV. ACCUSER AND ACCUSED.

A SMALL, slightly-built man, with a pale face and a quiet manner, presents himself at the Charing Cross Hotel that evening, and is shown up to Mrs. Marsden's room. The quiet man gives his name as "Mr. Brough," and informs her that he has come in answer to her request at Scotland Yard.

As he speaks he takes in every detail of the face, figure, and manner of the woman before him. She asks him to take a seat, which he does, then she produces some papers, and opens the business for which he has been summoned.

"I have spent the afternoon," she says, "in making a few notes of the matter. Will you kindly read them?"

Mr. Brough takes the papers, draws his chair up to the table, and for the space of a quarter of an hour gives himself up to the task.

"A clever woman, and a woman who knows what she's about."

In those brief words he sums up Beryl Marsden's character, as he studies the notes she has made, and sees how the case stands.

"Well?" she says, as he looks up from the last page.

"You will allow me to put a few questions to you, madam?"

"Certainly, as many as you please."

"You must be aware," he says, "to whom this evidence points."

"I am quite aware of it," she answers calmly. "The man who has tried to throw suspicion on me is the worst enemy I have."

"You declare here that you have no knowledge of any person who could have had a motive for murdering your husband?"

"I have no such knowledge," she says wearily.

"And no suspicion?"

"None whatever."

"His papers and money were not in any way disturbed?"

"So I have heard."

"You have not been to the rooms since the inquest?"

"No," she answers with a shudder. "I—I could not."

"This Count—this foreigner was a friend of your husband's, and yet you say an enemy of yours?"

"Yes," she says simply. "He occasioned the—the misunderstanding that kept us apart those three years."

"He was present at the interview between your husband and yourself the night of the murder?"

"Yes. I left him there with my husband."

"You don't suspect him?"

"No," she says with a bitter smile, "for he has lost the stake for which he played, by the death of my husband."

The detective looks at her keenly. Is she wilfully bent on making her position worse by damaging statements?

He draws out a pocket-book, and makes some entries in it. She watches him gravely and silently, as if unconscious that she is launching herself into a sea of troubles, of all the possible shame and terror waiting to engulf her life.

"You give me unlimited powers to act as I think best?"

"Yes; I am rich enough to reward you, as well as to place any possible means that can assist discovery, at your disposal."

The detective relapses again into thought. He is bound to acknowledge that this is a puzzling case. The person to whom suspicion points, the only person to all showing who has any motive for the crime, is the person employing him to search for the criminal.

"A rum start," he says to himself, "a very rum start. Does she want to mislead me, or is she really anxious to have the thing sifted?"

"Have you told me everything that can throw a light on the matter?" he says at last.

"Everything, as far as I know."

"The weapon has not been discovered?"

"No, there was no sign of it."

"Very well," he says thoughtfully. "In the first place, I must go to his rooms and see what I can find out there. You will kindly give me your card and an order for admission. Is the—body—there?"

"Yes," she says with a faint shudder. "I am expecting a gentleman—a friend—for whom I have telegraphed. I must ask him to make all the necessary arrangements."

"Has anything been disturbed? I mean books, papers, drawers, etcetera?"

"Not to my knowledge. But you forget, I have not been there. The shock was very terrible to me, and we parted in so unfriendly a manner."

"Yes, yes," he interrupts hurriedly; "but I shouldn't say more about that than I could help if I were you. And now, good-evening. I'll look in to-morrow morning, and tell you if I've found any clue. I——"

What more he might have been going to say was cut short by a sharp rap at the door. It was opened so closely on the knock, that it seemed as if permission had been quite unneeded.

As Beryl raised her head and saw who barred the entrance, she started to her feet. Two men stood there—one, a policeman; the other, Count Savona.

The count advanced with his cold smile, and that evil glitter in his eyes that she knew so well.

"Constable, there is the woman named in the warrant you hold. Arrest her!"

Beryl looked at him, her face ashen pale, her eyes aflame.

"Arrest me!" she cried wildly. "You dare not; you——"

"Hush!" said the detective. "I expected this."

She sank back on the chair and covered her face with her trembling hands, as if to shut out some hateful sight.

"You had better come along quiet, ma'am," said the policeman, advancing. "It's my duty to tell you that any observations you make may be used against you."

She dropped her hands and looked wildly from one to the other of the three men.

"But I am trying to find it out," she cried. "I have offered a reward; I—— Oh, speak for me," she entreated passionately, as she turned to Brough. "Say it's a mistake—they can't mean it! Take me in charge! Oh, the shame, the horror of it! For Heaven's sake, don't do that!"

Count Savona only stood there with folded arms, and smiled at those agonised prayers. It was his turn to triumph now, and the triumph was very sweet to him.

Mr. Brough's sharp eyes were on his face, and Mr. Brough's sharp wits were at work, but he had seen the warrant, and he knew that interference was useless. Beryl Marsden might be as innocent as himself, but that innocence must be proved now throughout the length and breadth of the land wherever the news of the murder had spread. And to prove it would be as difficult a matter as the tracing of that real criminal, whose very existence was shrouded in mystery.

"She hasn't done it, and the foreigner hasn't done it," said the detective to himself. "But I'm blest if there's a trace of any third party who has. However, that's for me to find out. A queer case this, and no mistake, but it's harder than I think if it baffles John Brough!"

Then he went to Beryl's side and whispered something to her, and she looked up at his face with the stony quietude of despair.

"Do what you will," she said wearily; "I have ceased to struggle with misfortune!"

When Colonel Dunbar came up to town in obedience to that summons of Beryl Marsden, he was horrified to learn the course events had taken—horrified at the charge against Beryl—horrified at the stupidity of juries, detectives, and the police force in general.

He rails, and he rages, and he goes to the magistrate who has issued the warrant for Beryl's arrest and offers bail to any amount for her release. But the magistrate tells him quietly that the application is quite in vain, that it is impossible to allow bail upon such a charge as this.

The case is coming on next week. The best thing the friend of the accused can do is to procure witnesses and counsel to defend her. She will need it, he says significantly.

Colonel Dunbar then asks to see Beryl, and permission is given. It is a terrible ordeal to both of them, though she is the calmer of the two.

"I will bring Madge to see you," says Colonel Dunbar as he takes his leave; "she will cheer you up."

Beryl looks at him imploringly.

"No," she entreats, "not here, I—I could not bear it. I want to be calm. Heaven knows I have need of all my self-control, and to see Madge would upset me altogether."

"You may be sure I will do all in my power," Colonel Dunbar says earnestly; "you can trust me to set every engine of the law at work on your behalf. It will only be a question of—a little temporary inconvenience—your detention here," he adds huskily.

"I am sure you will do everything in your power," she says gratefully; "and believe me, I have no fear. Whatever they prove, they can't prove that I have done what they accuse me of."

"Of course they can't," he says cheerily. "Talk of justice, indeed! A pack of blind, self-willed fools running their heads against a brick wall—that's just what this case comes to."

"I—I want you to do something more for me," says Beryl, flushing and paling as she takes a slip of paper from her dress. "If you will go to this address, you will find someone there who is in great need and danger—someone you used to know in other days. You will understand when you see the—the person, what is to be done. Promise that you will go straight there when you leave me?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," he answers, turning the paper over and over in his hand in a puzzled way. "It—it has reference to this, I suppose?"

"Some slight reference," she says hesitatingly; "I don't think it is of any importance. If there is any mention of my name," she went on, "don't let this disgrace be known. If it becomes public I can't help it, but at present, while there is any chance of concealing it, let it be concealed; that is all I have to say."

"I will come again soon," says Colonel Dunbar eagerly. "Every day—six times a day, if they will let me. So keep up a good heart, my dear. We'll see you through this safe enough, in spite of juries, and lawyers, and witnesses, and foreigners. I should like to see that infernal Count strung up to a gallows himself," he adds with unwonted savageness; "and I dare say he will be some day. A nice, scheming, fraudulent brute he seems. And how he took us all in!"

Beryl grows white as death.

"He has been a bitter foe to me," she says with a nervous shiver that she cannot repress. "I—I can't help saying I am afraid of him."

"Nonsense!" says Colonel Dunbar heartily. "Afraid—you afraid! Don't let me hear such a thing! Now I'm off to see Brough. He's hard at work for you. Then I'll go to this address, and see what's up with your friend there. You—you're sure you won't like to see Madge?"

"No—no!" she cries almost wildly. "I told you I could not bear it."

"Very well," he says soothingly, and then they part.

It need not be supposed that Madge Dunbar, though forbidden Beryl's presence, could leave her friend in such a sorrowful and hazardous strait without some sign of sympathy. Cosmo's next appearance was signalled by a letter from the brave-hearted little woman; such a letter, so characteristic of the writer; so charged with love, pity, sorrow, indignation, wrath, that Beryl laughed and cried alternately over the closely-covered sheets which she read again and again.

"I—I have some more news for you," continued Colonel Dunbar. "I went to the address you gave, and I suppose it is needless to say whom I found there? I owe you a debt I can never repay for sending me in time."

"In time!" she cried, growing very white. "He—he was so ill, then?"

"Very—very ill; but there, don't look so alarmed. It's all right. I've had the best surgeon in London to him. The operation was over in a trice, and now there's every hope of his recovery. Poor fellow!" he adds sorrowfully, "he must have had an awful time of it, from what his man says."

"Does he know—of—this?" she asks slowly. "Had he heard?"

"No, nor is he likely to. It's easy to keep papers out of reach of an invalid. He's awfully weak, but with a good doctor and a devoted attendant like that Tom, he's sure to pull through right enough."

The slow tears are trickling through her clasped hands as they hide her face from sight. It strikes Colonel Dunbar as strange that she can weep for another's sufferings, yet care so little for her own peril. But to him women have been always more or less of a mystery, so he asks no question and makes no remark on her agitation.

He is glad she does not question him about herself and her position, for things are looking very black, and he cannot but acknowledge that all Mr. Brough's skill seems powerless to set aside the accumulation of facts that grow and grow into appalling magnitude, till they stand like a dead wall between Beryl Marsden and that liberty for which she looks with eager eyes and brave and hopeful heart, but to which, alas! the most sanguine of her friends can now no longer point.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 141.)

## In the Flower Snow.

"T'WAS on a fair and summer day,  
The blossom-time of hope and love;  
The hawthorn-trees were white with may,  
The lark sang in the blue above.  
When straying by the brook to see  
The lilies float upon the stream,  
There softly fell a spell on me,  
The dawn of life's most tender dream.  
I felt the pain, the sweet unrest,  
That Love, and Love alone can bring;  
And to itself my heart confessed  
That it at last had found its king.  
The sun sank low, and from the blue  
Dropped down to rest the panting bird;  
The closing flowers were wet with dew,  
The mellow bells of eve were heard;  
And still beside the rippling brook  
I lingered in the twilight grey,  
And cast around a wistful look;  
"Some one" might chance to come that way.  
Oh, joy! a footstep that I know  
Like music falls upon mine ear;  
A form comes through the flower-snow—  
Be still, my heart, for he is here!  
The moon rose up with silver light,  
And still we knew not how to part,  
As there we stood, on that blest night,  
Hand clasped in hand, heart pressed to heart.  
And then, beneath the flowering trees,  
A tale of love once more was told;  
With none to hear save bird and breeze,  
The story that can ne'er grow old.  
Unbroken is the golden chain  
That bound our two hearts on that day;  
And never shall it break again,  
Until our two lives pass away.

## The White House.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

ON the confines of a small wood of oak-trees, where the bracken-fern grows wonderfully high and vigorous, low down in a deep hollow between two ridges of rising hills, stands a solitary house.

Round it lies a vineyard—for I write of a land where the vine both flourishes and ripens—and on one side a modest kitchen-garden, where cabbages, carrots, and garlic grow together in company with a few neglected flowers. A tiny gate leads from the garden to the road, which to the right ascends at once, and to the left goes still lower in the hollow to where a bubbling river runs under a rustic bridge. Beyond that the road climbs up the hill to the village of Thermae.

The house has been long known, for many leagues round, by the name of "The White House," but that name seems now a derision, for the building, including its tiled roof, is uniformly grey. Perhaps, long, long ago, when that house was new, its white-washed walls may have so contrasted with its red tiles, as to have rightly gained its appellation. But for many a long year it has been grey, and rains and storms have discoloured alike both the whiteness of the walls and the redness of the tiles. It is a very small house, and a very solitary one too, for the nearest habitation is a full ten minutes' walk from The White House.

But it was once quite large enough for its two lonely inhabitants, and sufficiently near the neighbours to satisfy old André Desbats and his idiot granddaughter.

Yes, Madeleine was "foolish," as they said. You could see it in the vacant gaze of her large dark eyes, you could hear it in her dreamy, expressionless voice, and you could understand it, too, when once you knew her sad story.

Madeleine was not born so. For six happy years intelligence had gleamed in her eyes, which now retained only their beauty of form and colour, but from which the life of reason had departed. For six happy years her pallid cheek had worn the glow and bloom of health, and Madeleine had been the joy, pride, and hope of her parents' home.

Then, in one second, the mysterious hand of God struck all to naught; the parents were dead, their orphan an idiot. A storm—one of those dreadful storms that gather their force on the summits of mountains to pour out their fury in the valley—broke one Sunday evening over the land.

There was no rain, but peals of thunder instantaneously followed red flashes of forked lightning. When the roll of one of these, more fearful than all preceding ones, had died away in the distance, there

was a lull, then the rain fell heavily on the hot earth, and the storm swept farther on. But it had done evil work.

In a small peasant's house of Thermes a man and a woman lay on the floor stone dead, their faces disfigured and blackened by that last flash; a child lay near the corpses insensible, and to all appearance dead also.

When, after the storm had abated, a neighbour penetrated tremblingly into the lightning-struck abode, he came out staggering at what he had seen, and bearing in his arms Madeleine's lifeless form.

The child was not dead, only when she opened her heavy eyes, they were rayless; the mind had departed, or was sleeping, and never more, it seemed, would waken to this earth's joy or woe.

Old André Desbats, Madeleine's maternal grandfather, led the lonely orphan to his solitary home. She went passively, without a tear; the past was a blank, her parents, alive or dead, henceforth unknown.

Madeleine's father, like many other small landowners in that country, had mortgaged a good part of his land; for a succession of misfortunes—hail, frost, and a malady in the vines, which caused the leaves to fall in the heat of summer, leaving the uncovered grapes to be dried up and withered by the sun, before ripe—had made money scarce for many years.

The land was sold to pay the mortgage, as well as a few other debts, and the funeral expenses. When all costs were defrayed, Madeleine's inheritance was small indeed, yet sufficient to maintain her with what her grandfather would leave her after his death. The old man had made all the necessary arrangements in case of that event; his grandson, Robert Desbats, the child of his only son, had long promised that his home should be Madeleine's at the old man's death.

These two men were the orphan's only relations.

As Madeleine grew up she showed a preference for her cousin. Whether it was that his bright, genial voice struck some broken chord in her mind, or whether his young, handsome face raised some dead memory to life within her, she would vaguely show that his presence pleased her, and mark a prolonged absence if several days passed without his coming to The White House. Not that she would speak to him differently than in that dull, apathetic voice that was ever hers, or look at him otherwise than with her constant, vacant gaze; but she would steal noiselessly to his side, and follow him about like a faithful dog, sitting when he sat, and walking when he walked.

The young man had a kind heart; often he would speak to her gently, trying to make her understand his words, and sigh as he saw the uselessness of the attempt.

Once—Madeleine was then seventeen—he came upon her as she sat on a low bench, under an elm-tree, near The White House. Usually she heard his step, but this time she seemed to hear nothing. Her eyes, blank and lifeless, that would have been so beautiful had expression filled their orbs, were uplifted to the sky, where a trembling star had just risen, for the sun had set. Perhaps her gaze for a brief space had followed her mind into a far-off world, where perchance it dwelt.

Gently and pitifully Robert passed his hand over her long neglected tresses that fell darkly over her shoulders. She turned quickly, and it seemed to her cousin that an expression deep and earnest filled her eyes. It was dusk; astonished, eagerly he drew her towards him, when her idiot's laugh fell on his ear.

"The stars are very high," she said. "Madeleine would like to reach them."

Then she sighed, and as the young man heard the meaningless words, and saw the vacancy of her face, he thought he must have dreamt to have fancied expression could ever fill her countenance.

André was a peculiar old man, and his sorrows, which had been numerous—for of three children none were living—had made him taciturn and suspicious. He would have no woman about the place, and it was he himself who attended to his household duties and prepared his frugal meals; he would sweep both kitchen and bedrooms, and put the soup to boil, whilst Madeleine, in winter, sat crouching by the fire, and in summer wandered out of doors.

Sometimes she went to Thermes, where people invited her into their homes, and frequently setting food and drink before her, received her kindly, whilst she accepted their hospitality with her usual dull apathy. She was never violent or dangerous, and no boy in that quiet village would have dared to laugh at the idiot girl, whose calamity rendered her sacred, even in the sight of the most thoughtless. Only at the approach of a storm, and during its fury, her body would be shaken with nervous tremors. She would, at such times, throw herself on the ground, and hiding her face in her hands, moan piteously. Then, when the storm had passed, she would rise and go about as usual, and never since she had been an

orphan had a tear been seen to glisten in her eyes or to fall down her cheeks.

One day towards the end of October—a day on which a high impetuous wind hurried the fall of the leaves, and dark threatening clouds alternated with glimpses of blue sky—Robert came to The White House. It was rather an unusual hour for the industrious young man to call; he generally came at the close of evening, and now it was but midday.

André and Madeleine had barely finished their silent meal, and the old man sat smoking his pipe, whilst the young girl, from her seat, dreamily watched the wind rapidly chasing the clouds, when her cousin entered. The half-smile which his presence ever called forth stole vaguely over her features as she heard his step, and she rose, trembling with pleasure, as he bade her gently good-day. He was the only person who ever stirred a feeling in her vacant mind. Not all her grandfather's kindness or solicitude ever elicited a smile.

After speaking about the vintage, which had been bounteous this year, and tasting the new wine, still sweet, but promising to be good, Robert owned that he had something particular to say, but looked awkward at speaking before Madeleine.

"Never mind," said the old man sadly, "you know you can speak before her; she's forgotten you are here."

And so it appeared to be, for Madeleine had left her seat, and stood by the window, evidently engaged again in dreamily watching the clouds. Seeing this the young man was reassured, and after making a cigarette and lighting it, he drew his seat nearer to André's and began speaking in a low voice:

"Grandfather, you have frequently asked me of late whether I intended marrying, and you have told me that it would please you to see me settled before your death; moreover, that you would then be more at ease as regards Madeleine."

"True, my boy, so I should. I can't expect strangers to feel for the poor thing as I do. You are good to her, but you're young, and you might take a wife who'd object to having a poor idiot in her house, though she's harmless enough, Heaven knows. If you were married before my death I should know whether to confide her to your care, or whether to seek another home for her instead."

"Well, grandfather," replied Robert, who had listened smilingly to the old man, "I think you will be satisfied, for the best, the loveliest, the kindest-hearted girl of Thermes will, please Heaven, be my wife next spring."

A slight noise, like a stifled moan, here startled him, but as Madeleine was still quietly looking out of the window, he went on:

"You guess, don't you, that I am speaking of Léonie Dufour?"

"Aye, aye," answered the old man; "she's a fine girl, though very young. Has she promised to be your wife, and do her parents consent?"

"Yes, she has; and we should be wed at once, but that her father wants her to wait till she's eighteen, which won't be before next May."

"Well, she's a good and a pretty girl too, and will bring her husband a good marriage-portion as well, which never does any harm either," added the old peasant.

Robert rose.

"I must go now," he said. "I have oats to sow this afternoon; only the matter was settled yesterday evening, and I wanted to tell you at once. May I bring her to see you next Sunday?"

"Yes, come by all means, and I'll uncork a bottle of old wine to drink to your happiness and hers."

Robert had already reached the door when he recollected that he had not said good-bye to Madeleine; he turned to do so, and perceived she had left the room.

"Why, where is she?" he asked, astonished. "I never heard her move."

"No," returned André quietly; "she makes little noise. I suppose she forgot you were here, and has gone out. You'll probably come across her on your road."

The young man went, and, lover-like, soon thought of no one else but Léonie. He was indeed so absorbed in happy thoughts that he scarcely noticed where he went, when a moan, such as had startled him at The White House, again smote his ear. He looked about him, and saw Madeleine at a slight distance crouching on the ground, her face completely hidden by her long black hair.

He stood on the rustic wooden bridge, beneath which the Midou, a small but noisy river, lies in its deep bed. The idiot girl was lying on the grass, so near the edge of the water that by a single unguarded movement, she might have fallen in.

Robert crossed the bridge, took a small path on the opposite side, and soon stood close to Madeleine. Without a word he bent down, lifted her up, and carried her a few yards from the dangerous spot. Then only he released her, and watched her face with some anxiety in his. But that none had ever seen her weep, he would have thought she had shed tears now, for there was a softness in her large dark eyes, so beautiful in form and colour, and a moisture on her



pale cheeks, paler still than of wont. She trembled greatly, as she usually did when a storm brooded in the air, and yet no storm was to be presaged. Robert felt perplexed and troubled.

"What were you doing there, so near the river?" he asked gently.

Almost he fancied, owing to that unusual expression in her face, that she would give him a coherent reply; he was soon disappointed. She looked at him in her blank way, and said plaintively:

"Don't scold me, and don't tell the clouds you found me."

"No," he answered, sighing; "I won't tell them, only you must promise me not to lie so near the water's edge again. And now tell me, Madeleine, why you left the house so suddenly without even saying good-bye to me?"

"I don't remember," she murmured, touching her forehead; "unless it was because you said her name. You know—the name of the girl with the yellow hair, like wheat. I don't like her name."

"What! you don't like the name of Léonie? Ah, but you'll like it soon, Madeleine, and like the owner too, for she already loves you dearly."

Madeleine shook her head.

"And now," continued Robert, "go straight home like a good child; it is too cold to remain here."

He gently caressed her hair, and then stood watching her sadly as she slowly walked across the bridge, and afterwards climbed the road towards The White House.

The following Sunday Robert brought his betrothed to see André. He might well be proud of her, for Léonie was a very lovely girl. Abundant fair hair was plaited round her well-shaped head; her eyes were of a bright blue, and innocent as a child's in their expression; her cheeks were the bloom of youth and health, and when she smiled, which she often did, for hers was a sunny nature, she displayed merry dimples in their roses, and teeth that were dazzlingly white. She was not very tall, but although so young showed already signs of a not uncomely plumpness.

The couple arrived before dinner, but when the meal was ready and they drew their chairs to the table, it was discovered that Madeleine was not present. They called and searched for her in vain, she was nowhere to be found. This cast a shadow over their happiness; nevertheless, when old André drew a dusty bottle from his small cellar, and reverently drawing the cork, drank to the future welfare and health of the young people, they all three became a little brighter, and the poor idiot girl was forgotten for a while.

It was not till sunset that Madeleine returned. Robert and Léonie had left, and the old man was beginning to feel seriously uneasy at her prolonged absence, when, with a weary, tired step, she entered The White House.

Without a question, which André knew would be useless, he placed food and drink before her. She partook silently of both, but when her grandfather pressed her to drink the glass of old wine which they had left her, she refused it with so abrupt a gesture that the contents were spilled on the floor. She looked at it vaguely, murmuring, "It looks like blood," and then fell into her habitual silence.

André was both astonished and frightened at her petulance, for he had never known her other than gentle and submissive. However, as the following day she was the same as usual, he forgot the occurrence.

Shortly after, one day Madeleine went up to the village, and entered Léonie's house. The young girl was sitting in the neat clean kitchen by the side of a bright wood-fire, sewing some linen for her marriage-outfit. She offered her visitor a seat. Madeleine took it, and for more than an hour sat silently watching Léonie. To all questions she returned no answer, and her steady yet vacant look at last troubled Léonie so much, that she began gently singing so as to break the charm.

At last Madeleine rose, and went, still in silence, towards the door, but there she paused and turned:

"You will be happy, Léonie; you are good and pretty, and you sing like the singing of my dreams." Then, without another word, she left the house.

When Léonie related the visit to Robert, he said:

"You will tame her, dear, and do her good. You have already opened her mind sufficiently for her to see that you are good and pretty, and to hear that you sing divinely."

Still, Madeleine was rarely visible when the lovers came to visit André, and she never again addressed a word to the young girl. She seemed sadder and more silent than ever, and those that saw her only occasionally were surprised at her increased pallor and thinness; still, as she never complained, old André felt no anxiety on her account.

The winter came and passed. For that southern region the season had been severe; it had snowed, and ice had covered the

ponds more than an inch thick. Even now—and it was nearly April—though the days were warm and sunny, frost lay on the ground in the early morning; and on the borders of the woods and thickets, the sun was not yet warm enough to melt it quite. Throughout the whole day a fringe of white edged the green meadows near the trees.

One morning Léonie came down from Thermes to The White House. She was the bearer of a message from her father for old André. The road that led across the wooden bridge, owing to the tall elms that bordered it, and whose young leaves were already sprouting, was in the shade, but on the meadows which lay on either side, the sun streamed warm and bright.

Lightly jumping across a hedge, the young girl was soon briskly walking on the grass towards The White House.

Like most peasant-girls of the country, she knitted as she went, and at the same time she sang a bright, sweet song, for her heart was light and happy.

Suddenly a terrific roar silenced her song and arrested both feet and hands in fear.

Léonie was not a nervous girl, and she was too much accustomed to being with cattle to be afraid of them. She milked her father's cows, she guarded the oxen in pasture, and had never even stood in awe of the wild young bull of her father's herd. Yet when she now saw a large-horned animal rushing madly across the grass in her direction, she first paused in utter terror and dismay, and then tore on at her utmost speed, for she had seen at a glance that the bull running thus wildly after her, was one known in all the country as so dangerous that he was never let free, and must now have escaped by force from chain and collar.

Robert Desbats had very lately purchased the animal, and had himself only yesterday evening told Léonie's father, in her presence, that it was of pure race and lineage, but dangerously wild at times.

Léonie ran on, terror lending her speed, and the bull followed, accompanying his impetuous course with wild roarings of rage. She measured the distance that lay between her and safety. Alas! no building stood nearer than The White House, and that was still barely in view.

She raised a sudden despairing cry for help. She felt that the call would be unheard, and that a few moments only separated her from a cruel death. Now she feels the bull's breath on her neck—a ghastly feeling makes her reel. Then suddenly she receives a shock, a strong impulse throws her to the ground and saves her. Almost simultaneously she hears the roar of the maddened brute, and a heavy fall.

For a moment stunned, she rises, feels that she is unharmed, but has a conviction that her safety has been purchased at a dire cost. Through her bewildered gaze she sees Robert and a labourer running at full speed after the bull; both carry heavy whips, and the former the strong chain and collar, from which the infuriated animal has escaped. She hears Robert's voice calling to her in a tone she has never heard before:

"For Heaven's sake run to her, Léonie, and see whether she is still alive!"

"She! Who?" wonders Léonie. She sees that the two men are mastering the bull, and quickly recovers her senses. "She" must be that form which she now perceives, lying motionless on the grass a few yards off. She hurries towards it, and begins to understand how she herself has been saved. The generous hand that thrust her from an awful death to take her place, was the hand of the idiot girl Madeleine.

She seems dead; her cheeks, her lips, are bloodless; she lies on her back, her lids are closed, and her long black hair falls over her shoulders.

Léonie touches her hands, they are cold as death. A sob rises to her throat, she thinks she will die too in looking on that ghastly figure, when Robert hastily rejoins her. His voice is husky with emotion, and his hand trembles as he places it on Madeleine's heart. Then he turns to Léonie:

"She is not yet dead, but Heaven knows what injury she has sustained."

Of outward harm there is no sign; yet, when the young man tenderly and carefully takes the light form in his arms, a groan of anguish escapes those lifeless lips. He carries her gently and silently to her home, Léonie sobbing by his side.

They lay her on her bed, and whilst André stands by her side, silent and tearless in his grief, and Léonie tries to restore life by chafing those cold hands, Robert saddles André's grey mare, and makes her trot to the doctor's house, which is full ten miles off, faster than the old mare ever thought to run again.

Neither the old man's silent despair, nor Léonie's fast-flowing tears, wake Madeleine from her death-like swoon.

The noonday sun declines ere the doctor comes. He enters, stoops over the sufferer, touches the stiffened limbs, and then

ominously shakes his head. When with his hand he examines the spine, a moan escapes the poor girl's lips, and the doctor turns away.

"There is no hope," he murmurs, "the injury is in the spine; partial paralysis has already commenced, it will reach the heart, and then—"

A look says the rest. There is no need to do anything, for nothing can save Madeleine from a speedy, but not painful death.

Before leaving, the doctor asks to see the poor girl's clothes, and looks at them with Robert. The skirts are pierced, but the thickness of the home-spun woollen material has saved Madeleine's form and limbs from being gored. It is the fall from a height of perhaps fifteen feet after the toss, that has caused mortal mischief to the spine.

Tears are in Robert's handsome eyes as he returns from accompanying the doctor, and takes up his watch with the others by that inert body that seems already dead.

A priest has been sent for; he kneels by the bed, murmuring the prayers for the dying over Madeleine's unconscious head. His voice is the only sound that breaks the death-like stillness of the room.

The sun has sunk, a young moon has risen and throws a pale light on to the bed, when suddenly there is a slight movement in Madeleine's face and she opens her eyes.

They rest on Robert's, and their expression is no longer vague and wandering, but filled with such a light of love and tenderness, that it seems as though her soul had returned from a long journey to visit its mortal covering once, before leaving it again—for ever.

Robert bends towards her, and the voice that speaks to him, though very low, is no idiot's meaningless tones.

"I am glad I did it," she murmured. "I saw you coming, but I knew that you could not be in time, and then she would have been where I am now." She paused a moment, and then continued: "You are good and kind, and it pains you to see me here, but it would have been far greater pain had she been in my place."

The priest approached, but she turned her eyes away from him, and looked only at Robert.

"No," she sighed, "I have nothing to confess. My head has ached very often, and I have not always known what I did, but if you could have loved the idiot girl, Robert—only that could not be—the pain and confusion would perhaps have gone away."

She spoke no more, but with her hand clasped in Robert's till it grew colder still, and quite senseless, with her eyes fixed on his, till their first and last look of intelligence faded into death, she peacefully passed away.

A few days ago I passed by The White House. It was an autumn day, and the leaves were drifted to the ground by a cold wind. They strewed the path, and rustled under my feet as I walked, and I heard the river murmuring under the wooden bridge.

The house was deserted and closed, the garden neglected and overgrown by weeds. Old André, older, grayer, and more silent than ever, lives up in the village with Robert and Léonie.

In his happiest moments he rocks their child on his knees, but his thoughts ever seem absent, and are most often with the memory of the poor idiot girl—Madeleine.

Her name is sacred in Robert's home, and his child already murmurs a prayer for the peace of the soul of Madeleine.

## The Editor's Note Book.

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN has the happy faculty of always saying the right thing in the right way, and her touching and graceful letter of thanks to her people for the "affectionate sympathy" which they displayed on the death of the Duke of Albany will forge another link in that chain of personal good feeling, which, in this country, fortunately binds Sovereign and subjects together. So long as this family feeling exists, socialists, and republicans, and anarchists may rave against monarchical institutions in England without doing much harm to anybody.

THE arrests in connection with the dynamite infernal machines are of great importance, and perhaps some of the hasty people who cry out against the police and especially the detective department, if there is the slightest delay in discovering the most artful criminals, will regret their precipitancy.

THE American papers, by the way, appear to be very angry with our press for calling for some Government interference with Irish traitors on their side, and declare, firstly, that there is no proof that

the dynamite came from the United States, and, secondly, that if it did it would be out of the power of any Government to prevent its exportation.

THIS, of course, has nothing to do with the matter. The point is, simply, that the American Government, by allowing Fenian agents to advertise publicly for subscriptions with the avowed intention of destroying numbers of innocent people, is practically conniving at murder, and that everybody knows perfectly well that the only reason why no American politician displays common honesty and humanity in the matter is that the Irish vote is looked upon as much too serious and important a political factor to be trifled with.

If the action taken by the Empress of China and her advisers may be accepted as a forecast of the future, it is very clear that the French, far from having finished their work when they captured Bac-Ninh, are on the threshold of a war with China itself—a very different matter to a buccaneering expedition in a remote province. Everybody in power who was connected with the Chinese disasters in Tonquin has been degraded and punished, and Peking seems full of fight. A Chinese war may please the Parisians—especially as there can be no fear of an invasion of Black Flags—but it seems an odd way of procuring that repose of which France stands so much in need.

LORD ROSEBERY has evidently made good use of his eyes and ears during his tour in the Australian colonies, and his remarks at Dundee on the subject of the relations which ought to exist between the mother-country and her offspring will be read with keen interest in Australia and New Zealand. It is so very seldom that statesmen at home take the trouble to learn anything about subjects of this kind for themselves, that Lord Rosebery's speech will come as quite a pleasant surprise.

ONE of the matters of which Australia grievously complains is the existence and extension of the French convict settlement at New Caledonia, and the somewhat apathetic manner in which protests and complaints have been received by the authorities at home. A remonstrance was, indeed, addressed by Lord Granville to the French Government on the subject, but no real objection was made to its being politely shelved in the usual way, and there seems to be no reason to hope that France has any intention of clearing out the hideous sink of iniquity which lies, so to speak, at Australia's very doors.

THE annals of our own early convict settlements do not afford very pleasant reading, but the story of New Caledonia as told in the *Times* of the 17th instant—on French authority, be it understood—is infinitely worse. It is not surprising that the Australians should look with dismay on this manufactory of demons, for it really is little else, and on the prospect of its inhabitants gradually overflowing among the Pacific Islands.

THE Easter Monday Volunteer Reviews, which appear to have been quite as successful as any of their predecessors, have been described in the newspapers, as usual, at extraordinary length and with elaborate detail, and the customary compliments have been lavishly bestowed upon the force.

THAT these compliments are not in the main thoroughly well earned, and that the men do not deserve every credit for their public spirit and for the pluck and energy with which they struggle with adverse circumstances, I should be sorry indeed to say. But there seems to be real danger that in the roseate glow of the congratulations of the reporters, the public should lose sight of the darker side of the question, and be led away by the fallacious idea that the collection of regiments that they occasionally see together represents in any genuine way anything like a real army.

THERE is not much that is either useful or practical in the idea of an army without camp equipment, without transport, without commissariat, without cavalry, and without field-artillery; while the arrangements in virtue of which the volunteers are armed with a weapon inferior to that entrusted to the regulars are of a kind to ensure disaster if a crisis should ever arise. Furthermore, the difficulty, which has for some time been felt, of procuring a sufficient supply of competent officers points to something very rotten in the constitution of the force.

THE real fact is that no Government has ever really looked upon the Volunteer Service as anything better than a toy; and that such official recognition as it has slowly and painfully attained has been due to the persistence of some of the more energetic of its commanding officers, and to the steadiness with which all ranks have worked in the teeth of the inert obstruction of languid opposition, rather than to any conviction in the minds of politicians that the thing ought to be taken seriously.

THE proposal to erect vast sewage works near Kew hardly seems to have attracted the attention it deserves, probably because the inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood are not very numerous, but it is undoubtedly one of great importance. As one of its results would be to convert the Thames between Petersham and Kew into a receptacle for a great deal of the sewage of some twenty suburban parishes, the scheme is not altogether uninteresting to the enormous population which occupies both banks of the river for many miles lower down, and it is to be hoped that it will not be carried into execution until the new Metropolitan Council has had an opportunity of carefully considering it.

IN this connection it is interesting to bear in mind, as a correspondent of the *Times* pointed out the other day, that at this very moment a most expensive contest is being carried on between the Corporation and the Metropolitan Board of Works in respect to the sewage-pollution of the Thames. A stronger argument in favour of establishing one government, and one only, for the whole metropolis could hardly be found.

THIS being (as we are constantly being told by the writers of essays in the magazines and of leaders in the newspapers) a high-pressure age, when the race of competition allows nobody to stop and rest, and when the struggle for bare existence is so severe as to keep everybody continually strained to the highest pitch, it is not surprising that at Easter the country practically made holiday from Thursday night to Tuesday morning.

NOR is it any more surprising that a prodigious sum of money should have been spent (principally by the retail shopkeeping and wage-earning classes) during those four days, when we come to consider—on the authority also of our guides, philosophers, and friends, the essayists and leader-writers—that trade was never so dull, that there never was so little doing, and that there never were so many people either earning nothing at all or only just enough to keep body and soul together as at the present time. It is indeed a difficult matter sometimes to make facts and theories agree.

THE death-roll of men of letters for 1884 threatens to be terribly long, and to include an unusual number of names of more than ordinary brilliancy and interest. The list grew sadly in the first three months of the year, and last week were buried two men unlike in all things except their powers of sustained hard work and the obligation under which they had laid thousands upon thousands of readers and playgoers—Charles Reade and Henry Byron. What rank they will take in that Walhalla which is represented by the opinion of posterity, it would be as presumptuous as it would be vain to attempt to prophesy, but it seems certain that the earnest, eloquent author of "The Cloister and the Hearth," "Christie Johnstone," and "Hard Cash," must have his place among the immortals, and that "Our Boys" will long remain the typical comedy of its time. In each case private sorrow, and a deep sense among numerous friends of personal bereavement, will be as widely felt as the public loss.

ON Boxing Days and Easter Mondays, and on other such occasions, when new pieces are produced and there are many entertainments to be noticed, a great variety of reporters are pressed into the service of the newspapers, and, in the department of dramatic criticism more especially, a good deal is published next day which will reward careful study. One of the best things in this way that I have seen for some time appeared in a daily paper last Easter Tuesday, and was from the pen of a (presumably casual) dramatic critic, who described a scene in the new piece at the Standard as being "petitely presented and discreetly chastened." "Petitely presented" is a choice phrase, though I am not quite sure that it conveys any particular meaning. C. D.

## The Trial of Lady Lisle.

IT was at Winchester, in August, 1685, that the detestable Judge Jeffreys began the butchery that King James so much desired with the trial of Dame Alicia Lisle, a venerable and respected woman of more than seventy, the widow of one of Cromwell's lords (one of King Charles's judges, some say), who had been assassinated at Lausanne by the Royalists. She was accused of harbouring John Hickes, a Nonconformist divine, and Richard Nelthorpe, a fugitive lawyer, who had dabbled in the Rye House Plot. The chief witness, a man named Dunne, living at Winchester, deposed that, some days after the battle of Sedgemoor (which was in July), a short, swarthy, dark-haired man sent him to Lady Lisle, at Moyles Court, near Fordingbridge, to know if she could give Hickes shelter. Lady Lisle desired him to come on the following Tuesday; and on the evening of that day he escorted two horsemen, "a full, fat, black man, and a thin black man." A Wiltshire man, whom they paid to show them the way over the plain, betrayed them to Colonel Penruddock, who, early the next morning, discovered Hickes hidden in the malthouse and Nelthorpe in a hole in a chimney. Lady Lisle's defence was that she knew Hickes to be a

Nonconformist minister against whom a warrant was issued, but that she did not know he had been with the Duke of Monmouth. As for Nelthorpe, she did not even know his name; she had denied him to the soldiers only from fear, as they were rude and insolent, and were with difficulty restrained from plundering the house. Lady Lisle then avowed that she abhorred the Monmouth plot, and that the day on which King Charles was beheaded she had not gone out of her chamber, and had shed more tears for him than any woman then living, as the late Countess of Monmouth, Lady Marlborough, Lord Chancellor Hyde, and twenty persons of the most eminent quality could bear witness. Moreover, she said, her son had been sent by her to bear arms on the king's side, and it was she who had brought him up to fight for the king. Jeffreys, eager for blood at the first case of treason on the circuit, and seeing the jury waver, roared and bellowed at Dunne, who became too frightened to speak.

"I hope," cried this model judge, "I hope, gentlemen of the jury, you take notice of the strange and horrible carriage of this fellow, and withal, you cannot but observe the spirit of this sort of people, what a villainous and devilish one it is. A Turk is a saint to such a fellow as this; many a Pagan would be ashamed to have no more truth in him. Blessed Jesus, what a generation of vipers! Dost thou believe there is a God? Dost thou believe thou hast a precious and immortal soul? Dost—"

"I cannot tell what to say, my lord," stammered poor tormented Dunne.

Jeffreys: "Good God, was there ever such an impudent rascal! Hold the candle up, that we may see his brazen face."

Dunne: "My lord, I am so baulked that I do not know what to say. Tell me what you would have me say, for I am shattered out of my senses."

Placid Judge: "Why, prithee man, there is nobody baulks thee but thy own self. Thou art asked questions as plain as anything in the world can be; it is only thy own haughty, depraved heart that baulks both thy honesty and understanding, if thou hast any; it is thy studying how to prevaricate that puzzles and confounds thy intellect; but I see all the pain in the world, and all compassion and charity, is lost upon thee, and therefore will say no more to thee."

The jury were long in discussion, and three times brought in Alicia Lisle not guilty, but they succumbed at last to the judge's threats and denunciations, and the poor charitable woman was condemned to be burnt to death on the very next day. The clergy of Winchester Cathedral remonstrated against the cruel haste, and Jeffreys, not wishing to destroy the sociability of his visit, postponed the execution for five days. In the meantime there was great intercession made. But the only mercy James had the heart to show was to commute the sentence from burning to beheading. On the afternoon of September the 2nd she suffered death on a scaffold in the market-place, and underwent her fate with serene courage and Christian resolution. Her last words were forgiveness to all who had done her wrong. In the first year of William and Mary the attainder was reversed, and Lady Lisle's two daughters, Triphena and Bridget, were restored to all their former rights.

## A Tale of Mid-Air.

IN a cottage in the Valley of Sallanches, near the foot of Mont Blanc, lived old Bernard and his three sons. One morning he lay in bed, sick and burning with fever, and watched anxiously for the return of his son, Jehan, who had gone to the village to fetch the physician. At length a horse's tread was heard, and the doctor entered. He examined his patient closely, felt his pulse, looked at his tongue, and then said, patting the old man's cheek: "It will be nothing, my friend—nothing!" But he made a sign to the three lads, who, in anxious suspense, stood grouped round the bed. All four withdrew to a distant corner, when the doctor shook his head, looked grave, and said: "'Tis a serious attack—very serious—of fever. The fit is now at its height, and as soon as it abates somewhat, he must have sulphate of quinine."

"What is that, doctor?"

"Quinine, my friend, is a very expensive medicine, but which you may procure at Sallanches. Between the two fits your father must take at least three francs' worth. I will write the prescription. You can read, Guillaume, and you will see that he takes it."

When the physician was gone, the three young men looked at each other in silent perplexity. Their whole stock of money consisted of a franc and a half, and yet the medicine must be procured at once.

"Listen," said Pierre, the eldest, "I know a method of getting from the mountain before night three or four five-franc pieces."

"From the mountain?"

"I have discovered an eagle's nest in a cleft of a frightful precipice. There is a gentleman at Sallanches who would gladly purchase the eaglets; and nothing made me hesitate but the terrible risk of attempting their capture; but that's nothing when our father's life is concerned. We may have them in two or three hours."

"I will take the nest," said Guillaume.

"No, no; let me," said Jehan; "I'm the youngest and lightest."

"I have the best right to venture," said Pierre, "as it was I who

discovered the nest; but let us decide by drawing lots. Write three numbers, Guillaume, put them into my hat, and whoever draws number one will try the venture."

Guillaume blackened the end of a wooden splinter in the fire, tore an old card into three pieces, wrote on them one, two, three, and threw them into the hat.

How the three hearts beat! Old Bernard lay shivering in the cold fit, and each of his sons longed to risk his own life to save that of his father.

The lot fell on Pierre, who tenderly embraced the sick man.

"We shall not be long absent, father," he said, "and it is needful that we go together."

"What are you going to do?"

"We will tell you as soon as we come back."

Guillaume took down from the wall an old sabre which had belonged to Bernard when he served as a soldier; Jehan sought the thick cord which the mountaineers use in felling trees; and Pierre went towards an old wooden cross reared near their cottage, and knelt before it for some minutes in fervent prayer.

Then they set out, and soon reached the brink of the precipice. The danger consisted not only in the possibility of falling several hundred feet, but still more in the probability of attack from the formidable birds inhabiting the wild abyss.

Pierre, who had to brave these perils, was a fine, athletic youth of twenty-two. Having measured with his eye the distance he would have to descend, his brothers fastened the rope round his waist, and began to let him down. Holding the sabre in his hand, he safely reached the nook that contained the nest. In it he found four eaglets of a light yellow-brownish colour, and his heart beat for joy at the sight. Grasping the nest firmly in his left hand, he shouted joyfully to his brothers above:

"I have them! Draw me up!"

Already the first upward pull was given, when Pierre felt himself attacked by two enormous eagles, whose furious cries proved them to be the parents of the nestlings.

"Courage, brother! Defend thyself! Don't fear!"

Pierre pressed the nest to his breast, and with his right hand made the sabre play round his head.

Then began a terrible combat. The eagles shrieked, the young ones cried shrilly, the mountaineer shouted and brandished his sword. He slashed the birds with its blade, which flashed like lightning, and only rendered them still more enraged. He struck the rock and sent forth a shower of sparks.

Suddenly he felt a jerk on the cord which sustained him in mid-air. Looking up he perceived that in his evolutions he had cut it with his sabre, and that half the strands were severed.

Pierre's eyes dilated wildly, remained for a moment immovable, and then closed with terror. A cold shudder passed through his veins, and he thought of letting go both nest and sabre.

At that moment one of the eagles pounced down on his head and tried to tear his face. The Savoyard made a last effort, and defended himself bravely. He thought of his old father and took courage.

Upwards, still upwards, mounted the cord, friendly voices eagerly uttered words of encouragement and triumph, but Pierre could not reply. When he at last reached the brink of the precipice, still clasping fast the nest, his hair, which an hour before had been as black as the raven's wing, was become so completely white that his brothers scarcely recognised him.

What did that signify? The eaglets were of the rarest and most valuable species. That same afternoon they were carried to the village and sold. Old Bernard had the medicine, and every needful comfort beside, and the doctor was able in a few days to pronounce him convalescent.

## Luncheon for Ladies.

WE have often observed ladies—especially ladies from the country, who are sight-seeing or shopping in and about the town—very hungry and very tired, looking about with wistful eyes for "some-where to lunch." "Is it the correct thing to go in here?" one will say, as she scans the outside of a grand-looking restaurant. "I wonder whether we can get a chop?" says another, and yet more anxiously a third, with a numerous following, to whom the price of a meal is of consequence, "Will it be expensive?" Not caring, however, to make a practical answer to this last question, some more or less unsatisfactory refreshment is snatched at the nearest pastrycook's.

IN order to be useful to ladies who may desire to take luncheon under these circumstances, it is proposed in this paper to give some information about the principal restaurants, the ruling prices, and some general hints on the subject.

IN his "Dictionary of London," the Editor of this Journal says that "ladies without male escort can safely visit any of the great restaurants," and this is confirmed by our own observation. Nevertheless, it is a great comfort to know beforehand that there is a room reserved for ladies—more especially is this a comfort for young ladies—who nowadays move about so much for purposes of

study, literary work, business, and so on, and who are thankful for the quiet half-hour of comparative retirement. The very high rate of rents in the City makes every inch of space so valuable that one cannot wonder that the accommodation for ladies—as a rule, the least paying section of guests—is limited and far from satisfactory. This want it is which causes ladies to shrink from taking substantial meals in public rooms, and makes them glad to snatch a bun and wait until they can, at home, eat without an accompanying sense of suffocation. However, to many people it is an immense boon to be able to get, at reasonable prices, a really good hot meal within reach of their business haunts. No doubt in a few more years commercial enterprise will provide for women, as for men, more suitable rooms, and a greater degree of privacy than is at present the case.

FIRST upon our list must be placed the Holborn Restaurant, which, for its splendour, is unrivalled. It is true that luxurious surroundings are not necessary to a frugal meal, but when one gets them "into the bargain," they may be thankfully accepted. This truly palatial restaurant is conveniently situated for ladies visiting the British Museum, and is within easy reach of Oxford Street also. No one sight-seeing in London should miss seeing the Holborn Restaurant, and it is well worth the price of a luncheon, merely to see the taste and magnificence with which the place is fitted up. From the spacious and lofty vestibule, with its double flight of marble staircases and marble-lined walls, the visitor passes to the Grand Salon, through a doorway of statuary marble of rich Renaissance style. In the salon the tables are laid in the most faultless manner, with very beautiful glass and silver of perfect brilliancy; and no time is lost by the attendants in caring for the wants of the guests. For ladies unaccompanied by gentlemen the balcony of the Grand Salon will be found the most private and comfortable, and it may be stated that the tariff is the same in all parts of the house, and is as low as that of many very second-rate houses. For instance, a mutton chop is served for ninepence, a plate of roast beef for tenpence, a steak for a shilling. Those who desire it can choose from a large bill of fare a number of dishes of all kinds, at prices equally moderate with those quoted above; and there is always a variety of sweet dishes at from fourpence to sixpence each. The greatest care is taken in choice of provisions at the Holborn Restaurant. Everything is of the highest quality, and perfectly well cooked. The ladies' cloak and toilette rooms are on the left of the entrance to the Grand Salon, and are fitted up in so elegant and luxurious a manner as to afford a study in the art of furnishing.

THE excellence of Messrs. Spiers and Pond's luncheons and dinners is well known. At their Holborn Viaduct, as well as their other restaurants, the service is admirable. Everything on the table is faultlessly clean and bright, and you are provided with a serviette. A lady can perfectly well lunch here; still, you only see a few of the more staid and elderly enter at the busy time. You can, in dining-rooms, have a chop, with potatoes and bread, at a shilling. For a dinner of fish, or from the joint, with vegetables, cheese, and salad, the charge is two shillings. For this sum you have as much as you like to ask for, with all the usual accompaniments—for instance, with roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, delicious cheese, butter, and whatever salad is in season.

AN excellent place for ladies visiting the Cathedral, or shopping near to it, is the Cyprus Restaurant, 1 and 2, Cheapside. It is well for ladies to enter at the door nearest St. Paul's Churchyard, particularly at the busy hours, as thus they have no need to pass through the crowded refreshment-bar, but can go straight upstairs to a room for ladies. Gentlemen accompanied by ladies are admitted to this room, for, as the attendant remarked, "Husband and wife don't like to be separated." At the Cyprus you get a most excellent luncheon at a very moderate charge. The plate of meat from the joint, with vegetable and bread, for thirteen-pence, is all that can be desired, and more than a person of good appetite can eat. There is usually a choice at this price of five or six joints. A large plate of fish is supplied from ninepence to a shilling, and good soup at fourpence the basin. A number of nice light puddings are to be had at equally low charges. No alcoholic drinks are supplied here. The attendants in the ladies' room are young women, clever, quick, and attentive, and yet, as the bill says, there are no gratuities to waiters.

NEXT on our line of route we come to the People's Café, 61, St. Paul's Churchyard. Here a room is reserved for ladies only—we confess with shame that we don't know where the husbands are stowed away. The prices at this café are pretty much the same as those quoted above, and there is usually a choice here of three or four joints, and the Scotch broth at fourpence the basin is good. A fair-sized cup of what is known by the name of coffee, with unlimited milk, is supplied here at twopence. The young women attendants are attentive, and expect no gratuity.

PASSING out of St. Paul's Churchyard, and by the ancient book-selling establishment of Messrs. Griffith and Farran, and keeping a little way down on the same side of Ludgate Hill, we come to Brown's Refreshment Rooms, 16, Ludgate Hill. The accommodation for ladies is not all that could be wished, but the eatables are exceedingly good. Besides a variety of nice cold provisions, there is the usual

choice of soup, fish, grill, *entrée*, or joint. Of this last we had an excellent plate at tenpence, with two vegetables at fourpence. It is with no small pleasure that we chronicle a good cup of coffee at the moderate charge of threepence.

WE now cross the road to "Wolff's Konditorei," 55, Ludgate Hill. Here is pretty much the usual pastrycook's room, which ladies and gentlemen use in common. Joints are not served here, but the *entrées* from a shilling to fifteenpence are good. A mutton chop without vegetables is charged tenpence.

As we have already spoken of the general excellence of the arrangements and provisions at all Messrs. Spiers and Pond's restaurants, it will be unnecessary to do more than remark that at Ludgate Station ladies can lunch either in the dining-room, or on light refreshments at the bar on the other side of the station, where sixpence is charged for a cup of coffee of the average quality.

PASSING down the Strand, and immediately opposite the Royal Courts of Justice, we come to the Palsgrave. This is a handsomely fitted up restaurant, with every comfort, the table-service being exquisitely clean, and in no way inferior to that of a well-ordered private house. The tariff is as moderate as that of the other houses we have mentioned, and the provisions of the first quality.

At Brettini's, immediately opposite Exeter Hall, where there is a quiet dining-room, ladies can obtain dishes nicely cooked in the French style, and the prices are exceedingly moderate.

THE restaurant of the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross, the luncheon-room of which is situated below-stairs, leaves nothing to be desired. Here you have every comfort, and a choice of good dishes from a shilling upwards. This is a particularly useful house for ladies visiting the National Gallery, and is within easy reach of many of the West End exhibitions and shops. Farther west again are the Criterion and St. James's Hall, both excellent for luncheon purposes, while at Nicols's Café Royal, opposite St. James's Hall in Regent Street, the best of everything can be obtained at fairly reasonable rates. Ladies should go to the upstairs room, as smoking is permitted on the ground-floor. Verrey's, at the corner of Regent Street and Hanover Street, is all that can be desired except, perhaps, in respect of price.

## A Proposal in a Street Car.

THE bleak and uninviting interior of a street car, with the thermometer twenty degrees below freezing-point, was the scene of a proposal of marriage. The hour was half-past nine; the car one of the amber-hued chariots of the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Streets line, Philadelphia, and the interested parties a pretty girl of about nineteen summers, with dark eyes and rosy cheeks, and a young man of two or three and twenty.

"Are you cold, Amelia?" came in gentle tones across the car.

"Yes, Charley," was the half-whispered reply. And Charley snuggled up close and took Amelia's hand in his.

He then glanced at her in a loving way, looked across at the reporter, who was apparently asleep, noticed that the conductor was entirely occupied in keeping his feet warm, and, after giving one or two coughs, said with a smile:

"Do you recollect what I told you the first time I met you, Amelia?"

"No, Charley. What?"

"Why, that I had never been in love, and that it would be a cold day when I'd ask a girl to marry me."

"Oh yes, but why do you ask?"

"Well, this is a very cold day, Amelia, isn't it?"

"Yes, Charley; but why?" and she blushed as she glanced up at him, and his face drew nearer hers.

"Well, will you?"

There was silence for a moment but for the jingle, jingle of the bells and the shuffling of the conductor's feet upon the icy platform. Then she slipped her hand into his, blushed even rosier than before, and whispered, "Yes."

"Bless you, my children," exclaimed the delighted reporter; and as the lovers half started up, abashed at the unexpected discovery of their secret, the scribe shot out of the doorway and hurried away.

## Fashions.

THE recent Court mourning, occurring so unexpectedly, altered all the arrangements made previously for the coming season by the dress-makers and milliners. The pretty dresses which were ready for Easter had to be kept until the sombre garments were laid aside, and now the weather allows of much lighter clothing, less muffling than was intended when the dresses were planned. The end of the Court mourning is a relief to the eye. Good feeling induced ladies, who could not afford

new dresses, to appear heroically in black costumes which had known better days, and nothing looks worse than half-worn, dingy mourning, made up of many shades of black. The best feature was the second stage, with the beautiful shades of grey in soft woollen textures, which with bright colours can now be worn for the rest of the year.

THE term grey, as descriptive of a colour, is of very wide significance. Like the Smith family in England, it has many branches, and the relationships between each are difficult to trace. Slate, dust, lavender, dove, pearl, French, are all legitimate varieties. Then we come to the greys of secondary character, those in which other hues are blended. London smoke is a grey into which a suspicion of green enters. Another grey receives red and glides into violet, with mauves, and peach-blossoms, as colours by evolution. Another grey takes blue and becomes electric-blue, so that when fashion proclaims grey to be the colour of the day, we know not where it will land us. We know what it is, but we do not know what it will bring us eventually.

THE unexpected always happens, says a great authority, and this is exemplified in the blending of different greys in the same dress: smoke-grey, lavender-grey, and dust-grey, a mixture which, even a few months ago, would have driven an artistic person into idiocy; or pearl-grey, French-grey, and stone-grey, a more reckless mixture still, as these are all cold colours, very flat in tone. There was the same outcry a few years ago, when blue and green were worn together, it being considered that all the canons of art were outraged by placing these colours in close affinity. But the human eye is wonderfully docile to training, and if but opportunities are afforded of seeing any startling novelty frequently enough, it soon becomes accepted as a matter of course.

In the making of dresses we have as yet only modifications of old styles, nothing altogether original or striking. The skirts are still pleated, but less formally than last year; one broad fold, with several small between, or large box-quills with a plain part between each, and on this space ornament is placed, embroidery or braiding, not on the large quill as last year. The knife-pleated skirts have scarcely answered the anticipations of those who patronised them. Damp affects the regularity of the folds, and in order to make them remain in good order without a tape sewed at the back, the pleating is done with so sharp a machine, that only a very good material will bear the treatment. Silk and satin cut very easily; so do nun's veiling and the other cheaper textiles.

THE tendency of drapery is to return to depth and fulness, long tunics arranged in a series of graceful folds, like the robes on a classical figure. The tunic with one point in front, worn a little to one side, is draped very high up, being left plain at the side-seams for about half a yard from the hem. The puffings at the back are no longer absolutely necessary, as by the new arrangement the back is draped at the side-seams only. The treachery of the arrangement of puffs in drapery being tacked here and there to the lining, every lady has experienced more or less. To struggle through a crowd, or subject a skirt to any strain, but too often tore out the puffs, if the sewing were good, bringing a piece of the stuff with it, and if it were weak, the threads snapping in every direction.

THE modern tunic is made as before, in two parts, back and front; the front may be plain or pointed, the back quite plain. It is possible to join the side-seams and pleat up the tunic afterwards, but such skill is required for this that it is better to arrange the folds and then sew the seams. The tunic requires to be cut very long—twice the length it is to assume when finished—to allow of the folds being ample and flowing easily. The back is cut quite straight, and is neither more nor less than some long plain breadths; when sewed together, about one yard and three-quarters to two yards wide. As described for the front, half a yard from the hem is left plain, and from that to the waist pleated in large folds, turning upwards, making the waving lines from side to side describe an imperfect half oval. The arrangement of some tunics in front is on the same principle as muslin curtains are now draped on windows. Instead of the two lengths being hung up so as to meet in the centre at the top of the window, they are made to lap over, one on top of the other. When caught back about halfway down, they make a double festoon, which is graceful and yet leaves the window quite free from screening. The two fronts of the tunic are laid on over each other and caught back. The skirt for this design is generally of rich brocade or velvet, either frilled round the bottom, or out out in battlements and frills showing below, sewed on an underskirt.

CHENILLE spots on all kinds of woollen materials are fashionable; wafers, stars, leaves, squares, diamonds, being thrown up, and plain materials to mix with the spotted can always be had from the same manufacturer. For the plain fronts of skirts the machine-embroidered flowers for sewing on as *appliqué* are very much used for evening and dinner dresses.

SHOT-SILK is more obtrusive than any other in mantles and dresses, but always with some other material, for alone it would be very



trying. Mantles and dress-skirts are slashed, some at the sides, the latter at the back, silk in a series of small folds showing below. The silk is also used for facings, collars, cuffs, full vest, etc.

THE dress bodices made last year with the very long coat-tails behind, which reached to the hem of the dress, had one great fault in being too narrow, and looking rather too much like a string. As the tails of this year are broader, and slope gradually from the seam under the arm, last year's bodices will require some remodelling. By opening the back seam quite up to the waist, and laying a folded back underneath, pleats turned towards the centre, a very modern effect can be given to an old dress. If the tails had been cut apart from the bodice, and added on, moving them round, about an inch each side towards the front, is another improvement. Bodices have still vest fronts, and there seems to be no limit to invention in making a variety of waist-coats. During the recent complimentary State mourning very pretty demi-toilette bodices were made by having a vest for morning wear separate from the bodice, worn underneath it, and thick silk cords buttoning across on gimp barrels. For evening wear white muslin in folds was substituted as a vest. With black velvet, grey silk gauze made a dressy habit-shirt. Stockingette bodices show still more improvements each season. The addition of a well-cut basque is one of the happiest steps in advance. Black stockingette powdered with jet, with garnet, with gold, or with silver dots, removes the bodice from all suspicion of being a mere jersey for economical use, and elevates it to the position of best dress bodice.

IN mantles, the dolman shape, with long ends in front and very short behind, tied in at the waist, will soon be too warm for walking out in. The little circular capes with high shoulders have the addition of long ends in front, rather wider than what are known as stole ends; while the back, shaped in to fit the figure, is carried down for about six inches below the waist, and finished with bows of ribbon and lace trimming. Chenille fringes are still in favour for mantles, long and thick. The newest have little gold balls at the end of each caterpillar. This fringe is usually added in order to suit a bonnet of gold-spangled net with lace-edged strings to match, and a row of gilt beads round the rim. The tulle fall would also be gold-powdered. The horse-shoe round crown, cut out to show the hair, still grows in favour.

PARASOLS are in endless variety, and the brilliant colours in which sateen is made bring sunshades to match summer dresses within the reach of girls with limited dress allowances. Bright red sateens, covered with black lace, are very effective, the cover being a circular, put on over the top, bordered with lace, and tacked at the tips to the red foundation. Red silk or sateen, with a large rosette of black lace on each division, and a bow and long ends of satin ribbon from the top, the ribbon being reversible, black and red, is very stylish. Ladies who have lace sufficient to make rosettes can buy, for about half-a-crown, a very good sateen sunshade, and trim it at home; but about a yard and a half of lace is absolutely required for each rosette, as they must be large enough to stretch from rib to rib. Mushroom-coloured parasols are similarly trimmed, and are more useful than red, as they match every dress. Black lace is a very sober trimming; red lace, red lining, red bows of ribbon, give a mushroom-coloured parasol a very gay and stylish appearance.

VELVET throatlets are ornamented in every possible manner, from diamond stars worn by great ladies, down to humble little buttons of quaint designs brought from the depths of some old lady's workbox. Fancy waistcoat-buttons, coral, pearl, silver, etc., the survivors of the day when men indulged in fancy vests, rarely number more than six, too few for a dress-front, but quite enough for a velvet throatlet. Black velvet is again tied in a bow behind, but these old buttons look better with antique snaps to match.

## How to Sing Duets.

IF we have been much in the habit of going to musical evenings it is not unlikely that we have come to consider the vocal duet as about the most terrible of all the arrows that lurk within the quiver of the amateur.

WHEN a duet is badly sung, how very bad it is! No time, no sense of harmony, both the performers singing as if their object were to drown their companion's voice, a timid solo coming somewhere in the middle, sung as though the singer were quite overcome at the thought of her own temerity; a final reunion of voices towards the end, with a tremendous pause on the penultimate note which results in one singer losing breath before the other, and coming in unevenly at the commencement of the next bar, as if she had been running a race which she had just succeeded in winning by a neck. When this sorry performance has come to an end, the listener is apt to be slightly at a loss for words in which to express his sensations; if the duettists are sisters, he will do well to confine himself to the general statement that "sister's voices always go so well together"—a wise and not too compromising speech which is always accepted as a tribute of

praise. Sometimes it is a young lady and young gentleman who sing together, and then you may well close your eyes in agony and prepare for the very worst. She has a shrill and slightly nasal soprano, he has a sentimental air, and a gusty tenor—you know it as well as if you had been told it, your prophetic gaze can penetrate through the Russia-leather music-case—you know it as well as if you saw it written in red letters on the wall—they are going to sing Mendelssohn's "I Would That My Love."

POOR Mendelssohn! What sin had you committed during your blameless life that this one song should have been selected out of all your writings as the special prey of the amateur? It is not the most beautiful, there are many others as fine; it is not the most easy, in point of fact its long phrases demand a peculiarly fine style of singing; yet something there is about it which is fatally attractive to bad singers; and beautiful as it is in itself, the fiat has gone forth that no musician may enjoy it evermore, because its chords bring memories of suffering.

THE odd point about it, to a musician, is the curious clinging to old and hackneyed songs on the part of the amateur. There are many good duets that are little known. Why not try them, instead of dragging out that ancient battle-horse again and again? And as good duet-singing is only to be attained by constant practice, there is every reason why duet singers should be constantly reading new things together. Some voices are very hard to sing with, but some seem to have the art of blending easily with others. A sympathetic voice is the great secret of duet-singing, and the power of self-suppression when the occasion demands it.

IT is all very well to make fun of amateur duet-singing, but when it is done artistically it is by no means to be despised. It is delicious to listen to the harmonies when two sympathetic voices are wedded together in a union as perfect as that of the flower and the leaf, when the deep tones show through the lighter ones like a rich-coloured lining to a silvery dress, when one sentiment guides the two singers. Singing like this is truly a musical treat, and makes a pleasant change in an evening, and a relief from hearing one solo after another.

IT is also very good for singers to practise duets, as it is always cheerful work to do any kind of music in company, and it is a great assistance to the cultivation of a feeling for time. The one who sings second should remember it is her place to be always subordinate to the first; no singing can be artistic when the second is trying to overpower the melody. Then when the soprano ceases for a bar or two the contralto must strike in firmly, coming in exactly on the beat; she cannot sing too strongly then, as she has to take the melody.

As crispness, lightness, and accurate time are some of the greatest beauties of duet-singing, it is important that each of the performers should know her part perfectly. A great deal of solitary practice is necessary before any perfection can be attained; each singer should know her part so well that she can render it almost mechanically, and be able to devote the greater part of her attention to what the other singer is doing. Finish is the great beauty of duet-singing. Nothing is uglier than roughness in a duet, and it is difficult to avoid it when both singers are almost reading from sight. They may make very praiseworthy efforts at keeping in time, but produce an effect like that of a scramble.

AFTER the parts have been studied separately, there must be an immense amount of practice together. The principal reason why sisters generally sing so well together is that they have the opportunity of so much practice. They sing together so often that their voices get to sound like one, and then, indeed, is duet-singing beautiful to listen to, even though, separately, the voices might not be fine.

ONE very common fault in duet-singing is a tendency to drag. If amateurs had their own way they would take everything too slow. This fault is particularly ugly in duet-singing. Mendelssohn's music is peculiarly susceptible of being spoiled by this treatment. Over-emphasis is fatal to it. "The May-bells and the Flowers" cannot be made too quick and light, yet how often we hear it sung in a ponderous manner. "I Would That My Love" is nearly always taken so slow and pathetically that it seems natural to conclude that the singers have never looked at the time-mark, which is actually "*allegretto con moto*." Mendelssohn himself is said to have played the accompaniment like lightning. Duet-singers should be particularly careful to avoid slowness, and should not hesitate to tell each other if they perceive any tendency to slackening.

A GREAT point in the effect is that the voices should be equally balanced, and sufficiently alike in quality. Nothing is uglier than to hear a heavy contralto coupled with a feeble soprano, or a soprano so powerful that it completely drowns the inner part. It is surprising how easy some voices are to sing with in comparison with others. Some are so sympathetic, and so true to time, that, however softly they may sing, they give you a kind of support; others, again, are unresponsive and heavy, so that it is like being tied to a log. But, once you get the voice that suits you, there is no end to the advancement you may

make, particularly if you not only learn plenty of fresh music, but get it up with great care and finish.

DUETS for tenor and soprano sound very well. "Oh, That We Two Were Maying," by Mrs. Meadows White, is a charming specimen of this kind of writing. Its great beauty lies in its apparent carelessness. It is extremely graceful, and the voices dovetail over one another in a particularly charming way. Sir Sterndale Bennett's "May Queen" affords another example of the way in which these two voices can be combined. There is something particularly harmonious about duets for two equal female voices. Rubinstein's duets are wonderful, refined, and beautiful, and can hardly fail to give pleasure both to the listeners and the singers. "Der Engel" is one of the loveliest of the set. Mendelssohn's part-songs have been so frightfully hackneyed that one is afraid to mention them, still they are such excellent practice that it is well to learn them in private, though one would not choose the better-known ones to sing in company. Kücken and Keller have written many fine duets, and amongst modern music we often come upon charmingly-written duets, such as "Si t'adore," by Schira, for soprano and baritone; and "My True Love Has My Heart," for two equal voices, by Théo Marzials. Many of the operas afford delightful duets for various voices, and it is both pleasant and instructive to hunt through them for suitable pieces, as when one is looking for one particular thing, one often comes on many an unsuspected beauty by the way.

## Household Gardening.

GARDENS in which fruit-trees are grown and orchards are now in great beauty by the wealth of charming blossoms with which the trees are clothed. There are few, if any, flowers more delicately beautiful than those of Pears and Apples, the former being blush-white, and now fading, the latter lovely pink, varying in shade and just expanding. For this spring beauty alone these trees are worth growing in the form of bushes or pyramids, for they are at least as ornamental and attractive as any other shrubs; yet those who plant fruit-trees naturally look for something more than blossom—fruit. It depends entirely on the weather whether they can have it or not—at least, in the case of large trees in the open; small bushes, also trees on walls, can be usefully protected from spring frosts, that are often so ruinous, by covering them with blinds, netting, or the branches of evergreens; and a choice Pear, Peach, Nectarine, or Apricot tree, laden with blossom or embryo fruit, is well worthy of the attention that is bestowed on it in the manner indicated. The young fruits that have set are quite as liable to injury as the blossoms, and can never be considered safe until they are protected by the expanding foliage towards the middle of May. It will be well, therefore, at the present time, to give a little thoughtful attention to cherished fruit-trees.

### FASHIONABLE FLOWERS.

Only a very few years ago flowers, as a rule, were but little admired unless they were double, and florists were ever striving to raise new varieties with a multiplicity of petals. Single Dahlias were spurned as worthless, single Primroses and Polyanthus regarded as common, and even single Pansies were not considered good enough for the taste of the time; but all is changed, and single forms are in the ascendant.

### PRIMROSES.

For some days past the "Pale Primrose" has been the most fashionable flower, and lanes and copses have almost been denuded of the pretty wilding to meet the great demand for bunches in cities and towns. It is really a charming flower, and is now largely grown in gardens and window-boxes. The plants transplant well, even when in flower, but those who wish to establish a stock should divide the plants immediately after flowering and plant them in good soil in a rather moist and shaded place.

### PRIMROSES FROM SEED.

The quickest and cheapest method of raising a number of plants of various colours, also of Polyanthus, is by sowing seed, which can be had from seedsmen and florists, for sixpence or a shilling a packet, according to the quality of the flowers it was saved from, and the number of seeds in a packet.

Those who are tempted to purchase what are offered as "cheap" seeds, may be certain that they are inferior either in germinating power or the quality of the flowers from which they were saved.

As scarcely anything is more annoying than to grow plants for a year, and when they produce flowers to find them worthless, it is strongly advised that such so-called "bargains" be avoided, and that seed be obtained from a firm of repute, which cannot afford to do otherwise than to sell a good article at a fair price.

Artificial heat is not needed for raising Primroses from seed, which grow quite well in the open ground, though sown in boxes filled to within an inch of the top with light, yet rich sandy soil, and a sheet of glass laid over the box, germination is more certain, always provided the soil be kept constantly moist.

Whether sowed in borders or boxes, the position should be shaded,

as if the sun is allowed to parch the soil occasionally, healthy seedlings cannot be expected. The seed should be sown thinly, and covered about a quarter of an inch deep with sandy soil.

If pots or boxes are used, they may be stood either in a cool frame or on the north side of a wall, as they will be far better out of doors than in a warm and dry greenhouse.

Plants raised now and grown well will flower next spring. Double kinds cannot be raised from seed, but only by dividing the plants and planting offsets with roots attached, keeping them damp and shaded till established.

### DAFFODILS.

The bright and cheerful spring flowers, which "come before the swallow dares," were never so fashionable as now, and the singles are the favourites.

So great has the demand for single Daffodils become, that they are grown by the acre, especially in the Channel Islands, and the flowers are sent to London by the truck-load.

The varieties are very numerous and diversified in character, some being only an inch or two high, with flowers half an inch in diameter, while others are at the least six times the size and undeniably imposing.

Autumn is the time for planting Daffodils or Narcissus, and many were planted and potted as advised at the time. We have only to say now that those that were planted should remain undisturbed, and on no account must the leaves be cut off before they are withered.

Plants that have flowered in pots should, after removing the faded flower-stems, be planted out in positions where they can remain undisturbed to grow and flower year after year, and they should be watered, and shaded if needed to keep the foliage fresh as long as possible. This is a point of the first importance in strengthening the bulbs for another year.

By adopting the practice referred to, of buying a few bulbs every year and flowering the plants in pots, then planting them, a quantity of Daffodils can soon be established in gardens.

### WHITE AND YELLOW MARGUERITES.

These extremely pretty white and yellow flowers rank amongst the most fashionable of window and greenhouse plants, and they also succeed well planted in the open air during the summer.

The flowers are flat and round, varying in size from one to two inches in diameter, and are composed of a number of ray florets, arranged similarly to those of the common Daisy.

Although round, they have somewhat of a star-like appearance; indeed, the yellow variety is named by the French growers who raised it, Etoile d'Or (Golden Star).

The plants are raised from cuttings inserted now in a moist, warm frame, and speedily commence flowering. Those who have not a heated frame at command can purchase small plants for a few pence each from florists, and they only need potting in ordinarily fertile garden soil, using four or five inch pots, and placing in a greenhouse or light window to grow and flower freely.

The plants are attractive in summer, grown either in flower-beds or window-boxes, and the flowers are in great demand for furnishing vases for the adornment of rooms.

### SINGLE CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

For producing a grand display of colour in the autumn, the magnificent double Chrysanthemums are familiar to all; but during the past two years a new race with perfectly single flowers has been produced, and the varieties have created a small sensation in the floral world.

The flowers of this "new departure" type, as it is called, are perfectly single, like Cinerarias, and are both novel and attractive. To several of the varieties of star-like appearance names have been attached—some of them in honour of "stars" in the theatrical world. For instance we have Gus Harris, a rosy-lilac flower, described as "quite a gem," a designation which it is hoped the great man of Drury Lane will not disclaim; Henry Irving, silvery rose, and "very desirable;" Miss Ellen Terry, bright magenta, "one of the finest;" Mrs. Langtry, silvery blush, "a decided acquisition;" and Mr. Toole, clear yellow, "very free." It should be observed, however, that plants of these are four or five shillings each, but this, after all, is far below the price of a box at the theatre. Single Chrysanthemums are also raised from seed, and they will almost certainly become popular.

### DAHLIAS.

Single Dahlias are raised from seed as easily and readily as Balsams are raised, but artificial heat is requisite, such as a frame on a bed of leaves and manure. Those who have not such convenience, and yet covet a few plants of these very fashionable and brilliant flowers, should purchase them about the middle of May. They are no longer expensive, except the new varieties, several that are almost equally good being obtainable for a shilling each.

Double Dahlias, than which there are no flowers more magnificent both in form and colour, must also be purchased, except by those who have roots, which should now be divided, potted, and placed in a frame or greenhouse for starting them into growth, and preparing for planting out towards the end of May.

Those who have Dahlias in a dry state, but no frame or other glass structure, may plant the roots in the garden during the first week in May, covering them about three inches deep. The growths will then appear in June, when they will be safe from frost, and the plants will flower freely towards the end of summer.

# Odds and Ends.

DAVID, a Yorkshire musician, was one day returning home through a pasture in which there was a bull, who, seeing David with his red bag, made at him, bellowing loudly, with evident hostile intentions. The musician did not fly; it would have been undignified, and the bass viol that he carried might be injured by a precipitate retreat over the hedge. The bull came on with lowered horns. "Steady!" soliloquised the musician. "I reckon that was double B na'ral." Again the bull bellowed. "I am pretty sure it were B," said David again; "but I'll mak' sure;" and opening the bag he took out the bass viol, and drawing the bow across the string, he produced a sound as full of volume and of the same pitch as the tone of the angry beast. "I thowt I were reet," said David with a grim smile. At the sound of the bass viol the bull stood still, raised his head, and looked at the strange object before him. David thought it a pity to bag his violin without a tune, and began the violoncello part in one of Handel's choruses. It was too much for the bull; he turned tail.

THE son of a Pomeranian squire had been sent to finish his education in Breslau. He had not heard from his native village for a long time, when one day young Mat, the servant-man at the hall, made his appearance, and the following conversation ensued. Yonker (young squire): "Eh, good morning, Mat. Well, what news from home?" Mat: "Oh, nothing particular, except that the old crow is dead that used to hop about the house." Y: "That isn't much, certainly. What did he die of?" M: "Of eating too much horse-meat when the four carriage-horses died." Y: "The splendid team! How did they come to grief?" M: "With drawing water." Y: "But they had only the carriage to draw." M: "Nay, they drew the fire-engine once." Y: "On what occasion?" M: "When the hall was burnt down." Y: "What! is our house burnt down? How did it happen?" M: "It was set on fire by the wax tapers which were burning in your room after your mother's death."

IN his amusing "Recollections and Reflections," Mr. J. R. Planché, speaking of the great basso of times gone by at Her Majesty's Theatre, says: "Apropos of Lablache, it was after dinner at Gore House that I witnessed his extraordinary representation of a thunderstorm simply by facial expression. The gloom that gradually overspread his countenance appeared to deepen into actual darkness, and the terrific frown indicated the angry lowering of the tempest. The lightning commenced by winks of the eyes and twitchings of the muscles of the face, succeeded by rapid side-long movements of the mouth, which wonderfully recalled to you the forked flashes that seemed to rend the sky, the notion of thunder being conveyed by the shaking of his head. By degrees the lightning became less vivid, the frown relaxed, the gloom departed, and a broad smile illuminating his expansive face assured you that the sun had broken through the clouds, and the storm was over."

"COOKING," says Mr. Ruskin, "means the knowledge of all herbs, and fruits, and balms, and spices, and of all that is healing and sweet in fields and groves, and savoury in meats; it means carefulness, and inventiveness, and watchfulness, and willingness, and readiness of appliance; it means the economy of your great grandmothers, and the science of modern chemists; it means much tasting and no wasting; it means English thoroughness, and French art, and Arabian hospitality; and it means, in fine, that you are to be perfectly and always 'ladies'—'loaf-givers'; and, as you are to see, imperatively, that everybody has something pretty to put on, so you are to see, yet more imperatively, that everybody has something nice to eat."

THE late Dr. Macadam used to tell of a tipsy Scotchman making his way home upon a bright Sunday morning, when the good folk were wending their way to the kirk. A little dog pulled a ribbon from the hand of a lady who was leading it, and as it ran away from her, she appealed to the first passer-by, who happened to be the inebriate, asking him to whistle for her poodle. "Woman!" he retorted, with that solemnity of visage which only a Scotchman can assume, "woman, this is no day for whustlin'."

AT some religious ceremony at which Archbishop Whateley was to officiate in the country, a young curate who attended him grew very nervous at their being late. "My good young friend," said the archbishop, "I can only say to you what the criminal going to be hanged said to those around, who were hurrying him: 'Let us take our time; they can't begin without us.'"

HARRY and Charlie, aged five and three respectively, have just been seated at the nursery table for dinner. Harry sees that there is but one orange on the table, and immediately sets up a wailing that brings his mother on the scene. "Why, Harry, what are you crying for?" she asks. "Because there ain't any orange for Charlie."

WHEN President Arthur was a very small boy, his mother reprimanded him one day for some misdemeanour. Not knowing it, his father began to talk to him on the same subject. Looking up in his face, Arthur said solemnly: "My mother has tended to me."

THE philosopher Zeno believed in an inevitable destiny. His servant availed himself of the doctrine while being beaten for a theft, by exclaiming: "Was I not destined to rob?" "Yes," replied Zeno, "and to be corrected also."

ASKED if he did not think a certain friend followed his conscience, an eminent and witty prelate replied: "Yes; I think he follows it as a man does a horse in a gig—he drives it first."

THE best mathematics.—That which doubles the most joys and divides the most sorrows.

THE best navigation.—Steering clear of the lacerating rocks of personal contention.

THE best diplomacy.—Effecting a treaty of peace with one's own conscience.

THE best biography.—The life which writes charity in the largest letters.

THE best engineering.—Building a bridge of faith over the river of death.

ONE ought to remember kindnesses received and forget those he has done.

"WHEN I was a boy," said an old man, "we had a schoolmaster who had an odd way of catching the idle boys. One day he called out to us: 'Boys, I must have closer attention to your books. Let the first one that sees another idle inform me of the fact and I will attend to the case.' 'Ah,' thought I to myself, 'there is Joe Simmons that I don't like. I'll watch him, and if I see him look off his book, I'll tell.' It was not long before I saw Joe look off his book, and immediately I informed the master. 'Indeed,' said he, 'how did you know he was idle?' 'I saw him,' said I. 'You did? And were your eyes on your book when you saw him.' I was caught, and I never watched for idle boys again. If we are sufficiently watchful over our own conduct, we shall have no time to find fault with the conduct of others."

A STORY is told of a provincial theatre in Ireland where Macready was personating *Virgilius*. In preparing for the scene in which the body of *Dentatus* is brought on the stage, the manager called to the Irish attendant—his property-man—for the bier. Pat responded to the call at once, and soon returned with a foaming pot of ale, but was received with a string of anathemas for his stupidity. "The bier, you blockhead!" thundered the manager. "And sure isn't it here?" exclaimed Pat, presenting the highly polished quart measure. "Not that, you stupid fellow! I mean the barrow for *Dentatus*." "Then why don't you call things by their right name?" said Pat. "Who would imagine for a moment you meant the barrow when you called for beer?"

A DRAPER'S assistant in London, who was in the habit, with his master's cognisance, of attending a workmen's Socialistic meeting, neglected for a week or two to attend the meetings, and the following dialogue took place between master and man. Master: "Well, John, and how is it that you have not kept up your attendance at the Socialistic meetings?" John (rather confusedly): "Well, sir, I don't think I shall go any more." Master: "But how is that, John?" John: "I have found out, sir, that the scheme is not quite so fair as I thought it was. At the last meeting I attended we calculated how much there would be for every one when everything was divided up, and we found it would only be £105 each, and you know, sir, I have £150 in the bank."

A MEMBER of the Zoological Society says: "I once had a cat who always sat up to the dinner-table with me, and had his napkin round his neck, and his plate and some fish. He used his paw, of course, but he was very particular, and behaved with extraordinary decorum. When he had finished his fish I sometimes gave him a piece of mine. One day he was not to be found when the dinner-bell rang, so we commenced without him. Just as the plates were put round for the *entrée*, puss came rushing upstairs and sprang into his chair, with two mice in his mouth. Before he could be stopped he dropped a mouse on to his own plate, and then one on to mine. He divided his dinner with me, as I had divided mine with him."

A GENTLEMAN, who has been diverted by the fun extracted from the names in the Clergy List, has compiled *Ye Medical Directory*. For instance, under the head of "Beverages," one finds doctors named "Beer, Porter, Perry, Mead, Port, and a Pickup Tipple, besides Cream," while under "The Human Frame," there are "A Body, five Heads with Hair, one Brain, and two Beards, but only one Legg and one Foot with Corns, two Hands and Palms, a Tooth, a Bone, and two Joynts."

A QUAKER was negotiating with an insurance company as to effecting a policy on a vessel overdue. At this juncture he heard of the vessel's loss, and wrote at once to the company. "Friend, if thee hasn't filled up the policy, thee needn't, for I've heard of the ship." "Oh," said the officer, "cunning fellow, he wants to do us out of the premium." So they wrote the Quaker: "Thou art too late by half an hour—thy policy is filled up."

WHEN Samuel Lover was out with a tourist party off the Welsh coast, the band on board struck up the lively air, "Rory O'More," and when one of their number came round with the cap, the musician, on the strength of having done so, asked Lover for something to drink his health with. "Bedad," said Lover, "that's square, anyhow, to make a man pay for hearin' his own music!" and good-naturedly gave him half-a-crown.

A DISTINGUISHED foreign diplomatist, a very genial and social being, soon after his arrival in London, made the round of the sights, Madame Tussaud's among the number. "And what do you think of our wax-works?" said a friend. "Well," replied the general, "it strikes me as being very like an ordinary English party."

THE Police Commissioners of Broughton Ferry, near Dundee, have been compelling house-proprietors to lay down concrete on the foot-path in front of their properties. An old lady residing in a cottage, proudly told a friend the other day that the front of her house had been "consecrated up to the vera door-step."

AN American court has decided that marriage contracts made on a Sunday are valid, on the ground that they come under the head of "works of necessity and charity."

A GREAT philosopher says: "In the economy of nature nothing is lost. The inside of an orange may refresh one man, while the outside of the same fruit may serve as a medium for breaking another man's leg."

"I WISH you'd let me go to the city with you," said a young wife to her financial husband; "I should so like just for once to take a stroll through the money market."

A MODEST young editor says: "Our editorials have been crowded out this week by a pressure of interesting reading matter."

THE dates on some of the rare old books offered for sale in Paris show that they were issued before the invention of printing.

WHY is lighting a cigar a second time much the same as declining to accept one from a friend? Because you re-fuse it.

IT is said that artichokes are good for rheumatism, and there is no doubt that hearty jokes are good for dyspepsia.

NEVER judge by appearances; but, in case of a heavy defalcation, it is generally safe to judge by disappearances.

MAN is the picture, his clothes the frame. The frame is often worth more than the picture.

A THORN in the bush is worth a dozen in the hand.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Enquiries will be attended to as quickly as possible, but, as we have to go to press several days before publication, some delay is inevitable. In no case can questions be answered "next week," as some of our friends demand.

We have received several very unreasonable complaints of delay in attending to letters, which have been addressed to us by Correspondents who have paid no regard to the instructions which are given every week in this Journal.

The Editor is therefore compelled to give notice:

1. That all letters containing postage-stamps for copies of this Journal, or on similar business, must be addressed to the PUBLISHER.
2. That all letters containing enquiries for the Correspondence Column, or on literary business, must be addressed to the EDITOR.
3. That Correspondents are urgently requested to adopt distinctive pseudonyms, and not to use such vague signatures as "A Constant Reader," etc.
4. That Correspondents wishing to write on two or more subjects—say to send in an answer to a Correspondent, and to enclose stamps for a copy of the Journal—must send each communication in a separate envelope, properly addressed as above indicated.
5. That NO ATTENTION can be paid to any Correspondents who do not observe these rules.

### QUESTIONS.

S. D. D. will be glad to know who wrote the following verses, and where he can find them:

The Virtues were invited once  
To banquet with the Lord of All.  
They came—the great ones rather grim,  
And not so pleasant as the small.

They talked and chatted o'er the meal,  
They even laughed with temperate glee,  
And each one knew the other well,  
And all were good as good could be.

Benevolence and Gratitude  
Alone of all seemed "strangers yet,"  
They stared when they were introduced—  
On earth they never once had met.

### ANSWERS.

**ABDERITE.**—The two most celebrated Stylites or pillar-saints are Simeon of Syria and Daniel of Constantinople. Simeon spent thirty-seven years on different pillars, each loftier and narrower than the preceding. The last was sixty-six feet high. He died in 460, aged seventy-two. See Butler's "Lives of the Saints."

**A. C.**—A description of such a box was contained in *HOUSEHOLD WORDS*, No. 2.

**ALMA.**—You will probably find the biography in the "Eminent Women Series," 3s. 6d. (W. H. Allen).

**AN ANXIOUS ONE.**—1. Common-sense tells us that it is an idle saying that "It is seven years' bad luck to anyone that breaks a looking-glass." No doubt it is bad luck to break a looking-glass, but there the misfortune ends. Surely you must be careless to have a second accident of this kind. 2. We do not see that your handwriting requires improvement. It has good style and is legible. You might, however, keep the lines at more equal distances.

**C. J. E.**—The best private School of Telegraphy is that in the Uxbridge Road, W. To obtain particulars of Government School, write to the Postmaster-General, St. Martin's-le-Grand, E.C.

**DEUX CŒURS AIMANTS.**—No; we do not give names.

**E. W.**—The seeds you have sent are no doubt those of the Honesty (*Lunaria biennis*). Sow them thinly, in light soil, in the open ground, in May, covering half an inch deep, and when the seedlings are large enough to be handled, transplant them a foot apart. Further cultural particulars will be given in due time.

**G. B. G.**—The King's and Queen's College of Physicians of Ireland, the University of London, and the Royal University of Ireland, have opened their examinations to women, and have recognised the London Medical School for Women, 30, Henrietta Street, Brunswick Square, and the Royal Free Hospital, Gray's Inn Road, as institutions from which certificates of attendance can be received. All information on subjects connected with the medical education of women, or respecting scholarships, can be obtained on application to Mrs. Thorne, Hon. Sec., 30, Henrietta Street, Brunswick Square, W.C.

**IGNORAMUS.**—1. What could follow on "hot salmon and hot plum-pudding" at a birthday supper but indigestion and nightmare? The idea of such dishes at an "otherwise cold supper" is really too dreadful to contemplate. 2. The crust for a "roly-poly" pudding can be made either of butter or suet. Well flour the cloth and take care the water is boiling when you put the pudding into the pot; these precautions should prevent sticking of the cloth. Have you seen the cloths which are knitted with coarse cotton, expressly for roly-poly pudding? They leave the pattern on the pudding, which thus looks more inviting than when boiled in a plain cloth.

**J. F.**—We regret to find that in a paragraph in No. 154 of this Journal, the name of Dr. Jackson is given as retiring Bishop of Chester. It should, of course, have been Dr. Jacobson.

**MICROSCOPE.**—The actual focus of your object-glass would be about one-sixteenth of an inch. Have you tried it at that distance from your object? If so, and still without success, take it to an optician. Do not attempt to doctor it at home.

**PUNCH.**—A Red Cross nurse wears a plain black dress, high-necked, and with long sleeves, and rather short in the skirt, a white cap, and bibbed apron, and white lawn sleeves, worn over the black ones, and reaching to a little distance above the elbow. A red cross of some soft material, such as merino, is neatly stitched on the body of the apron. There were some "Red Cross Nurses" at the Peasant International Fête at the Albert Hall lately. If you will look in the illustrated papers of that date, you will see very correct pictures of them.

**SIGNA.**—1. We cannot find any trace of an opera called "Native Land." There is, however, a cantata of that name, composed by Alfred Gaul. If that is what you want, you had better write for it to Novello's, Berners Street, Oxford Street, London, W. They do not publish it themselves, but

say they will procure any of the works of Mr. Gaul which are published at other houses. Mr. Gaul is a Birmingham man, so most likely "Native Land" was published in Birmingham. 2. "Ahn's French Phrase Book" is an excellent one for beginners. It is in three parts; the first one, 1s., the other two 1s. 6d. each.

**SOAP.**—As we do not know of what kind of fat you make your soap, or the quantity of alkali, etc., you use, we cannot tell you the cause of the mildew. The description of the process of soap-making would take up too much of our space. You will find excellent articles on the subject in Parts III. and VIII., "Amateur Work" (Ward, Lock and Co.).

S. S.—"Walton's Argentine" can be had of the maker, Haverstock Hill, or be ordered through any silversmith or ironmonger. Full directions are given with the preparation.

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EDITED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHRISTMAS, 1883.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

## Haunted.

By "RITA."

### CHAPTER I. AN INTERLOPER.

"WHAT are we to do with him?" said the Rev. Amos Milroy, and he rubbed his thin grey hair up on end, as was his way when perturbed in spirit, and looked helplessly across the breakfast-table at his wife.

Mrs. Milroy was a meek little woman, cumbered with the care of many olive-branches and small means. Her eyes met those of her lord and master with a bewildered stare that gradually changed into deprecation.

"My dear," she said, "it is impossible. We have more mouths now than we can afford to feed. We can't possibly have him. You must write to these people and tell them so."

The Rev. Amos Milroy smiled grimly.

"I have been appointed guardian, and I cannot well refuse the office," he said, "and you see they offer a hundred a year. It will be no additional expense."

"And where are we to put him?" asked his wife, who had a woman's own gift of raising obstacles in the way of things that, to her, were undesirable. "You know how cramped we are already for room; and the boys won't like it, and what will Opal say to a young savage?"

"He may not be quite that, and Opal will have to get used to him."

"Six boys," sighed Mrs. Milroy. "Oh dear! If it had been a girl now—"

Her husband smiled faintly; he was accustomed to her laments, and generally ignored them. He laid down the letter which had been the subject of these remarks, and rose from the scantily-appointed breakfast-table.

"You must do your best" he said quietly. "He is on his way by this time, and may arrive at any moment. He can share Harold's room, and if you had a few extra things—you can get them from N—. I can spare you two or three pounds. A little chintz and muslin and some new ware will make the bed-chamber quite presentable under your clever management."

The door closed on the bent, shabby figure, and his wife's eyes followed him somewhat wistfully.

"Two or three pounds," she murmured, "and he does so want a new warm overcoat. Could I manage it, I wonder?"

The thought of bargaining and contriving brought a faint colour to her worn and faded face. She rose and took the letter, and then went to the window overlooking the neglected garden. The children were playing there. Five great, noisy, boisterous boys and one girl, their sister.

The mother's eyes looked out on them with more of wistfulness than pride—seeing the shabby darned clothes, the torn hats, the worn-out boots, and taking more note of them than of the rosy, handsome faces, and blithe, strong young forms, which bespoke abundant health and strength.

"I had better tell them," she said, and taking up a shawl which Opal had knitted for her, she put it over her head, and went out into the chill autumn air.

The children were round her in a minute. Opal, a girl of some thirteen or fourteen years, with a face like a spring morning, it was so fresh, and fair, and sunny, linked her arm in her mother's, and impudently demanded the news.

"Is it the letter?" she asked quickly. "Yes, of course it is. Has some one left us a fortune?"

"Has the bishop remembered father at last?" asked Tom, the eldest of the six.

"This letter is from abroad," said their mother. "From the lawyers of your uncle Sebastian. He is dead."

"They do not want us to go into mourning, do they?" said Tom.

"Bosh! when we've never even seen him, or he us," cried Bertie, who was the youngest of the boys, and the special favourite of his sister Opal.

"Do let mother speak!" cried Edgar impatiently. "What's the use of guessing when we can hear the real facts at once?"

"You see, my dears," resumed Mrs. Milroy, "your uncle Sebastian went out to Spain when he was quite a lad, and your father and he have never met since. He married there, but his wife died long ago, and now he, too, is dead, and he has left an only child—a son. This son he wishes your father to educate and bring up. He has been very much indulged—he is very ignorant—and when he is twenty-one he is to come into a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. That is the story we hear of him, and the boy himself is on his way, and may arrive at any moment. Your father wishes me to prepare you all for this new companion, and hopes you will welcome him kindly. Of course he will feel very strange and lonely, but—" She stopped abruptly.

There was an ominous cloud on the six bright faces. The news had evidently not pleased them.

"What a nuisance!" "Disgusting!" "The idea of another fellow coming here." "Why couldn't Uncle Sebastian leave the young savage in his own country?"

These remarks fell low, like smothered thunder, from the various mouths.

Opal only was silent. She was looking at her mother's face.

"Will it be any help to you? Will they pay?" she asked softly.

"Yes," said Mrs. Milroy, colouring, as if half ashamed of the one welcome item in the news. "They are to pay one hundred pounds a year."

"Well, that's good," said Opal emphatically. "At least it will provide his food."

"He'll only want oil and garlic," interposed Tom loftily. "You had better look up some Spanish messes in the cookery-book, Opal."

"I wonder how he'll be dressed?" said Bertie. "Don't they wear sombreros and knee-breeches out there?"

"You haven't told us his name," said Opal curiously.

"Alfonso, or Pedro, or José, of course," said Edgar. "I suppose he'll carry a dagger in his belt—or sash, whichever he wears—and give us a gentle reminder of his Spanish blood every time we disagree."

"His name," said the mother, when her voice could be once more audible, "is Ruiz. And I hope, my dears, you won't disagree, for after all he is your cousin, and your father's only living relative. Besides, you must remember he is an orphan, and we should all try our best to make him feel at home with us. And now I am going into N— to make some purchases, so I trust you won't get into any mischief. I may not be home till tea-time, and if by any chance your cousin should arrive, I must trust you to show him all kindness and attention."

"Where's he to sleep?" asked Opal.

"In Harold's room. I am going to make a few additions to it. It is woefully shabby; still, it's the best of the bedrooms," sighed the harassed woman. "And we must make it do. Perhaps your cousin won't be very particular."

She moved away then, and went back to the house to give her orders. Opal slowly followed. The boys lingered a few moments to discuss the advent of the new cousin, and then went to their father's study for the morning lessons that were the torment and delight of his life. Torment, because of the wild spirit and insubordination of the young crew; delight, because teaching was really a pleasure to him, and his mind was as gifted and intelligent as it was gentle and patient. The morning hours were always devoted by him to teaching his children; indeed, there was no other prospect of education for them except what he could bestow. The town of N— was far away, and schools there were expensive as well as unsatisfactory. It was his great ambition that Tom, his eldest son, should



go to Oxford; but that idea looked very impossible, and very far off; indeed, insufficient finances stood as a bugbear to most of the family's ambitions or desires, for the Rev. Amos Milroy was only the rector of a small and poor parish in a remote district of Lincolnshire.

Opal usually shared her brothers' studies. Indeed, she was nearly as good a Latin scholar as Tom, and better at Greek than Edgar; the boys themselves acknowledged that at English literature none of them "were a patch on her," which was high praise in their phraseology. This morning, however, as her mother was going to the town, Opal took the household duties off her hands. That is to say, she dusted the rooms, and gave out the stores, and helped the one servant of the household in preparing the early dinner. When that meal was over and her father had departed on his parish rounds, and the boys started off with wild whoops on an expedition of their own, she put on her hat, and went out for one of the lonely rambles in which she delighted.

The roads and lanes were already wearing that look of melancholy and desolation which Nature puts on at the fall of the leaf.

The tints of autumn had changed into its season of decay and desolation—that season of grey sky and bare trees, of dull mists and sodden leafage, when it is difficult to feel bright or hopeful, or out of harmony with one's dismal surroundings.

There had been a great deal of rain, and the low-lying grounds for miles around were more like marshes than anything else. But Opal did not mind weather. She flitted along through the dreary lanes, and shook off the withered leaves as they showered themselves on her bright hair, with a smile that might have repaid them for their trouble.

A walk of two miles brought Opal to her destination. She was then outside a low and broken stone wall, so thickly covered with ivy and creepers, and surrounded by underwood of all descriptions, that it was hardly more than outlined.

This wall was the boundary of Chalford Hall, or, as it was mostly called, the Old Hall, and from the rising ground where the girl stood, the beautiful, half-ruined building was distinctly visible.

Beautiful it was still, despite the ravages of time and the cruelty of neglect and desolation. It was a grey old Gothic building with lancet windows, pointed gables, and carved buttresses, and it stood in a park of vast extent, that was now a mere wilderness of trees, and tangled grass, and briars, and wild trailing ivy.

At a short distance from the wall by which Opal had halted was a small iron gate. It was broken, and hung on but one hinge, and the pillars too had fallen and crumbled into that same semblance of decay which made every one call the old Hall a ruin. On the inner side of the gate a great oak stood; it had been blasted by a lightning-stroke some score of years before, so the villagers said, and yet it stood firmly there—naked, leafless, with outstretched boughs, like skeleton arms that seemed to extend themselves threateningly over the portals it guarded. On the outer side was a small, deep pool, fringed by reeds and rushes, and with the trailing leaves of hidden water-lilies floating over its dark surface. By the side of the pool was a solitary heron.

Opal knew the bird quite well, and used to bring fragments of bread to feed it with. She used to wonder if it ever stirred from that spot. She never came there without seeing it, the only living thing among the general loneliness and desolation.

The Old Hall was burdened with a host of traditions, and not a few crimes. From times immemorial the lords of Chalford had been cruel, evil-living, and spendthrifts. Every generation had but added more debts, and wrung more money out of his inheritance, until at last the place stood as it stood now, a gloomy indication of fallen fortunes, and a byword of neglect and shame.

Some said it was in Chancery, some that it was mortgaged to ten times its value, but all that was known of it was that it was tenanted by one solitary and uncanny being, a man full three-score years of age, an ill-conditioned, morose recluse, who had dwelt there for many years, seeing no one, going nowhere, existing people scarce knew how, occupied, it was whispered, with strange and diabolical pursuits.

Rumour is many-tongued, and what it gathers from one source is filtered through so many, that the last account bears little resemblance to the first; so the stories told of the inmate of Chalford Hall were many and strange. Opal had heard some of them, but she paid little heed—as little as she did to the ghostly legends of the old Hall itself.

She had been used to go there from quite a child. She thought now, as she stood gazing on the dreary old building in the dusk of the autumn afternoon, of how often she had crept through those broken iron rails, or climbed the ruined wall, and wandered through the vast old pleasure, or over the moss-grown paths, where the rabbits flitted by, and the wild game whirled and flew across her feet.

She had never met a living thing beside the animals and birds, and had grown to disbelieve in the tale of the solitary inhabitant.

Often, too, she had wandered through the ruined portion of the Hall, and looked out through the windows of the haunted chamber; but in all these expeditions she had invariably been alone, for—though she could not have explained why—a strange disinclination had always been with her to introduce that noisy, boisterous crew of brothers to the weird solitude and mystery of this deserted place.

In Opal's nature there was a strange mingling of lightness and mysticism, reason and romance. Not even those who loved the girl best could have understood this inner part, as it were, of her nature. The stories of the Old Hall and its mystic legend had always impressed her greatly, but she never said so, and, indeed, rather shunned the subject if any chance remark led to its discussion. What she loved best was to come here by herself, to wander through the desolate rooms, or the great wilderness of the garden and park, and invent histories of the dead-and-gone Chalfords, or dream over the romantic episodes of their lives.

It seemed so sad to her that not one of the family remained—that the beautiful, stately old pile had passed into strange hands, and no one heeded its decay. It had never looked more melancholy and dreary than it did now, with the chill mists rising like faint vapour from the damp ground, and the dull grey sky brooding over the leafless trees and rotting stonework. The girl stood by the heron-pool, and rested her arms on the broken wall, and, leaning there, gave herself up to the luxury of thought so often denied her in the noisy and care-encumbered household at home.

She must have stood there for a long time—how long, indeed, she scarcely knew, only that the faint dull daylight had deepened into dusk, and the sky grown more colourless and the wind more chill.

Then she roused herself with a start, and remembered that she had two miles to walk before she could reach her home. As she looked up, she saw, standing some few paces off, a solitary figure. The sight was so unusual a one in this lonely spot that it was little wonder she started. But the start was one of surprise, not fear. The figure was a strange one—that of a youth dressed in most un-English garb, with a wide, drooping hat which half concealed his face.

She stared at him in unfeigned astonishment, and he returned the look. She saw a tall slender figure, a pale face, lighted by large pathetic eyes, sombre as night, yet with a strange light in their depths as of hidden fire that as yet only slumbered, and a beautiful mouth, curved, and mobile, and eloquent of feeling. Dark soft hair of richest brown framed in this strange unyouthful face—hair tossed carelessly from the low broad brow, and far too long and negligently worn for English taste.

The one thing, however, that impressed the girl was the extreme mournfulness of the whole expression. Sadness haunted the dark, long-fringed eyes, and had drawn the curved mouth into pathetic lines, and set a seal of tragic meaning upon the brow; and it was this sadness which struck her most and gave her courage to address the stranger.

"Do you wish to go into the Hall?" she asked gently. "I believe you can do so. It is not inhabited."

He looked at her curiously, then lifted his hat, and said in slow, grave tones:

"No, I have no wish to go there. I only came here for a walk."

"Do you live in North Apse?" asked Opal in surprise. "I thought I knew everyone here."

"I have come to live here," he said in the same slow, measured accents, "at the rectory. When I found it, no one was there. I suppose I was not expected. I left my luggage and came out. The first road I found led me here. I have been watching you for a long time. Is that," pointing to the Hall, "where you live?"

"Oh no," said Opal quickly; "I live at the rectory. And I suppose you are our new cousin. Is your name Ruiz Milroy?"

"Ruiz Sebastian Milroy," he answered calmly. "And you?"

"I am Opal," she said simply, and gave him her hand.

He took it in the same cold, grave way, and his mournful eyes looked steadily down at her own.

"I never heard of you," he said. "I wonder if I shall like you."

Opal coloured slightly.

"I hope so," she said. "I am sorry we were all out when you arrived. We did not expect you so soon. Had you a pleasant journey?"

"Pleasant!" His eyes flashed, his lips expressed the utmost contempt. "No; nothing is pleasant here. What an ugly, hateful country you live in!"

Opal looked up indignantly.

"I am sure it is not," she exclaimed. "It is beautiful! Of course, at this time of the year everything looks dreary; but I suppose it is not always summer even in Spain."

"Spain is lovely!" he said in a tone of intense regret. "I don't know how you can live under such grey skies, and with such horrible air as this to breathe. And have you no flowers or fruit? Is it all like this; wet, marshy, flat? Ugh!" And he shivered visibly.

"Of course there are flowers and fruit at the proper time," said Opal indignantly. "I suppose you are cold and hungry, and that is why you are bad-tempered."

"I am not bad-tempered," said the youth hotly, "and even if you are my cousin, I think you are very rude to call me so. I have the sun in my veins, and I know I shall hate this land of fog, and rains, and bleak cold days. My mother told me it would be so, and that English girls were bold and rude, and not like our Spanish maidens. She was quite right."

Opal looked at him with the blood mantling in her cheeks.

"Your mother could not have known anything of England, for she was never here, and as for Spanish girls, they are bold enough in some things, if they are kept in convents and never allowed to look at a man without a veil over their faces. You see I know quite as much about your country as you do about mine."

He smiled with a somewhat lofty air of superiority; but Opal saw the smile, and it incensed her greatly.

"You are a funny little girl," he said coolly. "Come, don't let us talk here any more; it is cold. Show me the way home."

"If I am a little girl," said Opal with cutting politeness, "I am at least accustomed to civility. Say 'if you please.'"

For a moment he looked at her, and she returned the look. Blue eyes and brown flashed defiance, rebellion, wrath at each other, as only young indignant eyes can do. Then something in the girl's clear violet orbs seemed to thrill and master him. A dark flush rose slowly to his brow. He raised his hat with an action of consummate grace, and bent half seriously, half mockingly towards her. "If you please, cousin," he said.

She laughed and flushed too, and then turned away with a little air of conscious victory.

"Come, then; it will be quite dark if we do not make haste."

## CHAPTER II. "TO-DAY IT IS MY TURN."

ON the whole the new comer was not popular with his young cousins.

Youth is always more or less antagonistic to innovations, and Ruiz Milroy was certainly entirely different in thought, word, and manner to themselves, and utterly unable to suit himself to the gloom of their everyday life. He disliked study—was too indolent by nature for any physical exertion, and regarded their rough sports and games with the utmost scorn and horror. Then he had been accustomed to have his own way entirely, and having been an only child was quite incapable of understanding the boisterous good-nature and "give-and-take" morals of the rectory boys.

The only one for whom he showed any regard was Opal, but that favour lost its value in her sight from the fact of the rooted antagonism that existed between this strange cousin and her favourite brother, Bertie.

From the first Bertie took a dislike to him. He was a bold bright boy of ten, gifted with immense physical strength, unflinching spirits, an invincible fancy for practical jokes, and a passionate love for his sister Opal. That this Spanish interloper, as he named Ruiz, should attempt to come between her and himself was more than he could bear, and he made Opal miserable with jealous reproaches, and infuriated the fiery-tempered Ruiz with sneers and taunts.

The rector did not see much of what went on between the young folks. He thought that no doubt Ruiz would shake down in time and become used to English ways, and he felt rather despairing when he discovered how very backward his education was, and what a difficult subject he seemed for instruction or control.

As for Mrs. Milroy she troubled herself very little about the boy. In fact she was rather afraid of him, if the truth be told. Afraid of his great sombre eyes that looked such a world of tragic meaning—of his abrupt curt manners, his very outspoken denunciations, for Ruiz never thought twice about saying what he felt, and had an uncomfortable knack of blurting out truths with an utter disregard as to whose feelings or opinions he offended.

So for the first three months of his stay the boy was very miserable, and the family very uncomfortable.

As for Ruiz, he hated England. He hated the climate, the bleak grey skies, the chilly weather, the rules and regulations of the household, the long hours of lessons, the boisterous play, and incessant quizzing and tormenting of the boys. He was out of place, and he felt it. No one understood him, no one cared for him, and his proud, passionate nature held such an inward craving for love that to live in this unsympathetic atmosphere was to him an endless purgatory.

To one only of these new companions could Ruiz Milroy have

spoken of his feelings, or betrayed something of the heart-hunger that consumed him, and that one was Opal. But Opal was cold too, and seemed to shun him, for Bertie hated him. Yet at times he caught the girl's eyes fixed on him with a sort of wondering gentleness, and even in his most wild and passionate outbursts, a look or word from her would calm him.

To show himself less ignorant in her sight, he worked hard at his hated tasks, and tried to set his aching and bewildered brain to the comprehension of Latin verbs and Greek hexameters, and all the terrible turmoil of figures and calculations comprised in that one odious word, arithmetic.

The boys laughed at him and his blunders, but Opal never did, and many a difficulty did she smooth away by her clear and simple explanations, or gentle hints. To him she seemed a marvel of cleverness. He only wondered how she could find delight in her brothers' rough companionship or wild games.

Sometimes, but very rarely, he would find her alone, and coax her to go for a ramble with him; but as the winter grew more bleak and bitter, he gave up going out at all, and so saw less and less of the girl.

One day he was standing in the cheerless, unfurnished play-room, looking out of the window at the frozen ground and glittering icicles, when Bertie dashed into the room.

"Hallo, Mollycoddle!" he said boisterously; "aren't you coming out? We're going to skate."

"What is that?" asked Ruiz, without moving from the window.

Bertie laughed uproariously.

"Oh, you are a ninny!" he said. "Come and see; but I suppose you're afraid of catching cold, or getting your nose frost-bitten, or something of that sort. Shall I lend you a blanket?"

For all answer his cousin turned round, his eyes blazing, his face white as death.

"I hate you!" he said fiercely. "What right have you to sneer at me, or what I do? You are nothing but a set of boors and farmers. You don't understand how gentlemen live."

"Don't I, Miss Petticoats?" persisted Bert irritably. "Perhaps I do. Gentlemen here don't lounge about on sofas, and draw poetry and play guitars; they are a bit more manly than you namby-pamby Spaniards. And as for sport, you don't know anything about it, except bull-fights, and they're only fit for barbarians. If all Spaniards are like you, they're nothing but a set of old women."

Further words on his part were rendered impossible by reason of a violent blow that sent him reeling against the doorway. Ruiz had snatched up a heavy book, and hurled it at the audacious young speaker. The moment Bert recovered himself, he flew like a young tiger at his cousin. Ruiz was cooler now, and met the onslaught with a simple defence. At this juncture the door opened, and Opal entered.

She gave a cry of horror, and flew towards the combatants. Ruiz instantly drew back, and she held Bert by main force.

"You coward!" she cried, facing her cousin indignantly. "The idea of your striking a child like that! I wonder you're not ashamed of yourself."

"Let me go," cried Bert furiously. "It's the first time he's shown any pluck. I'm not afraid to fight him."

"You shan't fight him," cried Opal passionately. "It's hateful, horrible! I wish you had never come here," she continued, stamping her foot and turning again to Ruiz. "We have no peace, night or day, now. Why can't you be like we are, and not for ever quarrelling and setting us all by the ears?"

"I am glad I am not like you are," said Ruiz with suppressed passion. "I wouldn't be if I could. And you can't be more sorry to have me than I am to be here. I am most miserable."

The proud, defiant look in his eyes died out, and in its place came one so heart-breaking, so pathetic, that a swift pang shot through Opal's tender breast.

She still stood there holding her brother's collar, her slight young figure drawn up to its full height, her whole face eloquent of anger and reproach; but at those words her hand relaxed its grasp, the colour faded slowly from her cheeks.

"Bert," she said reproachfully, "you have been tormenting him again. It is not kind of you. He is our guest, you know, and we ought not to make him unhappy."

The boy pouted, and shook himself free from her detaining hand.

"He is so ill-tempered, and he can't stand chaff," he said pettishly. "Besides, he began it—he threw a book at me."

"I am sure you are sorry," said Opal, turning to her cousin. "Shake hands and be friends again, won't you?"

"He must beg my pardon," said Bertie defiantly, as he put his hands behind him.

"I shall do no such thing," said Ruiz haughtily. "You insulted me. It is for you to beg mine."

Opal came and laid her hand on his arm.

"You are so much older," she said gently, "and you know you really are bad-tempered, I have always told you so. Beg his pardon just to please me."

"It will be a lie, and I shall not mean it," muttered Ruiz, his eyes flashing fire once more.

"It won't be a—ahem!" said Opal, smiling up in his angry face, "if you try and think you mean it—and to please me."

He hesitated. He met her eyes, and he thought of that day when she had first vanquished his pride and stubbornness, and she thought of it too. With a sudden flame of hot anger he wrenched himself away.

"No," he said passionately; "once before you conquered me; to-day it is my turn. At least my will is my own!"

"Oh, very well," said Opal haughtily. "Do as you like, but remember—in offending Bert you have offended me, and I don't forgive you until you say what I asked."

And she turned away like a young queen, and marched Bertie off with her.

Ruiz stood where she had left him, till the last echo of her retreating steps had died into silence. His chest was heaving, his eyes were on fire with wrath and hate and passionate misery. The silence around him seemed full of fiendish voices mocking his sorrow and his loneliness. Everything in life was a blank, save the hatred and anger tearing at his soul. He felt a loathing of all mankind—a hatred of these young, mirthful, undisciplined creatures, who comprehended him as little as he did them. His brain seemed on fire, he clenched his hand and cursed the fate that had brought him thither. Then he rushed from the room, snatched up his hat from the hall-table, and went out into the cold, frosty, sunless air, with all his soul in a tumult of rage, and the blood coursing like a stream of fire in his throbbing veins. He felt nothing of the cold—saw nothing of where his furious footsteps led him. His feeling then was that he would rather be devoured by wolves and bears than go back to that hateful house, and hear the boys' sneers and jokes, and see the proud contempt of Opal's eyes. He had never felt so utterly alone and uncared-for as he felt now. The feverish love and tenacious loyalty he bore for his dead parents and his lost home were things that only met with ridicule and misapprehension.

Opal was his only friend, and now she had turned against him. She would never forgive him, and that thought maddened him and made him desperate. He never ceased his headlong flight until he found himself at the spot where he had first met her. The ruined Hall towered dim and spectral in the wintry sunlight; the leafless trees glistened with sparkling crystals; the heron stood beside the frozen pool and uttered a low and plaintive cry; and the gate hung open on its broken hinges and showed the desolate park beyond.

He hesitated a moment, then the desire for solitude—for isolation—came over him like a resistless flood. He entered, pushing aside the broken gate, and turned off into the very depths of the desolate winter woods. Once there, and safe from human intrusion, he threw himself down on the cold, hard ground, and buried his face in his hands, the hoarse shuddering sobs breaking from him, sounding inexpressibly mournful in that dreary solitude. There he lay quite still, battling with the storm of passion in his breast, undergoing such mortal agony, shame, and self-reproach as would have gone nigh to break the heart of one who loved him, as that mother for whom he wept had done.

### CHAPTER III. "LET ME BE YOUR FRIEND."

THE boy—for despite his sixteen years and tall stature he was little else—lay there in that wild abandonment of grief for a long, long time.

A touch on his shoulder at last recalled him to himself. He sprang up, and saw standing beside him a strange-looking object. It was the figure of an old man, lean and bent, with snowy hair and beard, and wild, gleaming eyes that looked fiercely forth from beneath thick, shaggy eyebrows.

He was very old, and leaned heavily on a thick, stout staff.

"Why are you here?" he asked Ruiz fiercely. "Have you come to spy on me?"

The lad drew himself up indignantly.

"No," he said. "I came because—because I wanted to be alone."

The old man looked at him curiously.

"You are over-young to shun your species," he said. "What fault have you to find with mankind?"

Ruiz coloured hotly.

"My troubles concern only myself," he said with his usual abrupt truthfulness.

A grim smile crossed the lips of his questioner. That curt, haughty grace pleased him. It was unconscious, and it had a kinship to his own contempt and indifference for his species.

"That is true, or at least you fancy it is true," he said. "But you are rather ungracious. Are you aware you are trespassing?"

"No," said Ruiz calmly, as he glanced around. "I thought these woods were free to any one. If you wish to keep them to yourself you should bar and guard their entrance better than you do."

"You are very outspoken," said the old man. "What is your name? You are not of this country, I am sure."

"I am a Spaniard," said the boy haughtily. "We do not ask people in my country who and what they are the moment we see them. Since you say I am trespassing, I will leave this place. I did not know I was doing wrong."

"Not wrong—only the rights of landowners are somewhat rigidly enforced here; whatever they may be in Spain. You are a strange youth, but you have a face one can trust. I wish you to say nothing about me. It is my whim that no one should know I live here."

"I am not used to talk of the affairs of other people," answered Ruiz. "I shall say nothing of you."

"That is well," said the old man. "What, are you going?"

"Did you not say I had no right here?"

"You are too quick at taking one at one's word. You may stay if it pleases you."

"No," said the boy, with a faint sigh as he looked over the frozen landscape and up to the icicle-hung trees. "I must go now. It is late."

"When will you come again?" asked the old man.

"To trespass? Never!"

"Nay. If I ask you, it is no longer a trespass. You may come when you choose, but—alone. Since you love solitude it is hard to debar you from your singular taste. I am an old man, and poor, and sick of life, and I hate all my kind, and live but for one object. You see I tell you this, I who for years have spoken to no living thing. I tell it you because in your face I read the war of those fierce passions that ruined my own life. Beware of them if you can. Perhaps, though, they may be stronger than yourself. In that case recognise in my fate the semblance of your own. Do you know what they say of yonder place?"

His withered hand pointed towards the lonely Gothic pile, with the last sun-rays gleaming blood-red on its lancet windows and arched gables. The boy's eyes followed his gesture, a little startled by the strange manner and stranger words of this recluse.

"They say it is haunted," continued the old man. "Haunted. They are right. It is. Haunted by evil deeds—haunted by sad and bitter memories—haunted by one living soul whose days are weighted with the memory of a crime no after regret can expiate. Do you understand, and will you shun me now?"

"I do not understand," said Ruiz with simple directness. "But I will not shun you if you desire to speak with me at any time. It must be very sad to live unloved, and desolate, and alone."

"There is nothing in life sadder," said the old man, and his head drooped on his breast, and the hands that clasped the supporting staff shook visibly. "Go, boy," he continued wildly, "go. I have spoken to no living being for years. I cannot tell what made me speak to you. You are young, and the sorrows of youth are short-lived, and doubtless life looks to you fair and full of promise. It is only the old who look forward and see—nothing; and backward on years that are like a graveyard of regrets. Heaven keep you from a fate like mine!"

Ruiz looked compassionately at him. Beside this grey and colourless existence his own youth seemed less supremely desolate than an hour before he had thought it.

He stretched out his hand.

"Good-bye," he said gently, "I am sorry for you, if your life be what you say. And I will come and see you again, if it is your wish, or can be any pleasure to you."

"Yes, come again," said the old man eagerly. Then his eyes clouded. "You are young," he said; "you will forget. Give me your promise ere you leave."

Ruiz drew his tall young figure up haughtily.

"I never broke faith with living or with dead," he said. "A bond that needs compelling is broken already. I have said I will come."

He raised his hat with that reverence which age and womanhood always inspired in him, and went his way homeward over the frozen ground, followed by the musing sorrowful eyes of the old Hall's lonely tenant.

They were all at tea when he returned. He went up to his room, and plunged his face in cold water to remove the traces of those passionate tears he had shed, and then calm and proud-looking as a young king, he marched into the fire-lit parlour. There was a momentary silence as he entered. All eyes turned to him. The Rev. Amos thought involuntarily, "What a noble-looking lad!" His wife felt a momentary wonder that the bright flushed faces around the board should suddenly seem so commonplace and coarse before the classic features and tragic beauty of this foreign youth. Opal

glanced at him and thought how grand and proud he looked, and the boys contented themselves with a contemptuous glance, and a muttered "womanish," which was all the admiration they ever bestowed on that slender, well-knit figure and graceful bearing.

"You are late, my dear," said Mrs. Milroy kindly, as she handed him his tea.

"I went for a long walk," he said curtly.

"Did you find it very cold?" asked the rector. The boys tittered at the question.

Opal glancing up saw how pale he was, and how heavy were the drooping lids that fell over his dark sombre eyes. A swift flood of compassion stirred her heart. She felt she had behaved cruelly and ungenerously to the lonely boy—she who understood him best, and for whom alone he had seemed to care in this household of strangers.

"It was cold," he said, answering his uncle's question after a fiery glance at the smiling, mocking faces of the boys; "it is always that here."

"Well, well," said the Rev. Amos cheerfully, "the winter will soon be over now. We are getting near Christmas, when the days begin to lengthen, and sometimes in February we have quite mild weather—violets and crocuses all in bloom. You will like England better when you see the spring."

"I shall never like it," said Ruiz ungraciously. "As soon as ever I am able I shall leave it and go back to Spain."

"A good riddance," muttered Bert below his breath.

Opal gave him a rebuking glance.

"Perhaps you will change your mind," she said graciously to her cousin. "You might at least give England a fair trial."

He looked at her, but said nothing, and the meal went on as noisily as it had done before his advent—no one taking any further notice of him.

When the tea-things had been removed, the boys all retired to prepare their studies for the next day. Ruiz followed them, and when they were alone he went up to Bertie and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"I am sorry for what I did this afternoon," he said simply. "Your sister was right. It was cowardly, but then you provoked me."

"Oh," said Bertie loftily, "it's of no consequence. I'm not afraid to fight you, and I'd soon have shown you that if Opal hadn't interfered."

"Bertie!" cried his sister indignantly, as she overheard this colloquy, "I am ashamed of you. Take his hand and say you're sorry too. No doubt you were as much in fault as he was."

"That's just like a girl," scoffed Bertie indignantly. "Turn-coats! Never know their own minds. First on one side, then on another."

"I can't understand half you say," said Ruiz wearily. "I've told you I'm sorry. I suppose you don't care. You are all very rude and very unkind. But it does not matter. I must live here until I am old enough to have my money and do as I like. Then I shall go to people whom I can understand, and who love me."

"Till then," said a soft, shy voice, "let me be your friend. You are right, Ruiz. We have been rude and cold, and you must have felt disgusted often and often. I have told the boys so, but they don't care, and they can't change. Never mind. I will do what I can for you, and I will be your sister, too, if you will let me."

The boys stared in amazement and felt a little indignant as well as ashamed, but Ruiz looked at her with all his passionate southern soul in his eyes; with such a storm of gratitude, wonder, admiration raging in his fiery young heart as it was well for her she could not read, or he explain.

"Thank you," he said.

That was all. But more words have expressed less fidelity, and more eloquent sentences a devotion not half so pure and perfect as the boy laid at the girl's feet in that one short moment of mutual comprehension.

#### CHAPTER IV. STRUCK DOWN.

THERE was a time of peace at the rectory after this little episode. The boys troubled Ruiz less, though Bertie was still antagonistic and grudged his cousin his monopoly of Opal's company.

To please her Ruiz tried to skate, though he disliked it. But for Opal's sake he would have done anything, and it was almost touching to see how he subdued his wild will and fiery temper, and put aside his own feelings and inclinations, and bent to her wishes with a half-proud, half-regretful complaisance.

Christmas Eve came round, and the existing harmony had not been disturbed. Ruiz had helped Opal to decorate the old church, and pricked his fingers, and spoilt his picturesque velvet coat with bunches of holly and evergreens, and otherwise martyred himself in her service.

The boys had been skating, and when they came round in the dusk of the afternoon, they found the decoration completed, and

Opal scolded them for their selfishness. Bertie, who was inclined to be sulky, retorted sharply, and told her that as Ruiz was always dangling after her, they knew they were not wanted. This offended Opal, and led to an interchange of words between herself and her favourite brother.

They all left the church together, but the boys insisted on having another skate before going home to tea, and Opal and Ruiz accompanied them to the large pond, where they usually disported themselves. Ruiz had his skates with him, but declined going on the ice, and Bertie made this an excuse for further jeers and rudeness.

His cousin took no notice of him for some time, but at last, irritated beyond endurance, he put on his skates, and challenged him to a race. Bertie refused, and went on cutting figures and doing spread-eagles and outside curves, while he sneered at his cousin's want of proficiency. Opal sauntered on, and as soon as she was out of hearing, Bertie turned to his cousin and said firmly:

"Look here, I can't stand this sort of thing any longer. I won't have you coming between my sister and me, so just remember that. She's not like the same girl now, and you're a sneak for turning her against us, and so I tell you. And I'd be ashamed if I were you, to have a girl teaching me to skate, and always be at her heels. You've come here where nobody wanted you, and I suppose we've got to put up with your company; but take my advice and let Opal alone, or it'll be the worse for you. I'm not going to have any sneaking Spaniards turning my sister's head, and making a ninny and a spoon of her! So just you mind what I say. And if you don't like it, you can do the other thing!"

For a moment Ruiz stood there and stared at him as if bewildered. Then a scarlet flush came into his clear, olive cheek, and an ominous flash leapt into his eyes.

"You are an ignorant, insolent little boy," he said in a low suppressed voice; "and I shall behave to your sister exactly as I please."

"No, you sha'n't, for I'll tell Tom, and as he's as old as you he can fight you and thrash you till you promise what I've asked."

"Bah!" muttered Ruiz with contempt, "you are nothing but a nation of prize-fighters, you English. It is all you think of, fight—fight, that and money-grubbing!"

"And you're nothing but a set of cowards—you Spaniards!" hissed Bertie, as his cousin moved slowly away. "And all you can do is to shelter yourself behind a woman's petticoats, or knife people in the dark."

"You know nothing about my country or my people," said Ruiz, halting, and trying to keep down the rage surging in his heart. "If you did you would know that they can behave like gentlemen even to strangers who claim their hospitality; but you—you are like your own bulldogs—as jealous, and as brutal, and as fond of fighting."

He was skating on again, only anxious to avoid further dispute, but Bertie crossed his path purposely, and they came into collision. Ruiz was not yet sufficiently sure of his balance to withstand the shock, and fell backwards, striking his head on the ice. The blow almost stunned him, but he struggled to his feet though his brain was giddy and confused, and a thousand lights seemed whirling before his eyes. Bert's mocking laugh fell on his ear and maddened him.

He saw the light young figure gliding by, and made a sudden spring, and seizing him by the collar shook him violently. Bertie raised his fist and hit his cousin full in the face.

Then—how, Ruiz could never tell—it seemed as if his grasp relaxed. There was a dull thud, and the boy fell heavily down, and lay there at his feet like a log.

He was not conscious of having struck him; he had only let him go as that fierce blow was struck; but all the clear wintry air seemed suddenly to gleam like blood, and a wild shriek echoed across the frozen stillness:

"Oh, God, you have killed him!"

It was Opal's voice, and Opal's slight figure threw itself between him and that still and prostrate form. Then other voices sounded, and other figures pushed him aside, and he could only stand there stunned and bewildered, with his temples throbbing like hammers, and in his heart an agony of fear.

"Dead! Is he dead?" that was all he heard, and mingled with the dreadful words came Opal's sobs of terror, every one of which was like a knife thrust in his heart. Then they raised that motionless form and moved away; none of them speaking to him, none of them pitying him, or even conscious of the agony of remorse and terror that held his senses strained to the utmost tension compatible with consciousness and power.

He stood there alone on the cold glistening ice; wishing it would open and let the chill waters swallow him; wishing he had never come to this peaceful home, where he had been only an element of discord and antagonism from the first. Then suddenly a strange thought came to him. Why should he go back? Everyone hated him, and now—now they would say he was a murderer. Opal had said it, and thrust him aside with a look of horror.

He would leave Lincolnshire, he would leave England. He would make his way to Liverpool, and work his passage out to Spain if need be. That would be better than living among kinsfolk so unfeeling as these. Yes, he would do that. They should never be troubled with him more.

His brain was still giddy and confused from that blow he had received. He could not think clearly or rationally—only all life seemed suddenly a blank and a desolation.

Scarce knowing what he did, he tore off his skates, and rushed blindly away from the spot—on—on—on, while the night fell in darker shadow, and the white ground and frozen boughs seemed to gleam before his eyes with a dark stain upon their whiteness, and in his ears a thousand fiendish voices seemed shrieking Opal's terrified words:

"You have killed him!"

#### CHAPTER V. TWO CHRISTMAS EVES.

"Just four years ago," sighed Opal Milroy, standing in the old church-porch, and looking out at the red, wintry sunset.

She was a slender, beautiful maiden now, with something of graver and more thoughtful meaning in the face that had been so bright and sunny.

She closed the door behind her, and left the keys with the old sexton, who was waiting by the gate, and then walked slowly and thoughtfully on to that spot where every Christmas Eve found her.

There was no ice on the pond this year, for the season had been mild and rainy, and the meadows were a sheet of water, and the lanes only sloughs of mud. The pond, with its banks fringed with willows and its dark unruffled surface, looked a desolate picture set in among those reedy marshes and watery fields.

Opal shivered involuntarily as she stood there and looked across it. It was always solitary, save when the frost king had bound it in his icy fetters and the skaters came to hold their revels there.

Far as she could see there was no living creature visible except herself, and the intense stillness struck her with a strange chill. It had been her home for eighteen years—it might possibly be her home for all her life, and the idea came to her to-day as it had never come before, with a sudden pang of distaste, and almost of horror.

The pulse of youth and vitality beat in her veins as the young sap thrills in the trees. She wanted to live her life, not stagnate; to drink in beauty, pleasure, hope; and she was buried in as complete a solitude as any spell-bound maiden of fairy-lore.

These four years had brought many changes, but had only bound her to greater loneliness.

In the first place had come the mysterious disappearance of Ruiz. From that fatal night, four years since, no one had seen or heard aught of the young Spaniard. He had not been missed in the excitement and confusion till the next day. By that time Bert's broken leg had been set, and the household had recovered its usual composure, and then came the question:

"Where is Ruiz?"

For four years that question had remained unanswered.

The Rev. Amos had been well-nigh distracted. He had written to his brother's lawyers, and they had advertised and sent detectives and offered rewards, and put all the usual machinery of the police in motion, and yet no clue, no faintest sign had been detected of the boy's whereabouts.

From the hour when Opal's words had proclaimed him a murderer, he had disappeared as entirely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him.

Of course the prevailing idea in the minds of the rectory folk was that he had gone back to Spain; but how he got there untraced and almost penniless, no one could guess. He gave no sign of his existence, his money lay unclaimed, but the lawyers still paid the hundred a year to the Rev. Amos Milroy, since his brother's will had made no provision for so extraordinary a contingency as this, and had ordered that sum to be continued until Ruiz had reached the age of twenty-one.

The money had been a great help. Tom had gone to college, and worked hard, and, thanks to his father's splendid grounding, had gained scholarships enough to keep him in funds and help him along the road to that ambition which had once looked so hopeless a thing. The two next boys had been taken, Edgar into a lawyer's office, and Amos into a bank, in Lincoln. Harold, Opal, and Bertie were at home. The latter still suffered from a slight lameness, and had only been very recently allowed to go without crutches. It had been a sad trial to Opal to see her merry, active little brother so helpless, but his time of suffering had not been without its benefits, for it had brought brother and sister into yet closer companionship, and tamed the boy's wild nature and hot temper into a patience and gratitude wonderful and beautiful to see.

Of all these things Opal thought now, as she stood by the drooping

willow-trees, and watched the sunset die in slanting lines of gold and red across the low, wet meadows. Her heart felt strangely heavy; her face looked pale and mournful, despite its youth and beauty. With a sigh she turned away at last, and wandered listlessly along, taking very little heed of where she went, so absorbed was she in speculations as to Ruiz Milroy's fate, and the memory of his short, ill-starred sojourn in their midst.

When she found herself close to the old Hall she gave a start of surprise. She had not thought she was anywhere near it, and for long—for years, in fact—she had not pursued her old fancy for trespassing in its dreary precincts.

She reached the old gate, and found it closed and barred, and rudely secured with rusty iron chains, which held it in its place. Entrance was not possible now, unless she scaled the walls, and Opal half smiled, remembering her old tomboy escapades, and how daringly she would once have done even that. Now she contented herself with folding her arms upon the low and crumbling boundary; and, leaning there, surveyed the desolate old place with the pity and wonder that it always inspired in her mind. Even more desolate than of yore did it look, and the slight, graceful figure leaning against the ivy hedge looked strangely out of place in that drear and melancholy spot.

Opal's eyes wandered from arch to window, from wing to wing, and then again dropped to the weed-grown terrace, where broken vases and maimed statues stood in mouldy resignation, and solitude with dusky wings sat brooding over the ravages of time.

Mystery, ghosts, crime, any or all of these might haunt that gloomy pile; it looked a fitting abode for anything except human life. Yet as the girl's eyes lingered in fascinated wonder she fancied she saw something move along the terrace walk—a human figure, if the dusky light could be trusted, and the swaying shadows were not playing tricks with her clear young sight. She looked steadily, wondering at the moving object. Yes, it certainly was a figure, the figure of an old man; and as she stood there motionless as the wall she touched, it came slowly along in her direction with the feeble uncertainty of age, a spectacle as pitiful and cheerless as the old Hall itself. He came up to the gate, and examined the bolts, and shook it as if to try its strength; satisfied apparently with its capabilities for resistance he moved on. At that moment some start or action of Opal's stirred the ivy, and he looked up. Their eyes met. Opal felt almost frightened as she saw that strange face with the shaggy white beard, the thin straggling locks of hair framing in its withered features. Yet of the two faces his expressed more fear than hers, though the fact only recurred to her long afterwards.

There was a moment's silence. Then he said in a low, fierce voice:

"What are you doing here?"

The girl felt too bewildered to answer. She could only stare at those wild, gleaming eyes, and a sense of terror held her speechless.

"Are you dumb?" he asked, shaking his stick impatiently, and looking at her again, with the look, she thought, of some lost soul in torment.

She tried to speak, but that gaze held her spell-bound; no words would come.

"Who are you?" he said again.

"I am Opal Milroy," she faltered, finding power at last to open those frozen portals of speech.

There could be no mistake this time. It was fear that those wild eyes held—fierce, overmastering dread, that paled his face to ghastliness, and made his frail hands tremble as they rested on his staff. He glanced round in terror. His voice, for all his effort at self-control, had in it something of appeal—of entreaty—as if he asked a favour, not enforced a command.

"Go! go!" he cried, waving his hand. "How dare you come here! You have no right. You are a spy, an intruder. Go, I tell you, or—"

He had no need to utter the threat, Opal was too terrified to wait for further words. She turned and flew across the leaf-strewn path and over the marshy meadows like a lapwing. Fear lent wings to her feet, and, though panting and breathless, she never rested until a good mile lay between her and the old Hall of Chalford.

The stars were glittering clear and large in the brilliant wintry sky.

In one of the topmost towers of the old Hall, in a small and curiously fitted chamber, sat a young man busily writing. The chamber would have puzzled and surprised any ordinary visitor. It was nothing but a species of observatory, rudely and scantily appointed; but it held within its four walls an ambition as lofty as those miles of space into which science and patience had given it insight.

The turret contained three windows and had a glass skylight. In the centre, mounted on a moveable axis, was a large telescope. In one corner stood an astronomical clock, regulated to sidereal



time. A table near one window was covered with books and papers; a small stove of charcoal gave warmth to the bare, chill place, and crouched beside it was the old man who had so terrified Opal Milroy.

It was verging towards midnight, and for an hour or more no sound had broken the stillness of that strange chamber save the noise of the pen on the paper, or the beat of the strange clock which marked the star time.

The old man roused himself at last and looked at the writer.

"Do you watch again to-night?" he said.

The young man raised his head—a dark Murillo-like head, with great sad eyes that seemed haunted by some mournful memory.

"Yes," he said simply.

"But it is Christmas Eve. You might give yourself a holiday for once. You have satisfied yourself as to the transit of the first point of Aries. You give yourself no rest. You will be ill."

"I have never been ill in my life," answered the young man calmly; "and now that life is only of value so long as I can pursue these studies. Weeks, months, years, how paltry they look beside the eternal wonders of the heavens! I feel like one on a journey, going on from stage to stage, approaching by gradual degrees the confines of the visible universe. A life—a short human life—all devoted to that one pursuit, seems far too brief!"

"I have found it so," answered the old man dreamily. "And yet success was once so nearly mine. I should have made my name as famous as that of Schröter, Mädler, Struve, Herschel, only——"

He paused abruptly. He looked with a strange yearning at the beautiful boyish face—graver, sadder than twice its years could have warranted.

"Only—a woman came between me and my life's ambition," he went on dreamily. "It is always so. We work, they destroy. That is life, or—fate."

His companion made no answer. He was not given to much speech. His thoughts were tuned to graver, higher things than mere material cares. He was unwise with that unwisdom of early youth that sees in its own dreams a heaven, and in its own ambitions success.

"Put away your work; you have done enough," continued the old man presently. "For nights you have had no sleep; for days no exercise, or rest. When I promised to teach you all I knew, I exacted no guerdon but obedience. Give me that to-night. There are things I would speak of. My mind is uneasy and full of care. Come and sit by the stove and talk, or let me talk."

The youth pushed aside his papers, and rose with a somewhat proud and graceful reluctance.

Beside the stove was an old stool. He took it and drew near the feeble warmth of the fire. He was very pale, and his frame was far too slender and fragile to bespeak robust health.

His companion's eyes rested somewhat anxiously and regretfully upon him.

"Ruiz," he said, "what will you do when I am dead?"

The dark eyes looked vaguely at the withered face.

"I don't know," he said simply. "Live on here, I suppose. You have taught me how little is necessary for actual existence. The woods supply us with food, the river with drink; and then there is always the great work."

"The great work!" echoed the old man regretfully. "Ah me, what dreams I had of it, what hopes, what ambitions! Dead, dead—all dead!"

"Your book will live," said Ruiz simply, "and it is so nearly done now."

"And the sands of life are so nearly run out," answered his companion. "And what a life! Dreary, unloved, desolate as any hermit's. Even fame could not quicken these old pulses by a single beat, or give my heart one throb of gladness. Ah, boy, there is no sadder thing in life than a lonely old age."

Ruiz was silent. He was thinking of how and where he had first met his strange companion; of how that promise to revisit him had been kept again and again, until, in the sudden shock and terror of finding himself a criminal, he had fled to the old recluse as to a refuge, and begged him for shelter for a brief space.

The old man had taken him into the Hall, and exacted a solemn promise of secrecy, and an assurance that the boy would never venture without the walls of Chalford, night or day, without his permission.

"I am old," he said, "but I like you, and feel I can trust you. I did so from the first hour I saw your face. You are as safe here as if the ocean rolled between you and those from whom you flee. I will bring you news of their welfare from time to time, but your existence will be shrouded in impenetrable mystery."

And so it had been.

No one at the rectory dreamt that the lost and long-sought-for

cousin was living close within their reach, and all the remorse and longing of Opal's heart were unrelieved by any suspicion of his safety or well-doing.

The boy had a wild, romantic feeling that he had sacrificed his wealth in their favour. He never dreamt that law is a stubborn guardian, and demands strong proofs before relinquishing its rights. He had a strange desire, too, to be near Opal, to be within call, to hear of her welfare, to offer up his life, as it were, in a species of martyrdom that some day would win forgiveness for the errors of his passionate youth.

For four years he had lived with the old recluse, and for four years the old man had consciously deceived him. He still deemed himself Bertie's murderer; he still had fits of agony and remorse, as he thought of the bright boyish face lying cold and white in the winter sunset, with closed eyes whose mute reproach was as a knife-thrust in the heart of his slayer; and the old man knew it, and let him suffer.

He deemed it best to keep the boy in his power by this means, to use his strength and skill, his brains and hands, in mental and physical servitude; and time had drifted on, and Ruiz never complained, and how could the dim eyes of age read in that proud young face the dread dreariness of heartbreak, the haunting memories of despair?

Quiet, pale, studious, the boy had passed through four years of utter loneliness and privation, finding solace only in the wonders of that glorious study to which his promise bound him, absorbing himself gradually in its mysteries and discoveries, until he bid fair to rival his master.

And now it was Christmas Eve once more—the fourth anniversary of that night when he had fled hopeless and terror-stricken to this dreary refuge—and he sat there and listened to the old man babbling of his broken hopes and wasted youth, and thought to himself in proud resignation, "My life, too, is over."

He had never uttered a complaint. He had served the old man like a servant, and performed all the needful offices of their simple life, taking as his reward those hours of study and instruction which to many of his age would have been only penance. He was very weary often, but the young live on even against their will, and now he had become almost reconciled to his sombre and solitary existence.

It was only when sleep brought him some vision of his past life that he felt his spirit rebel against this dull monotony. At other times he did his best to forget that the sun of the south had warmed his veins, and given him those dreams of orange-groves, and blue bright skies, and music, and colour, and beautiful women, and bold men, that made all his memories of his own beloved land.

"Four years—it seems a lifetime," he muttered now as he crouched closer to the stove, and the stars shone out unheeded, forgotten alike by youth and age, while the bells chimed out on the midnight air the old, old message, "Peace and goodwill to all mankind."

## CHAPTER VI. AWAKING.

THE bells had ceased to chime, but the two inmates of the turret-chamber still sat in immovable stillness. The old man had sunk into deep slumber, the younger was lost in thought.

The loneliness of the night, and the greater loneliness of his surroundings, did not trouble him. The sky shone crystal clear above his head, and the windows of the turret showed the starry galaxy sprinkled over that azure field, and tempting him to follow out their mystic rotation with the ardour such a pursuit inspired.

He had written much and studied much in those four years. He was at present engaged on an essay on variable stars, and spent every night that was clear and fine in observing.

The situation of the old Hall and the elevation of this special chamber made such observations very practicable, especially as the strange inhabitant of Chalford had accumulated many valuable scientific instruments for that purpose.

Who or what the old man was, Ruiz did not know. He had received no confidence on that point, and was too proud to ask for it. Sometimes for days together they hardly spoke to each other, and, though the boy had often wondered what secret weighed upon his strange companion's mind and bound him to such complete isolation, he manifested no curiosity on the subject.

At twenty years of age, Ruiz Milroy felt like an old man, and all the passionate emotions, and yearnings, and excitements of youth were as a dead letter to him. He lifted his head now, and looked at the sleeper with strange compassion. Would such a fate be his? Was his life also to be a haunted one—haunted by the shadow of a crime, the ghosts of dead passions, the memories of a brief dream of gladness?

The thought stung him to a sudden desperation, unlike the usual calm patience that characterised him. He rose and went to

the east window, and looked out. The blue sky looked like a shield of polished steel; the stars seemed to say, "Study us, and we will repay you." The great telescope pointed invitingly to glittering Jupiter; but his mind was dwelling on things terrestrial to-night, and the solar system had lost something of its attraction.

His eyes—at first dreary and absorbed—grew restless and almost fierce. He felt as some wild jungle king might feel, caged and isolated from its species. Nature for once cried out against its enforced inaction, and pictured to him hopes, dreams, ambitions, glories far different to that philosophical abstraction in which he had tried to steep his soul.

His pulses leaped, the blood raced wildly through his veins. He flung open the window, and leaned out into the cool and frosty beauty of the night.

From the sky his eyes turned to the great park, and the weed-grown terraces, and the shining line of water that marked the boundaries of Chalford. To rove from them to the low broken wall, and rusty iron gate, and stagnant waters of the heron pool, was a natural consequence.

There they paused, arrested by a vision so strange and unexpected, that for a moment his heart ceased to beat, and a pang of fear shot through it. What he saw was a white figure fitting through the woods, and gliding towards the old gate. Reaching it, it stopped and looked over the broken wall towards the grim old building. The turret was so high and far off, that Ruiz could not possibly distinguish the features of this strange apparition, but the pang of fear died out as quickly as it had come, and he quitted the chamber, leaving the old man there asleep, and rushed down the staircase, through the corridor, and out at the side-door, which was his usual mode of egress. Once on the terrace he skirted the wall, and keeping in the shadow, he made his way towards the gate.

When he reached it, the figure had gone. He seized the trailing branches of ivy, and swung himself up to the top of the old wall.

From that vantage-point he could see a long distance, and he caught sight of the white floating garments a short distance off, as if the owner were skirting the boundary of the park. He sprang down as noiselessly and lightly as a cat, and hurried off in pursuit.

What strange curiosity prompted his actions he could not tell. He never thought of asking himself. An impulse stronger than reason guided him, and he obeyed that only.

A very few moments and he was near enough to touch the figure; another—and he was beside it.

To his amazement it suddenly turned, and, passing him so closely that the floating drapery brushed his feet, went back along the same way as he had pursued it. But one strange thing he noted, and that was the look in the wide-open eyes—a look strange, weird, and wholly unlike to any human expression.

A sudden thought flashed across his mind.

Was she a sleep-walker, this girl, whose face in the weird moonlight had looked without recognition at his, whose sunny hair hung round her like a cloud, whose eyes were like, yet unlike, those haunting violet eyes of his cousin Opal's?

Opal's! the word crossed his brain like a lightning flash. Was it—could it be?

He started off in fresh pursuit, it brought him to the gate, and there again the slender white-clad figure stood gazing over the ivied wall with those fixed, sightless eyes.

Impulsively, unwitting of harm or hurt, he grasped her arm.

"Opal!" he cried hoarsely.

He felt a shudder run through the slight young frame. Her whole body quivered and shook as if under the pressure of some intense physical suffering.

The eyes gleamed back with an awful look of horror and incomprehension—a cry left her lips, so wild and awful that it curdled the very blood in his veins. Then she fell down at his feet and lay there like one dead.

In an instant he flew to the gate, and tore at it, and shook it with the frenzy of almost superhuman strength. It gave way, and he seized the girl in his arms, and bore her into the old Hall. She lay in his arms like a log—stiff, cold, to all appearance lifeless; and terrified beyond all power of speech, he rushed up the broken stairway, and through the dusty dreary corridors, nor ever stopped till he came to the turret chamber.

The old man was still asleep, but that sudden entrance startled him. He opened his dazed eyes and stared at Ruiz in bewilderment.

The boy troubled him with no explanations. He laid his senseless burden close to the stove; he rushed to an inner room and brought out rugs and pillows, and piled them on the bare floor, and lifted her on to them, and chafed her cold and frozen hands in an agony of dread.

"Who is she? Why do you bring her here?" asked the old man at last, as he tottered feebly over to the senseless figure and stood leaning above it.

"It is Opal—it is my cousin!" cried Ruiz wildly. "Oh, is she dead? Will she never look at me?"

"Opal Milroy! Here at this time. What brought her?"

"Sleep, I should say," answered Ruiz despairingly. "I remember the boys telling me of her strange habit once. I found her walking to and fro beside the old east gate, and when I spoke and woke her she screamed and fell down like this. Oh, she moves, does she not? Oh, say she won't die also."

"If it is as you say, it is a dangerous thing," said the old man. "But what matter if she dies? Your secret will be safe then."

"My secret!" he cried bitterly. "Do you think I place that in the balance with her life? Better suffering—prison—death, than that she should perish thus."

The old man looked at him grimly.

"And this is my reward," he said. "You would sacrifice all the labour of years for the sake of a foolish girl. What is she, or her life to you?"

"My life also, I think," he answered softly, and a dusky flush crept over his face as in sudden, tender shame he bent it over the motionless form.

He had not known how that face and memory had haunted him till now; he had not dreamt what possibilities life held, or what he had denied himself in the future.

She stirred and moved, a deep sigh parted her lips, and that warm, sweet breath seemed to him as the scents of Paradise. His arm was still round her, her hand still lay in his. Suddenly he felt the slight figure thrill and tremble in his clasp. Her eyes opened on his face, not startled or surprised now, but only glad with the gladness of a happy dream. An instant, and as her head drooped on his breast he bent and touched her lips with the passion of youth and the reverence of joy.

"Opal!" he murmured dreamily, "oh, how happy I am to see you again!"

The girl's languid eyes unclosed.

"This is like death—or heaven," she said faintly. "Is it you, Ruiz, or do I only dream?"

"Ah no, it is no dream," he whispered passionately, almost wondering that the eloquence and gladness of his heart could find no better utterance than these commonplace words. "I am here beside you."

She struggled into a sitting position, and looked wildly and affrightedly round the strange room.

"How did I come here?" she cried in terror, as her scared eyes caught sight of the old man standing by the axis of the telescope, and watching her furtively.

Ruiz rose to his feet looking rather embarrassed.

"I—I brought you," he said timidly, and his face flushed like a girl's.

"You!" Her dazed senses, arrested by strong effort, went back on lines of memory to seek for solution of this mystery. But they could find none. Then her eyes travelled slowly downwards and saw her strange attire—her bare feet that had been thrust into slippers, her long flowing hair, and white loose garments, and the blood flew in a crimson torrent to her face and neck.

She could not speak for shame, and wonder, and agony of mind. She covered her face with her hands and trembled in every limb. Ruiz pitied her, but he was equally abashed and bewildered, and he knew there was something about her appearance that was unusual and unlike what he remembered in the days of old.

"You—I think you were walking in your sleep," he faltered at last. "I did not know. You looked so strange, and I spoke, and then you screamed and fainted, and so I brought you here. At least it is warm and sheltered, and we can send word to your home if you wish."

"It seems all so strange," murmured the girl faintly. "And you, Ruiz, how is it you are here? For four years we have been searching for you high and low, and yet—"

"And yet he was at your very gates," said the old man grimly.

"Why did you leave us?" asked Opal, forgetting even her strange adventure in this new interest, and gazing with rapt and wondering eyes at the beautiful, dark face above her. "Did you never think how we grieved, wondered, sought you?"

"No," he said simply. "I knew you all hated me, and I had taken your brother's life—or so you thought—though my hand never dealt that blow, I can swear to that."

"His life!" cried Opal wonderingly, and turning her bright eyes from one face to the other; "what do you mean? Bertie is alive and well. He was lame for some time after that fall, but he always told me it was his own fault—his own temper occasioned it."

"Alive!" Ruiz turned and faced the old man with eyes aflame and indignant. "Did you not know this?" he said slowly.

The old man was silent.

Ruiz drew himself up to his full height. Light, hope, joy, the gladness of a new and wonderful relief, flooded his heart, and gave to

his face an almost unearthly ecstasy. With a sort of sob he caught his breath, and threw himself beside Opal.

"Oh, to think of it—to think of it!" he cried wildly. "After four years! I have lived here believing myself a murderer, picturing you as hating my very name—"

"I never did that," said Opal with a beautiful blush. "I know we were all very unkind to you. We did not mean it. We were young and spoilt, and did not understand or even try to understand you. I think, when you left us, we felt that every day, and would have given anything to undo the past. But it was too late."

She had forgotten everything, her appearance, her strange visit here, the old man's presence. A sudden sense of what those four years had meant to the lonely suffering boy came home to her, and her heart grew hot with passionate pity, and her eyes spoke back to his in sweet compassion.

That long, bashful, eloquent look told more than any words, and stirred to life such feelings as neither had dreamt of before.

To Ruiz it seemed as if heaven had opened to his gaze. Never could any moments in after-life be like this strange time that was all joy, and rapture, and wonder fused into the strong fire of his ardent nature, glad with such gladness as never comes twice in a lifetime.

"Let us go home," he said at last, rising and looking round the cheerless room, forgetful now of all charms of science and ambition.

Opal rose too, and the white garments and fleecy woollen shawl fell round her graceful figure like the draperies of a Greek statue.

"Yes, we will go," she said with a shudder. "Some instinct drew me here to-night. I cannot tell what. I know I was dreaming of the old Hall, and striving to reach it, and the gate was barred, and I only saw that stern, forbidding face warning me back; and then I seemed to look and saw—you."

He looked at her with eyes so eloquent that words were scarcely needed. Then he drew her arm in his, and turned to the old and shrinking figure of the old man still leaning there in the dusk of the cheerless room.

"For four years you have deceived me," he said curtly. "I did your work. I kept my promise. I do not reproach you, for you are old and unhappy, I know. Perhaps you did not think of how I suffered. If you had been honest with me I would not have left you as I do. Your secret is your own still, and I will breathe no word of my stay here if you forbid me. And now farewell."

The old man raised his head and looked sadly at the two beautiful young figures.

"Fate is against me still," he said mournfully. "I warned you how it would be. Fate is always a woman. Well, go your way, leaving me in peace. I deceived you—true, but it was for your good. You might have been a great man. I suppose you prefer to be a woman's slave. Get you gone, and say of me what you please!"

Ruiz took Opal's hand, and led her away. He could not trust himself to speak.

#### CHAPTER VII. REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

IF Ruiz had once deemed himself an unwelcome intruder at the rectory he could do so no longer.

The family were roused up by Opal's return, and flocked down, startled and alarmed at her summons; but when they saw her companion and heard his strange story, they seemed to find no words or means enough to show their gratitude and delight.

There was no thought of going to bed again. The boys lit the fire in the shabby old parlour, and ravaged the larder for stores; and they all sat round the fire and feasted right merrily; and what with hand-shakings, and embraces, and kisses, poor Ruiz felt absolutely bewildered.

But how happy he was, and how merry they all were, and how radiant and sweet Opal looked, coming down to them after a quarter of an hour spent in donning some wonderful garment of dark cloth with cunning little knots of scarlet here and there, that made her look lovelier than ever in Ruiz Milroy's eyes. And the Rev. Amos sat and beamed on them all with his grey hair still rubbed persistently up the wrong way. And Mrs. Milroy, with her cap awry and her sweet, anxious face quite placid and joyful, could not make fuss enough of the "young savage," and between her embraces, sat and looked at him with eyes half glad and half tearful, and wholly loving, just as his own mother might have looked had she been there.

As for Ruiz himself, he could not talk much, or eat much, though he tried his best, for his heart seemed too full, and his eyes had an unaccountable way of getting suddenly dim. It seemed so strange that all this love and gladness had been waiting to warm his starved heart for all these cold and empty years, and he had never known or credited the possibility of such a thing.

And then how the boys tormented Opal and declared their intention of putting outside bolts and padlocks to the doors and windows of her room, and how the jests and teasing ceased when

their father, raising his ruffled grey head, laid his hand on the girl's sunny hair, and said:

"It must have been Providence who guided your steps thither, my child," and what untold eloquence was in Ruiz's eyes as he looked at her, and said softly:

"I think so, too."

Then at last the rector and his wife bade them good-night, though indeed it was quite daybreak, and the young folks drew closer round the fire, and Opal sat shy and silent by the side of the returned prodigal, and when he timidly clasped her hand, let it rest unrebuked in his.

And whether the boys saw or guessed they were not wanted, is hard to say, but certainly one by one they dropped off, and Opal roused herself with a start, saying she too must go, and could he find his way to his own old room? and he, not answering, looked up, and meeting her eyes, grew faint and trembled like a leaf.

Seeing her so shy and frightened, he put his arm round the beautiful dainty waist, trembling too at his own boldness.

"You are glad—really glad, to have me back again?" he whispered.

And though she could have thrown herself at his feet and poured out a torrent of words, so full was her heart, and so happy, that she only dropped her head—meekly, coyly, like a flower faint with sunlight, and said quite as softly:

"Yes."

"You have been with me all these years," he continued, growing bolder as he felt his power and saw how fair, and sweet, and yielding she was; "I have never forgotten you, or your promise."

"What promise?" she asked, very, very faintly now.

"That you would be my—sister—too."

She was silent, and her heart beat strangely fast, as surely no sister's heart had need to beat for assurance of a brother's love.

"But, after all," continued Ruiz, still more boldly, "I am not sure that I wish you to keep that promise. I want something else, Opal."

"What?" she asked even more faintly.

"I want you to love me, as I love you—as I have loved you since first I came here, a savage, ignorant boy, to whom you were as an angel of goodness."

He could be eloquent enough now; how could he help it, looking down at those softly crimsoned cheeks, those long bashful fringes—feeling the quick beat of the passionate young heart answering his own, as only youth and love can answer to each other?

"What do you know of—love?" she said at last. "You have only studied the stars these four years, so you told me; and why may I not be your sister still?"

"Look in my eyes, and answer me."

But she could not, for she knew—though she had not studied the stars for four years—that it was no sister's love her heart held; she had known it from the moment her eyes had met his again in the weird silence of the turret-chamber.

"If you can only be my sister," said Ruiz presently, "it will be better for me to go back to the old Hall and study the stars again; shall I, Opal?"

Her cheeks paled suddenly; the little hands clasped themselves round his arm. Her eyes looked up to his in sudden terror.

"Oh no, no!" she cried. "We cannot lose you again. You could not be so cruel, Ruiz."

"Then say, 'Stay for my sake!'"

A lovely smile curved her lips.

"That is like your old masterful self," she said; "you should say, 'if you please.'"

He laughed too, remembering their first battle and her victory.

"If—you please."

Again her head drooped, but this time it fell coyly, naturally, on his breast.

"Stay for my sake, Ruiz," she whispered obediently.

His lips answered her.

It was a week later.

Ruiz Milroy had almost forgotten the old tenant of Chalford in the glory and gladness of his young love-dream. Those dreary years, those mystic studies, the ambition that he had told himself would suffice to fill his life, had all faded into the background of some far-off past. Suffering, misery, privation, all these things were as though they had never been. Yet suddenly and sharply they were recalled to him.

He had received a letter on this morning of the closing year, containing only a few words, but though unsigned and undated, he knew who had written them.

"I am dying, and I would fain see you before my life ends. Come to me to-night, in the turret-chamber. Tell no one of this message."

Ruiz felt somewhat perplexed and distressed as he read. But he went, saying nothing to anyone but Opal.

It was about nine o'clock when he left the rectory. A clear, crisp, frosty night; such a night as he would but a brief while before have spent in long study and abstruse calculations. Now it was only filled with dreams and excited hopes, and the rich promise of years to come.

Never had he thought the old Hall looked so gloomy and melancholy as it looked now. It seemed a place utterly beyond the reach of such joy and gladness as filled his own heart and the home he had just left.

It seemed strange to him to tread the old desolate terrace, and make his way along the familiar galleries and corridors, till he reached the door that cut off the winding staircase leading to the turret-chamber. This door had always been kept locked. It was unlocked now, and he turned the handle and speedily found himself in the old room. There was no light in it save the dull glow of the embers, and the starlight from without. For a moment he stood there bewildered. Then, as his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, he saw a pallet-bed on the floor, and seated by it a woman.

She rose and faced him in the dull light, a tall graceful figure, with a face tired and haggard, but bearing still the marks of great beauty.

"Are you Ruiz Milroy?" she said.

"Yes," answered the astonished youth, marvelling who on earth was addressing him.

"He has been expecting you," she said, and motioned him forward.

Ruiz advanced and saw, stretched on the bed, the familiar figure of the old astronomer.

The woman bent over the stove and lit a small lamp, and placed it on the table. Then she withdrew, and Ruiz, silent and amazed, seated himself beside the motionless form. The old man opened his eyes and looked at him.

"I thought you would come," he muttered feebly.

His fingers plucked at the coverlet of the bed, his head moved restlessly from side to side.

"I—I could not die without seeing you," he went on presently.

"I want you to say you—forgive. I wronged you, but I wanted to keep you with me. I liked you from the first. I told you that. Sometimes I thought I would tell you the truth—but I had not courage."

"I forgive you freely," said Ruiz gently and compassionately.

"Do not distress yourself. After all, these years have not been wasted. I have learnt much. I owe you a large debt of gratitude for all your teaching."

"And you are happy now," muttered the old man, "happy and beloved. I was that once, and I lost all—all—all! I have often wanted to tell you my story. That woman you saw was my wife. My wife, whom I wronged, misjudged, ill-used—ah, Heaven forgive me!—nearly murdered. I thought I had murdered her. That thought has haunted all my life, and embittered every hour of these terrible years. She was young and beautiful, and I was old and jealous, and selfish too, for I thought more of my books and pursuits than of her, and let her fair young life eat itself out in loneliness and grief. We are an unfortunate and an evil race, we Chalfords. I am glad now that with me the race is ended. I often meant to tell you, but I lacked courage. I wanted to make you my heir; a poor enough inheritance the old Hall is, but still it is yours—after her. No other living creature has any claim upon me. I want to think that in years to come a new race will atone for the crimes of the old, and in you I see one worthy—worthy—"

His voice broke. That brief strength seemed deserting him. Ruiz bent over him anxiously.

"Do not speak more," he said; "you are fatigued and weak. Rest now and I will watch you."

The glazed and languid eyes looked gratefully at the young face. Then they closed in very weariness.

Ruiz sat silently there thinking of the strange story he had heard—understanding by it much of the mystery and loneliness of this haunted life.

An hour passed. The old man slept on tranquilly. The same weird stillness as of old reigned in the little chamber and round the deserted building.

Ruiz heard the door of the adjoining room open and saw that dark, graceful, woman-form glide in and take her seat beside the sleeper, but she spoke no word—nor did he.

Another hour took its flight. The woman sat with bowed head, waiting. The young man watched the silent figures, himself almost as still as they. Suddenly on the midnight air chimed out the sound of bells—bells glad, joyous, turbulent, ringing in new days, new hopes, new joys, and griefs; ringing out, too, the ended sorrows of an ended life; for, as the sounds ceased to echo on the midnight air, a sigh broke the silence of the chamber, and the face upon the pillows grew grey and set in the solemn rigidity of death.

The watchers rose. The woman's eyes were full of tears—the pale face looked sadder still in the shadow of a new grief. "Leave me now," she said, looking up to Ruiz; "you were good to him, and I thank you. But there is no more to do. You have obeyed his last wish. Heaven bless you for that, and give you the happiness he might once have had, and flung away."

She gave him her hand, and he took it, and looked with grave sympathy at her worn, pathetic beauty.

Then he left her standing there, with the solemn starlight falling on the dead face that had once looked love to hers.

The sorrow of these haunted lives touched him with strange sympathy, pointing as they did with the force of an unexpiated sin to the records of the past, the hopelessness of the future.

He looked at the old Hall as the gate fell back on its rusty hinges. There he had learned life's deepest lessons—from thence he had bought the fruits of learning, patience, endurance.

Those four years had not been wasted. He saw that now—now as he turned away from the records of that sad and misspent life, and by the light of its teaching read the way to purify and amend his own.

## A Christmas Welcome.

BY JOSEPH DILLEY.

Is good old Christmas dead? The jovial King  
Who brought a thousand pastimes in his train:

The gracious guest, whose yearly welcoming  
Made castle, hall, and cottage ring again?  
Where have they gone—the hissing "wassail bowle,"

The tables groaning with their ponderous cheer,  
The open house, the universal dole,  
The yule-log, and the brand of yester-year?

Where have they gone—the boar's head garlanded,  
The peacock pie, the "puddings in a pulse"?  
Into what Lethe have the masquers fled?

Where reign the lords whose kingdom was misrule?  
Where is the "Paon," through whose stately maze  
Our costumed grand-dames tript with solemn air?

The boisterous "disportes" of those merrier days,  
When ancient Christmas held his annual fair?

All, all are gone! Pageant and sport are cast  
Into the limbo of forgotten things.

Christmas himself, grey-bearded, totters past,  
A veritable shadow amongst kings.

No noisy retinue the "wassail" raise;  
He comes and goes a potentate apart.

Nothing he brings to us, who stand and gaze—  
Only outstretched hand, and true, warm heart.

Only outstretched hand, and true, warm heart!  
Ah! by that sign we welcome him again;

The old fantastic mummery may depart—  
The bright glad face, the laughing eyes remain.

Dear Christmastide! for us, as for our sires,  
You bring the joys that knit us to our kin;

The listening circle round the winter fires,  
The storm without, the warmth of love within!

You bring us peace! What, tho' the city lies  
Pallid and ghostly in its shroud of white,

Its pulse still beats; from countless hearths still rise  
The happy sounds of innocent delight.

Home is your empire still! The fireside ease,  
The "guiltless mirth," our flagging hearts that cheer:

No HOUSEHOLD WORDS more dear to us than these—  
"A Merry Christmas, and a glad New Year!"

## Banker Thorn's Bargain.

BY R. E. MULLEY.

### CHAPTER I.

"STIR UP" Sunday had come and gone, and at Dovecote Major, as elsewhere, the approaching Christmastide was making itself known by active preparations on all sides to give it a hearty welcome, while away up in London, seated before his desk in Messrs. Keeper and Spender's bank, Con Constantine, a young man who ought to have known better, was balancing, not the accounts, but his own chances of finding under the mistletoe somebody who, though she lives so far away in the little west country village, was always being conjured up like some pleasant vision to cheer him in his dingy office. Many a dull hour had been lightened to him by her visionary presence at his elbow, and by the sound of a voice that was unheard of any ears but his own.

Mr. Constantine was so deeply buried in his calculations, that one of the younger clerks had called him by name more than once in vain before he heard.

"Yes?" he said, waking up at last.

"You are wanted in Mr. Spender's private room."

Edited by Charles Dickens.

Con whistled, laid down his pen, and betook himself to Mr. Spender's presence.

"You sent for me, sir, I believe?" said the young man, addressing a tall, lank gentleman who, his back to the fire, was standing with his coat-tails slung over his arms like a pair of panniers.

"We did," returned Mr. Spender. "We wished to speak with you."

Mr. Keeper had long ago retired, first from the bank and then from a world of banks; but Mr. Spender continued to live and move and have his being in the plural, such a form of speech being, it was commonly supposed, a graceful tribute to the memory of his late partner.

"You are a west country man, Mr. Constantine?" asserted Mr. Spender enquiringly. "Your name leads us to think so."

"Yes," said Con.

"We thought so. Now under such circumstances there would be nothing unusual, nothing to excite curiosity, if you were to run down to Dovecote Major for a few days?"

"Oh, nothing at all," said Con eagerly. "I certainly had hoped to go there for bank-holiday."

"We cannot wait till then," said Mr. Spender. "To be frank with you, Mr. Constantine, we are uneasy—very uneasy. We have lately heard some most unpleasant rumours respecting Thorn's Bank, and it would be a great advantage to us if we could know whether or not there is any real ground for doubting the solvency of the firm. I suppose you have heard nothing?"

"Not a whisper of it," said the clerk.

"Do you happen to be personally acquainted with Mr. Thorn?" Mr. Spender asked.

"Banker Thorn?" answered Con, using the prefix which in Dovecote Major distinguished Mr. Thorn the banker from all other Thorns. "Oh yes, I know him, only we don't happen to be on speaking terms just now. You see," added Con, "Dovecote Major isn't exactly the abode of peace. The whole parish is at sixes and sevens, and I suppose when I was down there in the summer I caught the common epidemic of quarrelsomeness; at any rate, Banker Thorn managed to quarrel with me—not about money," Con hastened to explain, "it was a purely private matter, and, of course, should you send me down on business I should sink my individuality in Messrs. Keeper and Spender's confidential clerk."

"No, no!" cried Mr. Spender. "We would rather you went down quite casually, you know, and picked up what information you could in an informal manner. We should be unwilling by any action on our part to give colour to the reports flying about. All the same, we would, if possible, avoid being ourselves involved in—"

"Exactly," said Con, supplying the blank left in Mr. Spender's speech.

"But you may hold yourself in readiness to act on our behalf, should we deem it advisable to take any steps in the matter. Believing you would fully recognise the need of prudence," said Mr. Spender approvingly, "we chose you, Mr. Constantine, in preference to either of our other clerks. It will not be necessary for you to inform them of your destination or its object. You had better start this evening, and we shall not expect you to return before bank-holiday, unless unforeseen circumstances should oblige us to recall you. Your expenses, Mr. Constantine, will be our affair."

"Thank you, sir," said Con, hardly able to believe that the path of duty, which is generally so remarkably unattractive, should lead him to Dovecote Major, and to Banker Thorn's grand-daughter.

Dovecote Major, towards which Con Constantine was being carried at express speed through the midnight darkness, lay some thirteen hours' distance from London, and nine miles from the nearest railway-station.

Out of the world, Cockneys called it, this wild stretch of moorland, within sight and sound of the sea, where, centuries back, pious hands had raised the big grey church, whose tower served as a landmark then as now to the seafaring folk. People had come and settled themselves round about until quite a little town grew up and at last stopped growing altogether, and, scorning all modern improvements, remained at a standstill, stagnating contentedly.

Gossip was the only product of the sleepy little town that thrived and never flagged, and Con Constantine counted upon picking up a good deal of the informal information Mr. Spender required of him over Miss Polwhele's green card-tables; but Con arrived a day too late, for Miss Polwhele's whist-party had taken place the preceding evening. In fact, while he was getting his ticket at Paddington, Miss Maria, to her partner's consternation, and the glee of her opponents, revoked.

"I thought you very hasty to trump, Maria," said the elder Miss Polwhele, who was playing against her younger sister. "It's the first time diamonds have been out."

"The first time for seven years," said Maria abstractedly.

"It would be the last time if I were Robina Constantine," said Miss Polwhele acidly, while Maria's partner put down her cards with considerable irritation.

"What are you thinking about, Maria?" she asked indignantly.

"The reconciliation," explained Miss Maria. "It was beautiful, and coming so near Christmas too! And just now, when they cut for partners, their cards fell together. It seemed quite providential."

Miss Robina Constantine continued to regard her partner with annoyed forbearance. Then she said:

"If you are alluding to Banker Thorn and Mrs. Charles, I prefer them at daggers drawn, it is more natural. I never heard either say a civil word of the other yet, and if they begin now, I shall never believe it's true."

"It won't be half so entertaining," said Miss Polwhele regretfully.

"I am sure if everybody shook hands all round, just because it happened to be Christmas, I, for one, should be very dull. Maria may revel in sentiment if she chooses. Give me a good long-standing quarrel, with a sharp tongue on both sides, not one of your foes to-day, friends to-morrow, which is as aggravating as revoking. And now we will go on, if you please."

"Miss Robina, we are waiting for you," said Miss Polwhele with such asperity that Maria was startled into playing out of her turn, after which there was no more dullness.

## CHAPTER II.

THE reconciliation which had so fatally unsettled Miss Maria Polwhele's mind was a recent as well as an astounding event. Every man, woman, and child in Dovecote Major knew that between Banker Thorn and his eldest son's widow no love was lost, and that for years, beyond a passing greeting in the streets, they had not spoken; therefore, it was with self-doubting eyes that the Misses Polwhele, from their house on the right, and Miss Constantine, from her window at the left of the bank, had, that afternoon, seen Mrs. Charles Thorn standing on the step leading to her father-in-law's door, chatting amicably with that gentleman himself.

The conversation was quite a friendly one now, but in its beginning, at the bank counter, it had threatened to be stormy.

Mrs. Charles had entered the bank within ten minutes of the hour of closing, and had given a cheque into Banker Thorn's own hands; he looked at it, turned it over once or twice, and then looked at his daughter-in-law. There was a moment's silence, and then he leaned forward.

"Clarissa," he said in a low voice, "what is the meaning of this?"

Mrs. Charles Thorn's thin lips slid into a half smile. She raised her eyes—they were the pale, bluish-grey eyes that frequently go with her shade of dark red hair—and their usually shifting pupils rested on her father-in-law's face for full a minute before she answered him:

"I should like my money."

A certain emphasis on the two pronouns made her simple reply sound almost like a challenge, and Banker Thorn's ear detected the tone.

"It is rather late to count out so large a sum" he said, consulting the clock.

"There are five minutes yet," said she.

Banker Thorn bit his lip. "If you will go in there I will give it you," he replied. "Open the door for Mrs. Charles," he said to one of the clerks, sitting near the green-laid door which led into that part of the building that formed Banker Thorn's own house.

Mrs. Charles passed through. The banker followed her without leaving any orders for the cashing of the cheque, indeed he still held it in his hand when he stood by the fire in his study, facing Mrs. Charles, who had seated herself in the big easy-chair that was sacred to himself. She knew it was so, and had taken it as a further token that she was aware of having him at a disadvantage.

"That cheque is only for my balance," she said. "Of course I should like to realise what poor Charles left me in bank-shares, but I hardly know how to set about it. Shall I instruct my stock-brokers to sell, or are you prepared to take up my shares? I might offer them to Miss Polwhele, but she would be sure to ask me why I want to get rid of them," she continued.

"And why do you?" asked the banker.

"Why do rats leave a sinking ship?" retorted Mrs. Charles.

"Who has told you Thorn's is in that pleasant predicament?" said the banker bitterly.

"A little bird," said Mrs. Charles—"a London sparrow. Things get talked about in town long before the news reaches here as a rule, but I manage to hear a good deal."

Banker Thorn silently cursed the chance that had brought his present embarrassments to his daughter-in-law's knowledge, but he accepted the situation.

"We may weather the storm yet," he said.

"Personally, I prefer not being on board," remarked Mrs. Charles.



"It will be very inconvenient to give you so much money just now."

"I dare say!" she replied; "but it will be more inconvenient to pay all your creditors, and what I know, they may get a hint of—"

The banker coughed.

"Hush!" he said nervously, looking about him anxiously. "Hush, some one may hear you, Clarissa! For Heaven's sake be careful what you say. If a suspicion of this got wind it would be all up with me, half the county would be clamouring for their money. If I can keep up my credit over next settling-day, I may succeed in doing so altogether."

"Provided I am on the right side of the hedge," said Mrs. Charles, "I have no objection to you being there too."

"I am much obliged to you, Clarissa," said her father-in-law with faint sarcasm.

"If you do your part," she said, "I am ready to do mine. Give me my money, and I will hold my tongue."

The banker regarded his daughter-in-law with grudging admiration. He hated her cordially, but he could not deny that he had to deal with a woman whose friendship would be more useful to him than her enmity.

"Well, well," he said, "your shares shall not go into the market. Eight hundred pounds, I think, Charles left you of our stock. I will take it of you at a thousand. I am making you a good offer," he added, finding she demurred.

"You ought to know the value of your own shares," said Mrs. Charles dryly.

"Would you have taken less?" retorted Banker Thorn.

"Not from you, certainly," she returned coolly. "I felt sure you would see the mutual advantages of the transaction."

"I am glad we understand each other so well, Clarissa," said the banker. "And now I suppose you would like this cheque cashed?"

As he spoke, he unlocked his davenport, and taking from it a bundle of notes, began to count them over.

"There!" he said, "there is the hundred and fifty."

Mrs. Charles Thorn re-counted them.

"Quite right," she said. "And how do you propose arranging for the larger sum?"

"You won't want to carry it away on the spot, in hard cash, in a hand-bag?" said her father-in-law evasively, with a constrained laugh.

"It would be safer," she said. "But if I don't have it in cash, or at least Bank of England notes, you must make it worth my while to take anything else."

"Exchange is no robbery," said the banker.

"It is generally remarkably one-sided," said Mrs. Charles. "But what do you offer?"

"Foreign securities."

Mrs. Charles laughed in his face.

"Foreign insecurities, you mean."

"Nonsense!" said the banker testily. "I made a very good investment some time ago, thinking that Clare could be provided for out of it if—anything went wrong."

"Then you had better provide for her at once," said Mrs. Charles.

"No," said Banker Thorn; "I only wish to save two or three thousand for her to have eventually. Just at present I prefer to have the spending of my own money."

"Oh, I see," said Mrs. Charles; "it is Clare's or yours as occasion offers. Whose will it be when the crash comes? Not yours, for the creditors could claim it. Not Clare's; she is quixotic, and would give it up to them. What shall you do with it—bury it in the back garden?"

There was an eager tone in her voice in spite of an evident effort to speak carelessly, even derisively.

Banker Thorn turned towards her and looked at her keenly, as he laid a large packet on the writing-table and smoothed the papers out; they rustled and crackled as only paper money can. The sound was almost as alluring as the clink of gold to Mrs. Charles Thorn's ears. She loved money with an intensity of passion that could call up expression even into her pale colourless eyes. They lit up now with feverish excitement.

Banker Thorn watched the growing eagerness in his daughter-in-law's face with a feeling of contemptuous wonder. In his eyes, money was only valuable for what it could buy. Hers was the true miser's temperament—a craving for possession its strongest development. She rose from her chair, came and stood beside him. She could not have analysed the impulse that drove her to do so, and yet it was very closely allied to the one that had compelled her to ask what would be done with the money. It was an unspoken, almost unformed thought, "If it were mine!"

"I have often wished," said Banker Thorn, "that I knew someone in whose hands this five thousand pounds' worth of bonds would be safe till all this has blown over."

He paused; he looked at his daughter-in-law again. She was listening intently. He went on:

"Now, if you had them, Clarissa, you could pay yourself, and still have a large sum left to feast your eyes on. The coupons are payable to bearer. I should make no claim on the interest so long as the capital was out of my possession."

Mrs. Charles put out her hand, and then drew it back.

"Are you sure I am quite safe in taking them?" she said. "I don't want to lay myself open to a charge of compounding a felony, or anything of that kind."

"Compounding a fiddlestick!" said the banker sharply. "Listen to me, Clarissa. So long as you do not tell anyone of the little Christmas present I have made you, I shall not—I have no wish to be compelled to ask for it back again to sacrifice to my creditors."

The hand that Mrs. Charles Thorn now held out to her father-in-law was not withdrawn again.

"I can keep my own counsel," she said.

"Very good," said Banker Thorn; "then I will give the bonds over to you for the present."

Clarissa Thorn watched him impatiently whilst he folded them smoothly into as small a packet as was possible, put it into brown-paper, and tied it up. He did not hurry himself in the least, though he could see that it was only by a violent effort of self-control that she forced herself to wait till it was ready. At last it was hers. The banker felt her hands trembling with excitement as she took it from him.

"I will go straight home with it," she said.

"Do," said her father-in-law.

He accompanied her out of the room, across the hall to the front-door. With his hand on the latch, he said:

"Now, Clarissa, you perfectly understand that not only this," he touched the brown-paper parcel lightly, "but also my purchase of your shares, is a purely private transaction between you and me."

"Of course," said Mrs. Charles; "that, as well as my reason for selling them."

A young girl coming down the stairs overheard the last few words exchanged between the two in the hall. She stopped a moment, looking down on Mrs. Charles Thorn's face with an expression of dislike and mistrust.

The banker opened the door and let his visitor out. He stood on the mat watching her go down the steps.

"You are a prudent woman, Mrs. Charles," he said to himself. "I wonder if I have been as prudent. Anyhow, I don't think she will squander it." And he laughed as he turned indoors again and let down the chain.

"Grandpapa," said a voice behind him—the young lady on the stairs had come down, and was waiting in the hall; "grandpapa, will you please give me some money to pay these bills?"

"I can't, my dear," he said. "I have just given my last shilling to your aunt Clarissa."

"What did she come for?" cried the girl indignantly. "Did she make herself very disagreeable?"

"Yes and no," said the banker, pinching his grand-daughter's pretty ear. "But we parted friends. Do you know, Clare, I think we must be a little more polite to Mrs. Charles. You shall make a very fine Christmas pudding, and invite her to come and eat it with us."

"Grandpapa!" protested the girl.

Banker Thorn shrugged his shoulders, and went back to his study without further remark.

### CHAPTER III.

It was a clear sunny morning, with just a suspicion of frost in the air; away westward the sea glistened and danced in a line so bright, that it dazzled Miss Constantine's eyes, and she had to shade them with her hand. She had been half-way to Tregellas in her donkey-cart, and now she was on her way home to Dovecote.

"There is something wrong," she said aloud.

Balaam took the remark as a personal attack, and endeavoured to mend matters by starting off at a quick trot, shaking stout Miss Robina till she grew very red in the face, and puffed and panted almost as much as if she had been toiling up the hill on her own short legs, instead of being in the little yellow cart, which was known within a radius of six miles as Miss Robina's "shay," but which she uncompromisingly called her donkey-cart.

"There's something wrong," she said again.

At that moment a slight young figure jumped off a gate and came to meet her. As if by intuition, Balaam declined to move another pace, stretching out a soft, velvety grey nose for a friendly stroke from the new comer. The girl gave the accustomed caress, and then held out her hand to Balaam's mistress.

The old lady did not take it, she merely nodded and patted the empty seat beside her.

"Jump in, Clare," she said, "I have something to say to you."  
 "And I to you," the girl answered. "I have been waiting on the gate for the last half-hour. Grandpapa brought me thus far in the gig; he has gone on to Tregellas, and I am supposed to be walking home."

"He did not count upon your meeting me, I can readily imagine," said Miss Robina. "I am not poor Con, but I am Con's poor aunt."

In the meantime Banker Thorn's granddaughter had settled herself on the wide substantial plank that did duty for a seat in Miss Robina's "shay." Either from the exertion or at the mention of poor Con, Clare Thorn blushed becomingly, but she neither smiled nor looked conscious. She only turned a pair of grave grey eyes on Miss Robina's face with a seriousness that was not untouched by anxiety.

"Have you any money in our bank?" the girl asked abruptly.

"Con holds some shares, I believe. I am only a depositor. Why do you ask? Is there anything wrong?"

"I don't know," Clare Thorn answered slowly, "but if I were you I should draw my money out."

"Mercy on us, Clare!" In her astonishment Miss Robina dropped the reins, which made no difference to Balaam, who was too high-principled to take that opportunity of running away. "What put such an idea into your head?"

"Miss Robina," said Clare, "Aunt Clarissa has drawn out hers."

"And what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander—eh?" said Miss Robina with an amused smile at her own simile. "But you are right, my dear; your Aunt Clarissa no doubt acted under advice, and what you tell me explains the anomaly of Banker Thorn and his son's widow on friendly terms. How long is it since they quarrelled over that lawsuit—seven years?"

Clare nodded.

"They quarrelled over money," Miss Robina resumed, "and now they have made it up over money, have they? It looks bad."

The sound of approaching wheels attracted her attention; she looked round.

"Will that be your grandfather, Clare?"

"I don't think so," said the girl; "he told me to wait dinner for him. Miss Robina, it is—"

"Con!" cried Miss Robina.

The driver pulled up short, that his "fare" was the nephew of the stout old lady who was smiling and nodding vigorously from her shay, he knew well enough—knew equally well that "Masster" Con was over head and ears in love with the pretty young lady by Miss Robina's side.

"There ain't no call for yew to bide, your missis sez to me, 'yew can be gwine on,' so I comed," Clem explained later on to Tamsin, at Miss Constantine's back-door, as he handed over Con's bag and baggage, adding: "He waz out o' cart and over to Miss Clare, a'most afor' I'd time to stop. Miss Robina, her sat still an' laffed at 'em!"

Miss Robina had waited for her turn, and Con was duly grateful. "You dear old woman!" he said, "will you take me in for a week?"

"No," said Miss Robina, laughing.

"Grandpapa will be delighted to see you," said Clare demurely, with a contradictory twinkle in her grey eyes.

Con laughed too.

"I almost expect to be asked to dinner at the bank, when I find you driving behind Balaam with Aunt Robina. When did she bury the hatchet?"

Clare shook her head.

"Aunt Clarissa has done that; we are to dine together on Christmas Day, that is, if we have any dinner to eat."

"What do you mean?" Con asked quickly.

"Clare is taking a low-spirited view of things," explained Miss Robina. "Because Mrs. Charles Thorn has taken her money out of the bank, Clare believes it to be on the point of a grand crash; she has been imploring me to close my account."

"Clare," said Con in a slightly bantering tone, "Clare, have you played the warning prophet to any of the other shareholders?"

"I never thought of them," she said, in guilty confusion.

"And what made you think of Aunt Robina?" enquired Miss Constantine's nephew.

Clare looked about her on all sides, except the one where that young man was standing, thoughtfully pulling Balaam's ears.

"I think I will get down here, if Balaam will stop a moment," she said.

But Balaam did not stop, for Con had him by the collar and started off with him at a smart trot, so that there was no choice left in the matter for anybody concerned.

"Con," cried Miss Robina from the "shay," "stop; we can't make a triumphal entry of this sort into Dovecote."

By this time Balaam had entered into the spirit of the thing, and he and Con had a neck-and-neck race as far as the toll-bar. Balaam's

ears came in first, and there, from old custom, he pulled himself up with a jerk. It threw Clare and Miss Robina into each other's arms; they clung to one another laughing and breathless from the jolting, and then Con came to the rescue and helped Clare down.

"May I walk home with you?" he asked quite meekly.

"If Miss Robina will let you, you may; it is not far," said Clare.

"You are a pair of geese," said Miss Robina. "There, go on, both of you, and leave me to pay the toll."

They walked on, and she waited, but nobody came, though she called, "Trevithic, gate!" in a voice that might have been heard had anyone been there to hear. Miss Constantine ended the matter by driving through without paying.

By this time the young people were out of sight. They had reached the market-place, which also did duty as horse-fair, open-air chapel, and general gossip ground. It was consequently always a much frequented spot, and when Con Constantine and Clare Thorn got there they found quite a crowd assembled, gathered about the bank-steps. It was the nearest approach to a mob that the little borough could furnish out of electioneering times. Con noticed it first, and without apology or explanation, he took Clare's hand and drew it within his arm. For a moment she was too surprised to demur, and then the sound of a sudden crash of broken glass, a backward pressing of the crowd, made her cling to him, frightened and trembling, very thankful to Con for his strong protecting arm amid the hubbub of loud angry voices and the rough jostling of the men and boys who, armed with sticks and stones and any missile calculated to strike a nasty blow, seemed prepared to make a raid upon the bank.

As yet, apparently from lack of a leader, they were only swaying to and fro, throwing an occasional stone at the bank windows, but not worked up to the point of doing any actual bodily harm even to the two policemen stationed at the top of the steps to the entrance door, which, contrary to custom during business hours, was close shut, barring ingress and egress alike.

To Con's eyes that last fact spoke volumes, and yet when Clare asked him, "What is it, Con?" he answered evasively, "I can't tell, but the sooner we are out of this the better."

He tried with all his strength to elbow a way out, not towards the bank, but towards Miss Robina's house next door; he made but little progress, they were so hemmed and hedged in, and presently found themselves face to face with Trevithic, of the toll-bar. To both of them his big burly figure had been familiar from their childhood, and the gruff voice that sounded so oddly at variance with soft West-country dialect had always had a kindly tone for the little boy and girl who threw him their pennies for the toll out of Miss Robina's cart or the banker's gig.

Clare seized upon him now as a friend in need.

"Oh, Trevithic," she cried, "do tell us what is wrong at the bank! Has anything happened to grandpapa?"

"Happened to 'un!" repeated the man with almost savage irony.

"Nothing don't happen to the likes o' him! Ruin only comes to poor folks. 'Twere but yesterday I paid it in, all on it, the savin's and scrapin's o' twenty years, and to-day the bank's broke!"

Clare crept closer, and Con felt the girl's slight form shiver, as though each word were a blow.

"Con," she whispered, "dear Con, can't you get me home?"

#### CHAPTER IV.

At that moment Miss Robina's "shay" came rattling along at a hand gallop into the midst of the crowd, which made way for it with the prompt respect that is always paid to hard driving. Balaam was too distinctly conscious of the immediate neighbourhood of his comfortable stable to slacken speed just there, and he made a bold dash for Miss Robina's front door. To right and left the people dispersed. Con, seizing the opportunity, followed in his wake, and before the free passage had time to close again, Clare was safe inside Miss Constantine's garden-gate.

When Miss Robina joined them some ten minutes later, she found Clare sitting on a chair in the hall crying bitterly, and Con standing by, looking at her helplessly.

"Do make her stop crying, Aunt Robina," said the young man desperately. "She won't listen to a word I say."

"Leave her to me," said Miss Robina. "And, Con," she took her nephew by the arm and led him into the kitchen, and from there out to the courtyard at the back of the house, where Balaam was still standing harnessed to the yellow cart—"you must go back, Con, over the Tregellas road till you meet Banker Thorn, and warn him of what is going on here. If he should show himself the mob won't stop at breaking windows."

"I think not," said Con, getting into the "shay," "and I suppose we can't let the old sinner get his deserts. Gee up!" shaking the reins, "gee up! you can't be more unwilling to go than I am, Balaam, so make the best of it."

When Con arrived at the toll-gate, he found only a very youthful member of the Trevithic family sitting on its topmost bar, whistling as cheerfully as if banks never broke. He scrambled down to take Con's toll; he was just old enough to thoroughly appreciate the difference existing between two pennies and two halfpennies, and therefore quite capable of taking his father's place.

As Con jogged along, after passing the gate, his thoughts travelled faster than Balaam's legs. As was only human, he considered first the aspect of Thorn's failure as it affected himself.

"It is partly my own fault," he grumbled to himself, "that I did not save myself. If I had not been too proud to take my money out last summer, after he had refused to let Clare and me be engaged, I should not have lost that fifteen hundred pounds of my poor mother's. I had a good chance of a capital reinvestment too, but I thought it would look better to leave things as they were till Christmas. 'I had neither the income nor the position he should expect for Clare;' the old rascal said that, I remember. Well, I have less than ever now, but I have not changed my mind, and neither has Clare."

Then Con began to think of his neighbours.

"I wonder if old Spender is hard hit by this failure? I must try and get hold of some particulars before the post goes out. I suppose I ought to have been doing that now, instead of running after Banker Thorn. Personally I don't much care what happens to him; but for Clare's sake I will tell him to keep out of the way. I wonder how far I shall have to go before I meet my respected grandpapa-in-law? All the way to Tregellas?"

Before he saw Banker Thorn driving leisurely along towards him, he had come almost to the edge of the gorse and heather-grown moor, over which runs the high-road between Dovecote Major and the county town, railway, and telegraph station, Tregellas.

Con drew the "shay" on to the soft turf by the roadside and waited.

The banker would have passed on, but Con laid a detaining hand on the rein.

"Banker Thorn," said Con Constantine, "if you are thinking of going back to Dovecote, let me advise you to change your mind."

"Why?" asked the banker shortly, regarding the young man with no friendly eye, and resenting his interference.

"There has been a run on the bank since you have been gone, and the depositors are waiting for their money. It is just a trifle lively in the market-place," said the young man grimly. "They don't seem to think you are as anxious to give it to them as you might be."

"I can't give them what I haven't got," said Banker Thorn sullenly.

"Then they'll lynch you!" said Con coolly.

The banker caught convulsively at the side-rail of his high driving-seat, and grasped his whip with the instinct of self-preservation. It was not an encouraging picture that had been drawn for his consideration; the idea was ghastly, and made him grow sick and cold with apprehension.

Could he not escape? He looked about him and saw only the long line of high-road winding through the desolate stretch of moorland, dotted with gorse-bushes, on whose stiff spikes the hoar-frost hung glittering in the slanting winter sunlight.

Not a living soul was in sight, except this young Con Constantine and himself; the quiet scene calmed him, and, somewhat reassured, his fingers relaxed their hold, his tone became almost defiant.

"They would not dare," he said. "The police—"

"Police!" laughed the young man. "What use do you suppose a couple of policemen will be against men who swear you have robbed them—"

"Choose your words better, sir," the banker interrupted.

Con shrugged his shoulders.

"It is no use mincing matters, Banker Thorn; I only came to warn you of the reception you are likely to meet with. Go back to Dovecote now, and see for yourself."

The banker's face blanched.

"You shall have your money, Constantine," he said hoarsely, "every penny of it, if you will get me safe out of this."

"Thank you," said Con coldly, "I prefer to take my share with the rest of the creditors."

"Confound the rest of the creditors!" said the banker.

Con looked at him, contempt in his honest grey eyes.

"You'll have to meet 'em, all the same," said the young man, "Well, good-day, Banker Thorn, I won't detain you any longer. I have to go on to Tregellas."

Whereupon Con lifted his hat, and drove on, leaving Banker Thorn behind, sitting in his gig, a prey to disagreeable reflections.

First, he asked himself what had caused this sudden run on the bank during his short absence. Had Clarissa had any hand in it? It was scarcely likely; but women were so imprudent.

Next, he wished he had asked Con Constantine some questions.

Should he follow him back to Tregellas? Anything was better than driving aimlessly about the moor all day, and he certainly should not go back to Dovecote before dark. In so far he would take Con Constantine's advice. What was the insolent young puppy doing in Dovecote just now? By the way, was he not one of Keeper and Spender's clerks?

Banker Thorn immediately began to put two and two together, but as is often the case when this is done in the abstract, as a mere figure of speech, he made a grave miscalculation. Neither Con Constantine nor Mrs. Charles Thorn had brought about the suspension of Thorn's Bank.

The unconscious agent of the mischief lay in Banker Thorn's own pocket—the key of the bank-safe, without which the manager had been unable to meet the first cheque handed in that morning. His explanations were at first received with much amusement, but the story, with several embellishments, got wind, and next, people laughed incredulously.

A report that no money was to be had at Thorn's spread, a panic ensued, the bank-counters were besieged, the police had to be called in to clear the building.

"It was confoundedly careless of me," said the banker that evening, when having safely reached his own house under cover of the darkness, he was listening to his bank-manager's account of the day's events.

"It was unfortunate, sir; but we can re-open as usual to-morrow. That will restore confidence."

"Not unless they get their money, Nicholls; and there is not a couple of hundred, cash, in the safe, and I don't know where to go for credit."

The manager looked at the banker.

"Then the crash only came to-day instead of to-morrow?"

"Not exactly," said Banker Thorn, "but I have brought it on my own head, after all."

Con Constantine returned to Dovecote Major earlier than Banker Thorn, and found Miss Constantine quietly knitting by the fireside, sitting alone.

"Where is Clare?" he asked anxiously; "I hoped you would keep her with you."

"She would not stay," said Miss Robina. "As soon as the crowd dispersed she went home. Con," said the old lady, "I believe the child feels as if she had robbed us all. After you were gone she went to the window and stood looking out."

"Poor things!" I heard her say, 'poor things!' and then she turned to me."

"Do you think they are all depositors?" she said.

"I dare say not one-half of them have got sixpence in the bank," I said.

"But there will still be a great many to pay," she said. "There are the shareholders too. How many are there of them, do you think?"

"I don't know, my dear," I said; "but I dare say things are not so bad as we think."

"I would have cheered her if I could," said Robina apologetically to Con. She was very much afraid he might think she had been harsh to his darling.

"I know you would," said her nephew reassuringly, "but I think I will just run in next door and tell Clare that I have seen her grandfather, and that she need not expect to see him before dark; he is afraid to show himself. Of course, Clare is not to hear that."

"How thoughtful the dear lad is," said Miss Robina, looking after him fondly as he went out.

He left the door open behind him, which let the cold wind in, and the old lady had to go and shut it; but then, who can think of two things at once?

Clare Thorn received her visitor in her grandfather's study; he found her pacing restlessly to and fro; he told her what he had done.

"Oh, Con!" she said, "it was very good of you. I have been so terribly anxious, even thinking that perhaps he would not come back at all. I sent for the manager, Mr. Nicholls, just now, and he has told me how it all happened. He says it will all come right to-morrow, that it is only a temporary suspension. I don't know exactly what that means, but I hope, I try to think it means that Trevithic will get his money back, and that there is nothing to be ashamed of. Oh, Con, I thought I should have died when Trevithic said that to me this morning."

Clare looked at him with tearful eyes, her lips quivered pitifully; the sight was too much for Con's fortitude. He caught her in his arms and kissed her, although there was no mistletoe near.

"My dear," he said, "you shall never be ashamed of anything. I am come down here as Keeper and Spender's confidential clerk. I am only waiting for further instructions from them to act in this matter, and if your grandfather is frank with me, we may pull 'Thorn's' through yet."

CHAPTER V.

FOR the next week Con Constantine passed the greater part of each day at the bank, where pressing business kept him hard at work.

By the time Christmas Eve came, the suspension of Thorn's Bank had been in all senses a nine days' wonder, and all that was known, and all that was not known concerning it, had been talked threadbare, and the public indignation against the banker was wearing itself out. It began to cool down after it became actually certain that Messrs. Keeper and Spender had come forward with offers of assistance, and that it was more than possible that the creditors would eventually have their claims settled in full.

Dovecote Major regarded Con Constantine with increased interest as the confidential clerk of the highly respected firm of Keeper and Spender.

He was overwhelmed with invitations which he was too busy to accept. The good folks, his fellow townsmen, tried in vain to worm information out of him; he evaded their questions, or flatly refused to answer them, and succeeded in rendering himself a thoroughly unpopular object of curiosity; but Banker Thorn was obliged to acknowledge that once Con had entered on the new ground of their altered circumstances, his line of conduct became irreproachable, his manner was strictly professional, slightly deferential as became a clerk in the presence of a banker, and Clare's name was never mentioned between them. Con had, according to promise, completely sunk his own individuality in that of Messrs. Keeper and Spender's confidential clerk, and it was in this capacity that he presented himself, on the morning of the 24th, at the door of the room in which Banker Thorn was accustomed to see his clerks. He knocked for admittance, and entered; he held an open letter in his hand.

"Can you spare me a few minutes, sir? I have just heard from Mr. Spender, and I should like you to see for yourself what he says."

He laid the letter down on the desk as he spoke, and waited till Mr. Thorn had read it twice.

"What answer shall I make, sir?"

"Answer!" repeated the banker irritably. "Keeper and Spender know the state of my affairs as well as I do myself. Where can I put my hand on a shilling?"

Con Constantine hesitated, and turned over some papers on the table; he kept his eyes fixed on them when he answered:

"As Mr. Spender says, between three and four thousand pounds will be required to meet the most pressing claims—the depositors first of all—and he evidently thinks you might, by an effort, manage so much. Can you not find friends to advance that sum? Mrs. Charles Thorn is supposed to be well off. She ought to be willing to help you, as she is, so far as I know, the only shareholder who has got her money safe. Yes," said Con, forgetting his official capacity, and taking up the rôle of Con Constantine again, "I happen to know she has, though there is no mention of the transaction in the bank-books, therefore I conclude you met the claim out of your private purse. You, also, if you remember, offered to give me my money. Now, Mr. Thorn, where was it coming from?"

The banker started to his feet, quivering with passion, and for a second it seemed as if the artificial barrier of civility, which necessity had raised between these two, was going to be swept away; then he recollected himself, and sinking back in his chair, stammered:

"I—I should have borrowed it."

"Then let me recommend you to go to the same money-lender, for unless the required amount be forthcoming after bank-holiday, I shall feel it my duty to advise Mr. Spender to withdraw. I think I have made my meaning plain enough. Good-day, Mr. Thorn;" and Con dismissed himself.

CHAPTER VI.

PERHAPS it was as well for Banker Thorn's peace of mind that he did not know that the brown-paper parcel which his daughter-in-law had carried out of harm's way had already, regarded through the magic glasses of desire, lost its first aspect of a trust and assumed the proportions of a coveted possession. An undue carefulness for "mine" oftener than not weakens the distinction between mine and thine, and makes covetousness the first step towards misappropriation.

Mrs. Charles Thorn's heart warmed within her as she thought of the banker's thousands lying safely with her own under lock and key; she had not yet divided her share from his, her own would look so small—a mere nothing put by itself. Why had she not demanded more? She had a right. She was beginning to reason with herself in some such fashion by the time Christmas Eve came, and then her fancy would call up a kaleidoscope-like picture of possibilities that might leave his money still with her, untouched, unclaimed. She would draw her chair nearer the fire when late in the afternoon she could no longer see to work, and would indulge in a succession of waking dreams.

So Banker Thorn found her when between the lights on Christmas Eve he came—alas! for Mrs. Thorn's dreams—to claim his own again.

She received him without any expression of surprise, although this was the first time he had come within her doors for seven years. It was no pleasure to her to see him now.

"What does he want?" she asked herself; she waited for him to open the conversation. He led it off with various trifling remarks, of which she took no apparent notice; she was lighting the candles on the mantelpiece. That done, she looked at her father-in-law.

"Banker Thorn," she said, "what has brought you here?"

The banker moved uneasily in his chair—it was directly opposite hers—and he coughed nervously.

"Ahem!" he cleared his throat, "ahem! I am afraid you will think me very changeable, Clarissa," he began, "but I find I need not trouble you to keep those bonds any longer, in fact it will be more convenient for me to keep them in my own hands."

"You should have thought of that before," she answered, "and then you need never have made me that little Christmas present."

"You know that was a mere figure of speech," said the banker, "to—to explain their being in your possession."

"Possession is nine points of the law," said Mrs. Charles, unmoved. Her father-in-law laughed a constrained unamused laugh.

"You must not make a joke of it, Clarissa. I really want the money very badly. I have to furnish it by Tuesday, to meet the depositors' claims."

"Why should you sacrifice Clare's nice little fortune to them?"

"What a nasty sarcastic manner Mrs. Charles could put on when she chose!" the banker thought. He knew she was quoting his own words against him; he coughed again, to choke down his anger. To get back his own money was certainly a more difficult task than he had anticipated.

"I must," he said; "I can't afford to lose the chance of being set on my legs again by Keeper and Spender. Of course I am much obliged to you for giving the bonds house-room, and I will let you have a full year's interest on them, and then you will be just as well off as if you had been bothered with the responsibility of four thousand pounds in your possession that did not actually belong to you."

"You are very generous!" she said.

He looked at her uneasily, he did not like the tone of her speech; perhaps it was his own fancy that gave it so doubtful a meaning.

"I wish to deal fairly with you," he said, getting up from his chair and beginning to draw on his gloves.

Mrs. Charles saw that he was preparing to go, but she did not move even when he continued:

"I should like to take the bonds with me now. Perhaps you would kindly fetch them—that is, if it does not inconvenience you." He was politeness—urbanity itself.

"It is inconvenient," she said, "for I intend to keep them!"

The suave smile with which he had just spoken, dropped like a mask from his face, and was succeeded by an expression of blank dismay. He could not believe his ears, and yet there was no mistaking her meaning now. She intended to keep the money—his money that to-day could stand between him and ruin! A fury of impatient rage took possession of him at the thought, blinding him to prudence, to what was possible to him and what was not.

"Clarissa!" he gasped in an unsteady voice, for he could only with difficulty speak at all, "Clarissa, I will prosecute you!"

"You dare not," she answered coldly.

Over Banker Thorn's face there came a sudden purple flush; he caught at the table in front of him, for the room swam before his eyes; he let go again, and then, as though stricken by some unseen hand, he staggered and fell back into the chair behind him in which he had been sitting a while ago—dead.

Clarissa Thorn's heart quailed before a sense of growing horror that bound her hand and foot. She could not stir, but sat still in her seat by the fire. It seemed to her as if the dead man's open eyes were fixed upon her, their gaze slowly turning her to stone. Surely those parted lips witnessed against her dumbly:

"This is your doing!"

With a stifled cry of shuddering terror, she hid her face in her hands, but she could not shut out the sight. That, she felt, would haunt her to her dying day.

But now, side by side with it, she saw another sight—no ghastly reality—a vision of a little child, with soft red-gold hair, out of which the brightness has not faded, looking like some baby-saint curled up in a corner of a great high-backed pew in a cold, murky City church. It must be Christmas-time, for round the pillars are great bunches of holly and ivy, and at the east end, over the communion-table is a Christmas text in unfamiliar letters that she

cannot decipher, but below, in plain Latin characters, all newly gilded and picked out, her eyes rest on the two Commandments: "Thou shalt do no murder;" "Thou shalt not steal." They are so short, so simple, the child reads them right off.

Surely Clariissa Thorn does the same, or is it the motionless figure in the chair facing her?

Some voice had uttered them aloud; it broke the spell that bound her, and the miserable woman struggled to her feet, stung into remorse.

Did his eyes still follow her as she crept with lagging footsteps past his chair, giving it as wide a berth as the little room would let her?

At the farther corner near the door stood an old-fashioned cabinet with intricate locks and fastenings. With trembling fingers she touched a hidden spring; a panel slipped back and showed a secret drawer.

Within it, denuded of its brown-paper wrapper, lay the packet of bonds.

She lingers a moment, face to face with her "darling sin"; then she clutches wildly at the packet, and carries it at arm's-length to where he is lying.

"Take it back!" she cries in a voice of frantic entreaty; but his hands have fallen slack and nerveless by his side; not a breath comes from between his lips, through which a little stream of blood is trickling in slow drops, staining the cushions of his chair.

"Ah!" she cries, "he is dead—dead! Who says there is peace and good-will at Christmas-time?"

The paper slipped from out her shaking hands and fell rustling at her feet. The sound in itself was nothing, but to her ears it sounded like a voice of judgment from heaven. It set her heart beating wildly; she recoiled and shrieked aloud, fled from the room, from the house, out into the road.

Close to the gate a man stood lighting his pipe, and the little flash of the match he was using fell upon her as she was hurrying past him. He caught her by the arm.

"Mrs. Thorn!" he cried. "What is it?"

It was Con Constantine's voice, and she recognised it. It recalled her to herself, but it was in vain she tried to answer. An hysterical contraction of her throat choked back the sound of her voice. She held his arm fast, and turned back with him to the house. Con went with her, wondering. She led him into the room that to her was so full of horror.

At first Con saw nothing unusual, only Banker Thorn sitting in his chair. But stay—could that be Banker Thorn?

"Good Heaven!" said the young man in an awe-stricken whisper. "Is he dead?"

Mrs. Thorn shivered, and wrung her hands.

"Have you sent for a doctor?" said Con, who, recovered from the first shock, had gone forward and laid his hand on the dead man's breast.

"No," said Mrs. Thorn; "the servant is out. I was alone in the house."

"I will go for one at once," said Con promptly. "But what are all these papers on the floor?"

He went on his knees, and gathered them together.

"I see they are foreign bonds," he said, rising to his feet. "Are they yours? If his, I will take them to the bank."

"No, no!" she cried. "His!"

The gesture with which she emphasised her words, her hands stretched out, not to take but to ward off, the expression of unspeakable repulsion with which she shrank away from him, made Con Constantine think many strange thoughts as he bent his steps towards the doctor's house. He met him at his own door, just as he was about to go in and sit down to dinner.

"Bless my soul!" stuttered Dr. Spillars, too surprised to do more than ask questions which were only the repetition of Con's own words. "At Mrs. Charles Thorn's, do you say? Banker Thorn? A fit, you suppose—eh?"

"Yes," said Con; "he looks like it."

"Apoplexy," said the doctor, with unprofessional candour. "Banker Thorn was predisposed to attacks of that kind; any sudden shock or great mental excitement might cause instantaneous death."

Through Con Constantine's mind passed a flash of enlightenment. Was he beginning to understand?

The doctor hurried away to Mrs. Charles Thorn's, and Con, with his hands behind him, turned slowly and thoughtfully in the opposite direction. He was deliberately dovetailing inferences and conjectures.

Whatever his final deductions may have been, he kept them to himself, kept them from Miss Robina—who had her own theory under the lock and key of silence—kept them with tender care from her who is now his wife.

No whisper against the dead man's memory has ever reached

Clare Constantine's ears. She only knows that when the bank affairs were wound up, Trevithic, with the other creditors, got his money back. Neither does her husband tell her that Mrs. Charles Thorn has never presented the cheque which was sent to her in liquidation of her claim as a shareholder in "Thorn's."

## The Justice of Gulchville.

BY HENRY TINSON.

### CHAPTER I.

MANY Colorado "old-timers" will remember Squire Wilton Creed, once Justice in No. 100 precinct in that territory.

Wilton Creed was but a middle-aged man, and young at that, as they say out West, when he was elected by the citizens of Gulchville as their justice. From his unswerving integrity, his honourable career, and above all, his candour and truthfulness—qualities which, like precious stones, are admired in proportion to their rarity—he was pronounced to be the best man in his precinct for the office, and all, the worst as well as the best of a strangely mixed mining community, were glad when he consented to stand.

At the opening of our story Wilton Creed was a young, steady, and successful fellow, managing a large store in New York for his uncle, Zachariah Creed. The latter being a confirmed invalid and almost confined to his room, the young man was practically master of the concern, the more especially as he was looked upon as the assured heir and successor to Zachariah.

Wilton was a tall, good-looking young man, really of a cheerful and even temper, but with a certain gravity and reserve, which sometimes gave strangers and those who were not thoroughly familiar with him the idea that he was ungenial, if not sullen. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He was, in reality, a man of strong impulses, which would have been overwhelming in their force, for good or evil, but for the habitual check in which he held them.

It will, then, easily be understood that when his affections were engaged, he loved in earnest and wholly; and no girl in the state of New York possessed a more thorough sweetheart than Rachel Delame found in Wilton Creed. Miss Delame was not quite the bride whom old Zachariah would have had his nephew seek, not but that she was handsome enough to justify the choice of any man. Tall and dark; with olive complexion, and blue-black hair, inherited from a mother who came from some country in the south of Europe; and eyes that at one moment looked through you, while in the next they were soft and winning—yes, she was handsome enough, but her friends were poor compared to Zachariah, and, even at their best, had not been of the kind which pleased the cautious old merchant.

It was not said that Rachel herself had ever been on the stage, but her mother had certainly followed it as a profession for some years, and had afterwards practised as a teacher of music, a calling which was not, in the eyes of such critics as Zachariah, much superior in respectability even to the former pursuit. She was dead, and Rachel lived with her father, who followed the same undesirable profession, to which, indeed, the young lady and one of her sisters had been brought up.

At first, probably, there had been opposition and serious exhortation in this matter, but if this were so, Wilton Creed had conquered, for at last there was certainly a toleration, if not a hearty approval of the intimacy, and it was known that at no distant day Rachel was to become Mrs. Creed.

In New York, as in other places in the States, men do pretty much as they like, without such painful regard to the inquisition of their neighbours, as appears to be the rule in Europe; but for all that, there is some sort of surveillance exercised by the circle in which each person moves, and it was generally decided that the match was nothing better than an infatuation, and a throwing himself away on the part of the young merchant. These judges decided, too, that Rachel Delame cared very little for Wilton, but came of too crafty a race, and was altogether too good a judge to let so fine a chance escape her. That Wilton was earnestly in love with the girl there could be no doubt, and as is the wont with such apparently self-restrained men, when he did give his passion free course, he exhibited a devotion as intense—perhaps as absurd—as that of the most love-sick, moon-struck swain of romance.

One beautiful summer evening he had called for Rachel as usual, and had strolled with her into the Central Park, near which her father's cottage was situated, and here, like Claude Melnotte, with myriads of lovers before and since that somewhat un-



principled hero, he sketched their home and their future—for their marriage was to take place within two months from thence—and this furnished the text on which he dwelt so lovingly, speaking with an absence of reserve and an eagerness quite foreign to his ordinary reputation.

As he finished one of these sketches of such happiness as they, of course, were certain to compass, he looked with a loving smile into her face. The last rays of the July sun struck through the shrubs which lined the low mounds under which they were strolling, and for an instant flashed on the face of Rachel. Their next step took them into comparative shade.

"Rachel," exclaimed Wilton, "there are tears in your eyes; do not seek to hide them, I saw them but too plainly. I would not wish you to hide them, Rachel. I well understand the feeling which filled your eyes; it is the excess of happiness, the trembling fear that the vision is too blissful for us. No; not for you! You should not have that feeling, but it haunts me often, Rachel, when I reflect how unworthy I am of such a prize as I have gained. It is excess of happiness. Is it not, dearest?"

"It—It should be as you say," returned Miss Delame after a short pause; "but it almost pains me, Wilton, to find that you rate me so highly. I am not worthy of such language, and sometimes I think—I think—"

"You think what, Rachel?" said Wilton, still with the same fond smile on his lips. "What is it you think that is so difficult to say?"

"I think that—that perhaps it would have been better for you if we had never met," began the girl.

"Rachel!" exclaimed Creed in a surprised, reproachful tone.

"Yes," she continued, "you set a value upon me so far above my real deserts; you invest me with merits which only exist in your own imagination; so that I fear—I am sure—the disappointment will be great when you know me as I am."

"A risk I will readily take!" cried her companion cheerfully. "You cannot daunt me thus, Rachel. I see you as you really are; there never will be any change in my feelings to you—to that I pledge myself. 'Tis a heathenish oath, I know, but I swear it by the sun, whose last rays now gild the roofs of yonder houses, and by the moon which has risen while we have been talking so foolishly—while they shine I will never change."

Rachel smiled at his enthusiasm, but there was a tremulousness even about the smile which savoured more of her previous motion than of hilarity; nor was she quite herself during the remainder of the walk, nor even when her lover had taken her to her home. After a short stay there, he parted from her with an affectionate embrace and kiss, such as an affianced bride may expect to receive from her lover, and for which her father, by an opportune and discreet absence from the little parlour, gave the opportunity.

"Your cheek," whispered Wilton, "is as cold as marble, Rachel. Not many minutes past it was flushed and hot, now it is deathly cold. You are ill."

The girl only smiled again at this outburst of anxiety, and returned the kiss just as her father's hand was laid on the lock of the door.

Mr. Delame—Don he was called sometimes, and Signor, but persons in his profession are not rigid in these matters—was hearty enough in his welcome to his future son-in-law, and profuse in his regret on finding that the young man could not be persuaded to stay any longer. It was quite certain that Mr. Delame was fully alive to the advantage of securing such a connexion, for he had half-a-dozen daughters, and had never dreamt of such a prize as this coming to his net.

Wilton Creed walked slowly on his homeward way. He was troubled and distressed as he reviewed the events of the evening, and was inclined to blame himself for some oversight or abruptness; this was followed by a resolve to be more careful in future. This future was very close, for on the next day but one he left his business much earlier than usual, in order to take Rachel, as had been agreed, to see their proposed home in New Jersey.

If there was no want of affectionate anxiety on his part then, lest he should say something thoughtless, or be thoughtless in the omission of something, there was also a strange anxiety and nervousness on the part of Rachel. She was gentler in her manner than Wilton had ever known her, almost timid, indeed, which was assuredly not her usual characteristic, yet there was an indefinable something which hung between them like an invisible, but not impalpable veil, and startled him.

Rachel could scarcely be got to say anything about the house, or its fitness for them; and when an opinion was wrung from her, it was always a monotonous echo of his own sentiments. She complained of a headache, and they parted early, at her own home, where Mr. Delame was as hospitable in his manner

as ever, and as pressing for Wilton to pass the evening with him. But the latter declined, and went his way with again the same depressed disheartened feeling he had experienced so painfully only two nights before.

On his way home he met some friends, and was easily persuaded to enter a favourite billiard-saloon with them—indeed, he was glad of the chance of dispelling some of the gloomy thoughts on which he felt he was brooding too much. He had been there an hour or so, and had regained his usual equanimity, when several strangers came in, some of whom watched the play of Creed and his party.

These strangers were well-dressed persons, evidently, from their conversation, dwellers in the Far West, and like most of their fellows very liberal, and also somewhat loud and unsparing in their remarks. One of the number had, perhaps, called at other saloons before entering this one, for his manner was a trifle excited, and he interfered in the game which he was watching beyond the degree of which his companions approved, and to the annoyance of the players.

His friends endeavoured to get him to leave the table, but the young man not only refused to do this, but by some perverse whim attached himself specially to Creed, on whom he thrust his conversation with an air which was almost of bravado. Yet the stranger was by no means intoxicated, that was clear; he was excited, but perfectly master of himself. One of his companions appeared to be especially annoyed by his conduct, and whispered to him energetically more than once, evidently in remonstrance.

"I know!" at last exclaimed the young man; "do you think I can't tell what I am doing?"

Creed and his party were about to leave the saloon, not caring to have the company of strangers forced upon them, when the young man, addressing Wilton, challenged him to play for a dozen of champagne.

Creed declined, and turned away.

"Stay a while!" cried the stranger; "I will pay for the drinks if you will not play for them. Be sociable!"

"I do not want your champagne, nor your company," retorted Creed, who was growing somewhat irritated by the other's persistency; "why do you meddle with me?"

Wilton's expression was stern as he spoke, and he drew back as though expecting, perhaps, an angry outburst on the part of the man he thus openly rebuked; but to his astonishment the other only laughed.

Again did his companion make an effort to get the stranger away, and, as he did so, another visitor entered the saloon—a personal friend of Creed.

He saw at once that something was wrong, and as quarrels in New York saloons have often serious terminations, he was anxious to prevent Wilton from continuing any discussion.

Creed laughed, but submitted himself to his friend, who exchanged a few words with the obtrusive stranger, and then, in company with Wilton, left the saloon.

"I am glad," said the friend, when they had fairly reached the street, "I am glad I came in when I did, although I must own, Wilton, you were about the last man I expected to see taking part in a saloon squabble. How came you to be wrangling with him, above all persons in the world?"

"Why him—why is he different to any one else?" asked Wilton; then added with a smile: "Not that I should have involved myself in a brawl, Fred; but you were always a peacemaker."

"I don't know that it would have been left to you to choose whether you would involve yourself in a brawl or not," returned Fred. "That was rather a dangerous character."

"You know him, then?" said Wilton.

"Yes; do you not know him?" exclaimed the other.

"No; of course not. I never saw or heard of him before," replied Wilton.

"Whew!" Fred's reply for the instant was a whistle, but he went on: "Then the matter was even more serious than it looked, for you may rely on it that a quarrel would have been forced upon you. I knew him before he went to California. He is—he is—"

"Well, who is he?" cried Wilton, as his friend hesitated.

"Well, he is Jule Warrock. You know now," replied Fred.

"Indeed I do not: I never heard the name," said Wilton. "But there must be no hanging back now, Fred. You have said so much that you must tell me all—who is this man?"

"I wish I had never opened my lips about him," answered his friend; "it is only idle gossip after all, but—well, then," he continued, seeing Wilton about to break out with some angry question, "he is the man who was once a suitor—some kind of admirer, that is—of Miss Delame, and it was said—only by him, of course—that they were engaged to be married, but that her—"

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father, Mr. Delame, broke it off, after continually encouraging the young fellow."

"Ah! and why did he break it off, and when?" demanded Wilton. He spoke very coolly, but his companion did not like the expression of his face, and noted also that he had turned deadly pale.

"Oh, about a year ago, I believe; I have not the least idea why," he replied. "For nothing to Jule's credit, you may be sure, if there was anything in it at all; but, rely upon it, it is all an invention."

"Invention! He was dismissed about a year ago, when I first became intimate with Rachel," muttered Wilton, then added aloud: "As you say, there may be nothing in it, Fred, so we will talk no more upon such a trifle."

He dismissed the matter in this light way, but his friend was not the less sorry that he had led up to such a communication, and after he parted from Wilton, expressed his fears to some of his own acquaintance that more would be heard of it. He was right, although he had probably not anticipated exactly what followed.

On the next evening Creed went, as was usual with him, to Mr. Delame's—he had made no special appointment, and was much later than his usual time, so he could not complain at finding Rachel from home, but he was disturbed for all that, and not the less so on finding that her father did not know whether she had gone. He had no doubt of the genuineness of Mr. Delame's ignorance. It was only too evident that the latter was vexed at Wilton's disappointment, and pressed the young man to stay, assuring him that Rachel would not be many minutes absent, as she could only be gone to visit a neighbour, not expecting him to call so late.

Creed would not wait, however, but stayed long enough to have a conversation with Delame, and to make some enquiries which showed the musician that he was not completely ignorant of some past family transactions which the elder had hoped to keep entirely hidden from him. Perhaps, too, Creed revealed more than he intended, for Mr. Delame was not deficient in craft, and some of his apparently insignificant questions drew the young man out, without his perceiving their drift.

Be that as it might, the old gentleman—he was not so very old, however—was in an extremely bad temper when his daughter returned. So he rated her soundly for being from home when Mr. Creed called, and, it is possible, exaggerated the force of what the young man had said, and magnified the extent of his information.

If so, Mr. Delame probably precipitated a catastrophe, which, however, would have occurred in any case. When Wilton called on the next evening, a terrible shock awaited him.

He found the place in confusion, the old man raving, the sisters in tears; but Rachel was not visible, and upon his enquiring for her, the father, with many execrations in English, French, and Spanish, thrust a letter into his hand.

It was Rachel's farewell. She had gone away with her first love, to whom she was to be married that night. She humbly begged pardon of Mr. Wilton for having trifled with his feelings, and assured him that she had tried to school herself to love him as he should be loved, but in vain, and she felt she was now doing her duty more truly than she had done while feigning to favour him. Yet she had behaved wickedly to him, she owned, and could not defend herself. She should never see New York again, but should ever be her father's loving, although rebellious daughter, Rachel Warrock.

This was the purport of the letter, and this was how Wilton Creed lost his first love.

Many of his friends said it would kill him. He himself thought—perhaps hoped—it would be so; but, as other men have survived the bitterest pangs, so did he. Mr. Delame tried to find some trace of his daughter, but in vain; it was not known whether Creed assisted in this search or not, for he never spoke of the girl. Certain it is that she was seen no more in New York, and, like other nine days' wonders, her flight was soon forgotten.

Forgotten even by Wilton Creed, it appeared, for in less than two years he married Miss Milly Robins, the only daughter of a wealthy friend of Zachariah Creed. It was entirely through the latter that the match was brought about, and the old man was wonderfully delighted. In a year after the marriage, Zachariah died, and within a year after his death Wilton Creed sold out of his store, which was regarded as one of the most prosperous in New York, and, with his wife and child, went West.

He was a rich man when he started, so had not the usual inducement for seeking a gold-mining country; and he settled down at Gulchville, in the territory of Colorado, and being, as ever, an energetic, clever man of business, soon became one of the most prominent citizens of the district. His name was famous for

integrity and fair dealing; miners would travel many miles to sell or buy from him, and eventually, after much persuasion, he consented to stand for the office of justice, and was elected by a majority of more than twenty to one.

## CHAPTER II.

GULCHVILLE was the metropolis of a large mining district, extending for many miles along the spurs, or foothills, of a great mountain range, in the ravines of which were hidden many mining villages, and many more lonely camps and shanties. Yet we must guard against giving a false impression to the reader by speaking of a metropolis. Gulchville, after all, was but a mining town; its streets were ill-defined, its scattered houses were chiefly of wood, a few only being of adobe or unbaked clay, and, indeed, there were a few canvas huts, but these were disappearing as the town grew older.

A fourth of the houses in the main streets were "saloons" of various pretensions, and in all of them gambling was rife. There was plenty of drinking, gambling, and a few other vices in Gulchville, among its fixed residents, but the trouble from this was as nothing compared to what arose when a batch of miners came in to sell their dust, and to have a little relaxation; or when a returning detachment of Texan "cowboys" brought their dollars, their revolvers, and their inflammable tempers, to wake up Gulchville society. Yet, with all this, which sounds serious enough to those not native and to the manner born, Gulchville was regarded as an orderly, law-abiding place, and it was held up as quite an example to some of the lesser towns.

Such as the "city" was, there Wilton Creed lived and prospered, and there his children were brought up. He had brought one child with him from New York, another was born during his first year's residence in the West. When he was elected justice, some of the citizens, judging from his grave temperament, prophesied raids on the saloons, with general imprisonments and expulsions of the dangerous classes of both sexes—but these prophesies were to a considerable extent mistaken.

Wilton had lived in the West long enough to know how impossible it was to alter, suddenly and completely, the character of such a community, so chiefly contented himself with keeping aloof from these places and people, an example which was followed by some of the more respectable residents. Yet he did something, and whenever any saloon became specially famous, or infamous, steps were taken to get rid of it, and two or three notorious characters were expelled, or "got rid of," also; so that Gulchville perceptibly improved. It was something, even, to have saved it from becoming worse.

That there was some danger of this latter catastrophe occurring, was proved by the condition of other towns along the foothills, two or three of which were hotbeds of gambling and murder. To these gravitated the very worst class of professional gamblers—"monté men," card-sharps generally, billiard cheats, and those who habitually picked quarrels in saloons. Judged by the standard of these other towns, then—Goldpark, for instance, with its rowdies, and its notorious "Seven-up-Jack," the gambler—Gulchville was a paradise of law and order.

More than one incursion had been made by the worst of these outlying Bohemians, under such leaders as Seven-up-Jack—although this man himself had not ventured into the town—but the citizens had risen against them, had driven them out, and, after the fashion of the West, had seized and hung two or three of the more obstinate of the number.

The man alluded to as "Seven-up-Jack" was the most notorious of all those who infested the district. He was suspected of cheating, but nothing had been proved against him, and as he had a strong following among the miners, with a portion of whom he was popular, it was not easy for a small community to expel him. To attempt to get rid of him by individual quarrel was dangerous, as he was known to have killed two men during his residence at Goldpark; but as these men would undoubtedly have killed him, had he not been the quicker, no moral or social guilt was attributed to him for these acts.

Wilton Creed had been justice of his precinct about a year and a half, his appointment having been renewed almost as a matter of course; the sheriff, too, was a man of almost equal standing with himself; and their steady, though guarded efforts were bearing fruit in Gulchville visibly—when Mrs. Creed went to pay a visit to a friend, at a lonely ranch, or farm, some miles away in the mountains. This ranch was at the head of an enormous ravine which almost divided the great chain of mountains there, and which at its farther end spread into a wide area of good land; but this space was reached by a pass of varying width, in some places scarcely affording a passage for the torrent which dashed impetuously down its slope; in some parts overhung by beetling

rocks; in others, a hundred yards wide, with broad terraces running at the feet of precipices three or four thousand feet high.

Mrs. Creed, with her two children, travelled in one of the narrow waggons, so popular in the West, and which are so light, and are built of such tough materials that, in the language of the district, "where they can't travel it ain't no use travelling at all," and, under the care of a steady driver, reached the ranch in safety. They left before sundown, as a journey through such a country after dark was to be avoided if possible, their host and one of his men accompanying them on horseback, until the very worst spot was passed, when they took leave and rode back to the farmhouse.

All went well until half the remaining distance to the mouth of the pass had been covered, but there, at a difficult corner; where the road was but a narrow ledge, with towering rocks on the right hand, and with a tremendous gulf, at the bottom of which hoarsely roared the stream, on the left; they met with a serious accident.

The waggon was moving very slowly along the ledge, when a stone on the side towards the torrent gave way, and the front wheel of the vehicle dropped at once to a lower level with a jerk which threw one of the horses quite over the edge of the precipice. Its companion would have been dragged after it, but for the desperate exertions of the driver; then, after an instant of frantic struggling and plunging, the harness gave way, and the horse went crashing down to the torrent bed, whether killed by the fall or not, the occupants of the waggon had no means of knowing.

Their position was unpleasant enough, and even dangerous, for although the waggon was safely resting on a sound piece of rock, yet the remaining horse was so frightened that it was only restrained by the driver standing at its head from commencing equally frantic struggles which must have resulted in the destruction of the whole party.

"I guess, marm, you had better get out, and help master and miss out as well," said the driver. "I daren't quit this darned critter for a minnit. How I shall get him over the rough ground by Black Cat Canyon, I don't know. One horse can hardly draw a waggon over there."

"The moon is up now," said Mrs. Creed, who had alighted from the waggon, and was assisting to soothe the terrified horse; "we shall not in the least mind being left, David. Suppose you ride this horse down to Farmer Barry's house, you can get there in half an hour, and return with assistance. We shall do very well until you come back."

The driver offered no specific objection to this plan, but evidently did not approve of it; Mrs. Creed almost naturally pressed it the more, and at last insisted upon the man leaving them.

"Wal, I sha'n't then, and that is the real truth," said the driver; "the horse is quiet enough now, as you say, and there is nothing unpleasant in your waiting an hour in such moonlight as this, as you say, too; but I will tell you what I meant to keep from you. I've seen sneaking along the rocks by our side for more'n a mile, one of the biggest mountain lions"—the puma is so called in the West—"I ever see. The brute won't come near a man nor a rifle, for he knows what a gun is as well as I do—but he is dead on women and children."

"Are you sure, David?" asked Mrs. Creed, but her voice was tremulous and weak now, very different to the commanding tone in which she had just been speaking.

"Sure on it?" echoed the other. "Why, I have seen the brute since I told you to get out of the waggon. He is hiding beyond that peaky rock now."

Mrs. Creed shuddered, and she instinctively drew the two children closer to her side. David noticed the movement, and said:

"You needn't be afraid; he won't come close while I am here. I will take care not to stir out of reach of my rifle, and I will not leave you. We must push on, marm, and do the best we can."

As he said this, he jerked the rein of the remaining horse, and then, putting his hands to the side of the waggon, tried to extricate it from its dangerous position.

The horse, however, perhaps not having recovered from its fright, refused to pull, and with a vexed exclamation David ceased his efforts.

"I'm darned if I don't believe we shall have to walk to Barry's," he said, "and if we do, that sneaking mountain lion will have this horse before we have been out of sight two minutes."

"Unharness him, and lead him with us," said Mrs. Creed; "the mountain cat cannot hurt the waggon."

"That's so! you are right," exclaimed the man, who began to unbuckle the harness, but scarcely had he touched a single strap, when he stopped and listened.

"What is the matter?" said the lady, who turned pale as she spoke, fancying that the driver had heard the approaching tread of the dreaded beast.

"Hark! surely you can hear wheels!" he cried; "I'll be whipped if there isn't a waggon coming through Pasos Malos ravine. Any man who will drive through there must have got real white blood in his veins—listen!"

David was right; the sound of approaching wheels was distinctly heard, and approaching, too, through a pass or mere fissure in the mountains, which although just passable, was yet so dangerous and rough as to have gained the unenviable title of the "Pass of Bad Steps."

The sound of wheels removed one fear which would have been present had the travellers been horsemen only. The Indians of the district were few, and tolerably peaceable, but yet were held in great dread and hatred by the inhabitants, and Mrs. Creed would at once have pictured the approach of a troop of these.

In a few moments a waggon came into view, passing close under the rock behind which David declared the puma to be lurking, and in it were three men and a woman, the latter, from her dress, being evidently the mistress.

At sight of the disabled vehicle, the new comers pulled up, and a shout from the driver asked if assistance was wanted.

"A white woman, a white man, and two Mexicans," muttered David before replying; then in an answering shout, he told their position, and requested help.

The second waggon was driven nearer, the man got down, the horses were "unhitched," and fastened to the jeopardised vehicle, which in a few seconds was drawn to a place of safety.

David had taken care to let the strangers know that he was driving Mrs. Creed—or as he phrased it, Madam Creed, wife of the Justice of Gulchville; it was not every day that such folks—David knew them—got a chance of rendering assistance to the squire of the district.

The men worked with a will, and soon got the vehicle right for the road, the horse proving manageable enough when away from the precipice; the children were lifted into the waggon, and all was ready for a fresh start.

The strange lady had not moved from her seat, nor spoken, save once or twice in very low tones to her attendants, and now Mrs. Creed, before taking her own seat, went to the side of the other waggon, and thanked the stranger for her help. She mentioned her name, gave an invitation to her house at Gulchville—this was almost a matter of course in the West—and offered her hand.

The stranger had listened with unmoved features; so much could be seen even through her veil, which she kept down. She made no response to the offer, while she apparently did not notice Mrs. Creed's extended hand, as there was no corresponding movement on her part. She bowed slightly as Mrs. Creed ceased, then turned, and said something in a low voice to one of her men who had just mounted the waggon.

Mrs. Creed felt surprised and somewhat hurt at this behaviour, but recollecting that many of the farmers were Mexicans, and spoke no language but Spanish, supposed she was not understood. She had previously paid the men liberally for their exertions, so now, with a parting bow, she quitted the strangers, and took her place in her own waggon.

At the first touch of David's whip their single steed moved bravely on, and Mrs. Creed, turning for a last glance, as their vehicle was jerked round the angle of a huge rock, saw the strange lady watching them still, with the same intent air which she had felt so unpleasant a few minutes earlier.

Under the impression this produced she could not avoid speaking to David on the subject. "It was very kind of that lady to come to our assistance, David," she said; "do you think she is a Mexican? I fancy she did not quite understand what I said to her, and I think it is the more likely from her coming through Los Pasos Malos; no one but farmers well acquainted with the country, or Indians, would venture to ride or drive through that pass."

"Mexicans!" exclaimed David in a strongly contemptuous tone; "she's no Mexican. She can talk English fast enough when she pleases, though I must say she is a silent, sulky critter generally; nobody ever sees her laugh."

"You know her, then?" returned Mrs. Creed. "Is she a farmer's wife?"

"Know her!" exclaimed David; "why, marm, I should have thought everyone about here knew her. She don't come into Gulchville, though. Haw, haw! No; she ain't likely to come much into Gulchville. Tain't good for her, nor her husband neither."

"Then who is she, David?" asked Mrs. Creed. "Why, you have heard tell on Seven-up-Jack, the gambler,

he that shot the Texan at the monté table in the Pinetto House a while ago," replied the driver. "You might remember him, I dare say, because Squire Creed had word he was coming to start a gambling-saloon in Gulchville, but the citizens had a meeting and concluded to lynch him; so Jack did not come."

"Yes, I have heard of him," returned Mrs. Creed; "but what has he to do with these people?"

"Wal, just this," answered David; "that's his wife. I've seen her with him many times, and, as I tell you, she's pretty nearly always as silent as you've just seen her."

"What a dreadful thing!" exclaimed Mrs. Creed, who had imbibed part of the general dislike, and, it may be, terror, felt in regard to this man. "Does she join him in his gambling transactions?"

"No; nary bit," returned David. "Some thinks he is a little afraid of her; some thinks she is a good deal afraid of him; but, anyhow, you never see her at his monté, or dice, or billiard tables. It will be a good job for the territory when we hear he is shot, as shot he will be some day. That is how all these gamblers end."

Mrs. Creed made no reply, and soon after the garrulous driver stopped at "Barry's," where another horse was procured, and from whence two or three men set out to discover, if possible, some traces of the missing animal.

In connection with this item, as they say out West, we may mention that the horse was found grazing quietly enough on a grassy space near the mouth of the canyon, not very much the worse for its hazardous tumble. How it escaped being knocked to pieces, and how it arrived at its peaceful grazing-ground, no one could guess.

Of course Mrs. Creed had a great deal to tell her husband on her arrival, in which the danger to which she, and more especially the children, had been exposed was, perhaps, a little exaggerated; fear will sometimes do this, but there was enough reality to cause a burst of thankfulness from the squire, and to produce such a donation to David in recognition of his coolness and steadiness, as made this the best night's work in which the coachman had ever engaged during the whole of his driving career.

When the justice heard of the assistance rendered by the strangers, and the unsocial behaviour of the mistress of the party, he said:

"I hope this will be the last we shall see or hear of her. I have no doubt she is a strange woman; I hear she has the character; but for her own sake I hope she will keep away from Gulchville. Why I say this, Milly, is because I have been informed to-night that this rowdy, this Seven-up-Jack, or whatever he calls himself, has determined to start a gambling-saloon at Buffalo Dip. That is on the Gulchville side of the river, and the citizens are resolved that they will not have any of his gang here; and quite right, too. We have loafers and rowdies enough of our own without strangers, and if Jack really sets up a saloon in Buffalo Dip, the citizens will certainly lynch him."

This was an ominous prophecy for Seven-up-Jack, the more so as coming from the lips of one who was by no means likely to jest on the subject.

### CHAPTER III.

FOR some little time affairs went on quietly in Gulchville—that is, quietly according to the Gulchville standard; but presently it was said that at the nearest mining village—Buffalo Dip, already spoken of—there was a nest of gamblers of the worst character, in full operation, with their inevitable hangers-on. The effect of this was soon felt; there was a constant interchange between the two places, the worst of the Gulchville population went over to the Dip, returning furious with drink and exultation over their winnings, or, more commonly, furious with drink and desperation at their losses; neither mood being agreeable to such of the citizens as were law-abiding and peaceful.

To rival the attractions of Buffalo Dip, the saloon-keepers of Gulchville altered their style of business, and added fresh "draws," so that frequent arrivals from the Dip took place, and there seemed every chance of the larger town becoming a pandemonium. A constable had been killed, and two citizens seriously wounded in a single week, which testified to "more shooting scrapes," as the *Gulchville Planet* had it, than had taken place there in three months before, and all this was put down to the bad influence of Buffalo Dip, and the leadership of Seven-up-Jack. Several meetings were quietly held to decide what was best to be done; and although the justice and sheriff usually attended these meetings, strictly legal forms of action were not certain to follow their deliberations—in short, if the citizens saw

a way of abating the nuisance homœopathically—that is, by like curing like, by shooting and so forth, they would adopt the means.

One morning when Mr. Creed was in his counting-house, his friend, Mr. Mark Anthony Tropper, the sheriff of the district, presented himself, and with little preface, stated the object of his visit. It was to inform Mr. Creed of the resolve to which a meeting of the previous evening had come—a meeting from which the justice had been unavoidably absent.

Summarised, the sheriff's communication was to this effect. The citizens would not endure the presence of Seven-up-Jack and his associates any longer, and what was more, they would not now have him so near as he had previously been. It had been proposed to seize and hang him, with at least two or three of the gang, as the quickest and most effectual mode of settling affairs, but more merciful counsels had prevailed.

It was decided that notice to leave should be given to the gambling leader, with the intimation that if, after the lapse of twenty-four hours from this notice, he was found within fifty miles of Gulchville, he would be a dead man. The sheriff and a couple of friends were then about to start for Buffalo Dip, conveying this message.

Wilton Creed was glad to find that the man was to be allowed a chance, although his own voice had been at first for prompt justice; for, when he considered that the gambler's wife had rendered his family a service, although only by allowing her servants to work a few minutes for them, he felt a half-obligation to Jack himself, which made him glad that his life was to be spared.

His approval of the scheme was therefore given at once, and Mr. Tropper departed with his friends for Buffalo Dip. The justice would perhaps have accompanied the sheriff, but that he was about settling some claim business for a posse of miners, Gulchville men and strangers, who were just starting for what was likely to prove a "rush," a few miles beyond the Dip.

Of course a much larger escort would have been taken—and easily could have been obtained—had immediate expulsion been the object of the sheriff. As it was, his errand, according to Western standards, might be regarded as actually a friendly one, and precedent was almost wholly in favour of such an intimation being at once complied with; so it was with the confidence of men who had no doubt of their reception, that the sheriff and his two friends entered the mining village.

The village consisted of a few scattered shanties and tents pitched at random, without the faintest attempt at order, save where seven or eight larger wooden buildings clustered round an open space; one of these being the post-office, another a store, the remainder being all "saloons," as was shown by various banners and inscriptions.

The sheriff was apparently duly advised as to which of these buildings was the one he sought, for he went straight to a saloon bearing the title of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and swinging open the door, entered with his assistants. He had no occasion to ask for further information, for there, leaning on the bar or counter at the end of the place, in conversation with the bartender, was Seven-up-Jack. The latter glanced round as the visitors entered, and Mr. Tropper, who knew the gambler by sight, called him "Jack," and expressed a wish to have a few words with him.

The visit of the sheriff unfortunately proved to be timed most inopportunistically; the gambler was terribly out of temper, and by no means inclined to render ready obedience to the law, or any of its ministers. On the previous evening he had been very unlucky, having been stripped of all the money he had about him, to say the least of it, by a braggart miner who insulted him over his losses; conduct which would have led to an exchange of shots, but for the man's declaration of his intent to return on the following evening, with the means and the will to play Seven-up-Jack, and "all his outfit," for their bottom dollar.

This, with the addition of a few score of Western oaths, was what the miner said, and the prospect of having a complete revenge—of first winning back all his money, with a good deal of the miner's to boot, and then shooting his boastful opponent—had held back the gambler's hand, and saved one life, on that night, at any rate. To leave the prospect of this double vengeance, to allow his insulter to retain his gold, and to be able to vaunt how he had defeated Seven-up-Jack, and cowed him so that he never would face his conqueror again, to ask him to submit to this at the bidding of a sheriff was asking too much of flesh and blood—of such flesh and blood as an exasperated Western gambler, assuredly.

Seven-up-Jack flatly refused to accept any order to quit, and defied all the Vigilantes in Gulchville, or out of it, to drive him from Buffalo Dip.

"They won't be Vigilantes, siree!" returned the sheriff; "this is going to be a legal expulsion—that is so. We shall have the



sheriff's posse around, and we will take you out of this very saloon, this very night. Yes, sir."

The sheriff had been recognised, and his arrival noised about, so by this time a group of men had gradually entered the saloon, and were listening to this discussion. Their enquiring glances told Seven-up-Jack that his prestige was upon its trial, and probably made his mood more dangerous.

"Go home, and mind your store. Don't meddle with grown-up men!" retorted the gambler, using very strong language in addition, which it appeared was not at all customary with him, and showed he was not quite himself. "When we want Gulchville loafers here we'll send for them."

"They will come without being sent for, Jack," returned the sheriff; "and if you do not clear out as I order you——"

"You order me!" interrupted the other with a scornful laugh.

This laugh found an echo in the admirers who were looking on, and perhaps irritated the sheriff a little beyond the bounds of prudence.

"Yes, I order you," he said; "and I feel like sending you off at once, or arresting you."

A mocking laugh was the only immediate reply to this, and then the gambler, addressing the listeners, exclaimed:

"Here, boys! let us have one game in honour of the sheriff's visit, and I'll stand drinks, win or lose. Come on!"

A laugh and encouraging remarks rewarded this speech, and the idlers came closer to the bar.

"Then I arrest you as a common gambler," said Mr. Tropper, and made a clutch at the collar of the gambler's coat. The latter pushed him away; the sheriff sprang forward, and called on his companions to assist in the capture.

There was a brief, a momentary struggle, a blow was struck, and then it was all over in an instant. There was a report, a puff of smoke, and poor Mr. Tropper was lying face downwards, shot dead.

It was indeed all over in an instant, and then for another breathing space all seemed rooted in horror. Violence and even death were not so rare there, that the shooting down a single man should produce a general shock in the men who were now looking on; but there was an immediate feeling of sorrow for the occurrence, a conviction that the deed was hardly intended.

The first to move were the friends who had accompanied the sheriff, and they, being in a hopeless minority, and fearing an attack from the partisans of the murderer, fled at once from the saloon.

"This is a bad job, colonel," said one of the men who was assisting to raise the body from the ground; "a darned ugly job."

"It is, Joe," returned the gambler with something of sadness in his tone; "what did he want to bring on a difficulty just now for? I wish he had been a thousand miles away."

"He's dead enough," said the first speaker as the body was laid on a settle; "I reckon we had better give notice to the alcalde. There won't be much more monté, or euchre, or seven-up, played in your shanty, Rube."

This was to the landlord, who said rather fiercely:

"Why not, Joe? Who is to stop it?"

"Wal," returned the man coolly, "you don't think a sheriff is going to be killed, and no fuss made, do you? If he was sent by the Vigilantes, as Seven-up-Jack told him he was, it don't make it no better—why, where is Jack?"

No one knew; in the brief dialogue with the landlord, which had for an instant taken attention from him, he had left the saloon, which was now filling with a crowd of rough men, and a few women, attracted from all parts of the Dip by rumours of what had occurred.

"Seven-up's gone, I reckon," continued the speaker; "wal, I estimate he could not do a better thing than to vamoose right away. We shall have to send word to Squire Creed at Gulchville, he is justice for this precinct. We know what he is, and what the Vigilantes will do, so it is as well Jack has gone."

There was no one to follow the criminal, no one to avenge the sheriff. Had the crime been committed in the evening, over a brawl at the card-table, or a dispute about a drink, but few in Buffalo Dip would have regarded it as a crime at all. Yet now, although they had no sympathy with the sheriff, who was in their eyes an intruder and a meddler, they felt that this was somewhat serious, and very different to the "shooting scrapes" to which they were so well accustomed.

Besides the power of the law, too, there were the Vigilantes to be reckoned with, and the prevailing sentiment in Buffalo Dip was an echo of Joe's words when he said that there would not be much more gambling in Rube's saloon, and that a sheriff could not be killed without a fuss being made.

Two of the leading citizens of Buffalo Dip, whereof Joe was one, were deputed to ride over to Gulchville, and give information to the authorities. There was no doubt these latter would hear soon enough of the incident from the two friends of the sheriff, but, as the "citizens" convened in Rube's saloon decided, it would have a more decorous, law-abiding aspect, if some of their own people went over with the tidings.

So Joe and another went, and as it turned out, arrived at Gulchville with the first intelligence of the "difficulty"—they preferred speaking of it as "a difficulty" out there, "murder" having an ugly sound.

On hearing that some messengers from Buffalo Dip were asking for him, Wilton Creed at once guessed that something had gone wrong, and so gave audience to them at his private house, which adjoined his store.

"Now, is there anything the matter—anything wrong with Sheriff Tropper?" he said, directly he was in the presence of the men.

"Squire, I am Joe Bleak, of Buffalo Dip, and this gentleman here is Major Hiram Bartelson, of the same place, one of our leading citizens. We are here, squire, deputed by our fellow-citizens to inform you that a shooting scrape took place this morning, in our city, and in the difficulty——"

"The sheriff was murdered, I suppose. Is that so?" interrupted Creed.

"I said there was a difficulty," returned the messenger, with some emphasis; "the result is that the sheriff has pegged out, I admit, and as a law-abiding community, the citizens wish you to have every information on the subject."

"And who was the—— But you need not tell me," said the justice, with a sudden change of tone; "I see him coming. Rely upon it he shall have justice done him in Gulchville."

"See him coming, squire! What do you mean?" exclaimed Joe.

"Look there!" cried Creed, and the men turning round as he pointed, saw through the window, against which they were standing, a group of mounted men crossing the square or plaza of Gulchville, followed by a larger group of spectators.

In the centre was Seven-up-Jack, with his hands tied behind him; on either side rode a man armed with a rifle, while close behind came the two friends who had accompanied Sheriff Tropper in his luckless mission.

The messengers from Buffalo Dip were silent from sheer astonishment for a moment, during which Creed had opened the door of the house, and shown himself; then all the men pressing forward, the apartment, and the store-room into which it opened, were filled with the crowd, and Seven-up-Jack, with his armed guard still by his side, confronted the justice.

The accusation, and evidence given by the two friends, which was fully and candidly confirmed by the men from Buffalo Dip, need not be repeated here.

The capture and arrival of the culprit were explained by the fugitive friends having taken a route by which they met the body of miners who had left Gulchville that morning, and whose business had detained Justice Creed, perhaps saving his life thereby.

The rest was simple enough; the miners at once determined to arrest Seven-up-Jack, which attempt they might have found attended with some difficulty, had they not been singularly befriended by chance.

On their way to Buffalo Dip, the very man of whom they were in search, rode into their midst, for as they were not on the direct road from Gulchville, he feared no danger in that direction; so ere he could draw his revolver, or turn his horse's head to fly, he was seized, bound, and guarded as a prisoner.

"I reckon we shall leave him in your hands, squire," interposed Joe, at the conclusion of this evidence; "it seems all straight, don't it? I will say this for Jack, and I leave it as my testimony, that I never saw any galoot play a squarer game, or settle up quicker."

A subdued "Hear, hear!" from the crowd evinced the importance attached to this testimonial, and showed, perhaps, that some of the hearers had been in a position to note these elevated attributes of the captive.

"You hear what has been evidenced against you, prisoner?" said the justice; "you need not say anything now, as you will have another hearing. You are committed to Gulchville gaol on a charge of wilful murder, and I fix your bail at twenty thousand dollars."

This, of course, was a prohibitive bail, as it was certain that Seven-up-Jack could find no such security.

"Constable Jolstein, you will take charge of the prisoner," continued Creed; "you will see that he is kept in custody so long as he remains at Gulchville. You can have an assistant at the gaol."



"Yes," said one of the citizens, who had been hitherto a silent listener, "you will take care he does not escape, constable. You will keep guard night and day, and you will take orders from no one but the squire. The gaol is not a very strong building, but it will hold a man that's watched. The citizens intend to have justice done in this case; their officers are not to be murdered by rowdies for nothing."

A low stern murmur of approval ran through the room at this, and Seven-up-Jack, who had not spoken a syllable since his entrance, turned his eyes for a moment in the direction of the speaker. The glances of the two men met, then Jack turned away, and obeying a signal from the constable, followed him, still guarded by several armed men, in the direction of the gaol.

This was only a clumsy wooden building, but, as the last speaker had said, it would hold a prisoner if he was watched, and the probability was that this prisoner would be watched closely enough.

"The Vigilantes will string him up before he goes for trial, Pete, you bet your life," said one of those who had been present at his committal; "you heard what Colonel Smye said about justice being done. Colonel Smye is a Vigilante, and he will have Jack out to-night or to-morrow. They would hang Jolstein in his place, if he were to let Seven-up escape, and Jolstein knows it."

#### CHAPTER IV.

It was announced the next day that on the following morning Seven-up-Jack—no one spoke of him by any other name, or seemed to care whether he had another—would be taken to a certain large town, there to await his trial for the murder of a Sheriff Tropper. This was publicly discussed, and the fact that a despatch had been sent by Squire Creed announcing the intended disposal of the criminal was publicly discussed also; but the discussion was generally accompanied by significant grins, which would have impressed so experienced a frontiersman as Seven-up-Jack, could he have seen them, as being unpleasantly ominous.

There was no other unusual feature in Gulchville during the day, save that towards its close, some outlying residents, ranchmen, miners, and others, rode in to the number of perhaps a score; they were all armed, but this was a matter of course. There was, however, no increase to the gaiety of the town, such gaiety as often followed an influx of strangers—on the contrary, Gulchville was quieter than usual; none of the visitors hung about its saloon doors, or whooped and yelled in its open spaces, as was sometimes the case.

Yet although the Vigilantes were a secret society, and none but themselves knew who the members were, for all that, every one in Gulchville was certain that these were Vigilantes summoned to the town for a purpose, and everyone in Gulchville knew what that purpose was.

Wilton Creed was not ignorant of their arrival, nor of their business; he alone, of the prominent citizens of Gulchville, would not be asked to join them; but he was powerless to resist, had he the wish to do so.

His store was closed, his assistants were gone; his wife and children were absent—he had sent them on a visit for two or three days to a village at some distance. It was well, perhaps, that they should be out of the way of the news—and the sights too—another day might furnish; so the justice sat alone. His table was strewn with account-books, writing-paper, and the like; but Wilton Creed could not fix his attention on his business, and the glass, which was by his side, remained untasted and unnoticed. He looked up and listened now and then, as a gust of wind would sweep down from the mountains, and howl round the scattered buildings of Gulchville, but sank into abstraction again immediately.

Presently he started from his reverie, for he heard a knock—low, but distinct—at the outer door. He wondered who could knock in so stealthy a manner, and listened, with some curiosity, to hear the door opened; but all was quiet, until at length the knock was repeated. Then he remembered that the only servant had accompanied Mrs. Creed and the children, so that he was alone in the house.

He rose and opened the outer door. The night was intensely dark, so that at first he could not perceive anyone; soon, however, he saw a woman, wrapped in a cloak, standing before him.

"Do you wish—," he began; but the woman said quickly and huskily:

"My business is with you, Wilton Creed," and then, to his surprise, she stepped swiftly by him and entered the house. The justice looked hastily round, as expecting to see others, accomplices, perhaps, in waiting, but the woman was alone. She saw his movement, and with a low laugh, in which there was some-

thing which almost curdled her listener's blood, said: "You are in no danger. I am but a solitary woman, and one not far from death. You could crush me to the ground far easier than you could lift me from it. Fear me not, Wilton Creed."

"I do not fear you; but your conduct and manner are strange," returned the justice. "If you have business with me, come into this room"—they were speaking in a short, unlighted passage or hall—"I will then hear what you have to say."

A few paces took them into the room he had just left; he placed a chair for his visitor, and seated himself at the table; the woman, however, remained standing.

Creed looked searchingly at her, but could not distinguish her features beneath the double veil she wore.

"Now, madam," he said, "please to tell me why you have called on me; my time is short—as you see, I am busy."

"Yes," said the stranger harshly; "your time is short, doubtless. You expect to be summoned to the work which will be in hand to-night. Is it not so?"

"The work! what work?" exclaimed Creed, who was really bewildered for the moment.

"You know too well what will be done in a mockery of justice, between this and the dawn," returned the woman; "but time is too precious to waste in words. Do you not know me?"

"No," said Creed.

"Do you know me now?" exclaimed the stranger, throwing up her heavy veil; "is there nothing left in face or voice to tell you who I am?"

The justice had unconsciously risen from his seat at the other's excited language, but now he sank down again, and for a moment covered his eyes with his hands.

"No," he said again; "no, I do not. I cannot have seen you before."

"You do know me, Wilton Creed," retorted the woman; "the very horror which lurks behind your denial shows that you do. You knew me as Rachel Delame—you see me now as the wife of Jule Warrock, the outcast, outlaw, and gambler, who now lies in your gaol awaiting—you know it well—a lawless doom."

"Good Heavens! is it possible?" groaned the justice.

"It is true; you feel that it is true," continued the visitor. "You are happy, have always been happy and respected. I have lived a life of unbroken wretchedness and anxiety. We each met the fate we deserved, each lived the life we had chosen. I own it. I saw your happy wife and your blooming children but the other day, Wilton, and if you bear me any ill-will for my conduct, if you have suffered at my hands, oh, believe me you were avenged in the pang I felt then, at the miserable contrast between my life and position with theirs."

"Ill-will! Avenged! Oh, Rachel, why do you come to me now?" cried the justice; "why do you rise before me at such a fearful moment? And why—oh, why speak of my revenge against you?"

"It would be but right did you wish the bitterest—but no more of that. You know me. You once loved me, and although I destroyed that love, yet I know you have never—can never banish the tenderness which clings to the remembrance even of such a woman as myself," said the stranger, or Mrs. Warrock, as she had declared herself.

"It is only too true," murmured Creed, as she paused. "Then in the name of the past love—by the strength of the tenderness you cherish for my memory, even by the depth of the forgiveness you have accorded me," continued she, "I beg of you—I conjure you to aid me now."

"What can I do for you, Rachel?" exclaimed the squire; "painful as are the feelings your visit has awakened, and painful as will be the remembrance of this night, yet I shall only be too pleased to aid you. What can I do?"

"You can save him from this awful, this disgraceful fate," returned Mrs. Warrock; "that done, I shall vanish for ever from your sight. Let my husband go free; you and you alone in this town have power to do so."

"Let free your—release Jack of Buffalo Dip!" cried the justice. "It is impossible, Rachel; you know not what you ask."

"I know only too well what I ask," answered the woman, "and know also, that if I fail with you, my unhappy, my guilty husband is a dead man—that he dies without trial or ceremony before the morning. I demand this, and this only. Refuse me, and by the dawn of the coming day you shall have two lives on your hands."

"Rachel, what can I do? why do you torture me with such a request?" exclaimed Creed; "I cannot speak the pain it has given me to find this unfortunate man is—is your husband. But I have not condemned him, it is the law—or it will be. His offence is too serious for my influence—"

"Peace, Wilton!" passionately interrupted the woman; "is it to such trifling as this that you think I have dared such a humiliating ordeal to listen? Throw open his prison doors; you can do it. He will be murdered in a few hours—you know it, Wilton—unless you save him. I implore you, I charge you by the love you once swore to me, if there dwells a spark of the feeling in your heart."

"Oh, Rachel, if I were to do this, my name, my reputation, would be gone," said Creed, "and I should— No, it is out of the question."

"Name! reputation! Let them go!" cried Rachel; "the nearer you draw to degradation, to shame, to misery, the more you will resemble me, Wilton. I swear I die before the morning if you refuse me."

"I need not—I scarcely heed that threat—" began Creed.

"No," interrupted the woman; "I should be better dead."

"Even that may be so," continued Creed; "but for the sake of the old love, Rachel, and under the rush of memories which your presence has recalled, I promise. Leave me now; say no more, or you may change me. I have given my word."

"You will keep it, I know," said Rachel; "would I had been as truthful as you have always proved. Farewell, Wilton; we shall meet once more, for I shall have to do my part, and will assist in the sacrifice I know you are making; but this will be in your mind as my farewell."

She said no more, but left the room, and directly afterwards was heard to quit the house.

The justice passed his hand over his brow, with the air of a man bewildered and dazed.

"What a fearful vision it was," he muttered, "and what a fearful pledge I have given!"

The intense darkness of midnight in the wilderness had settled on Gulchville, on its outlying suburbs, and on the square, gloomy wooden gaol in which the solitary prisoner was confined. All was black and silent as a man left the town, and with the assured tread of one who knew the way, albeit it was marked by no road or track.

He listened at one large saloon, now as dark outwardly as the other buildings; a murmur of many voices reached him, and he smiled bitterly, as he hurried away.

In a few minutes he had reached the gaol, and at the spot where a faint line of light shone from a chink, he paused and listened, having approached the building as stealthily as possible.

"As I expected," he muttered; "both the men are drinking and talking—they will hear nothing. I thought the whisky I sent down would not be thrown away."

After this he stole cautiously round to the rear of the building, which was of no great extent, opened a small door with a key, and at once stepped inside.

He was in a passage, along one side of which were ranged the three little chambers which were the cells of the prison; at the end of this passage was the larger room in which, as could now be heard distinctly, the gaolers were carousing.

From one of these cells a light gleamed; the door was secured on the outside by a heavy bolt, which the visitor withdrew softly, and then looked into the cell. Its inmate—Seven-up-Jack—wild and haggard-looking, had shrunk to the farthest corner of his den, evidently suspecting that an intrusion at such an hour of the night must be from the dreaded Vigilantes.

When he saw but one man, and then saw who that man was, a startled exclamation escaped him, and he uttered the stranger's name.

"Silence, Jule Warrock!" exclaimed Creed in an impressive whisper; "give but the slightest alarm now, and you are a dead man. I have risked my own life to save yours—you know why. Follow me."

Without another word they left the cell, Creed carefully replacing the bolt, lest the gaoler, in some unwonted spasm of vigilance, should look into the corridor to see that all was right; more he was not likely to do.

In another moment they were in the open air.

"You are safe now—fly!" said the justice. "No, not a word," he continued, as the man strove to pour out his thanks; "not a word; you owe me no gratitude. But for your wife's sake, you would have swung on a mountain-oak before the morning. Ah, what is that?"

He was surprised into this exclamation by two horses coming suddenly out of the darkness, almost upon him; a voice spoke in a low tone, and then the fugitive threw himself upon one of the animals.

"Thanks, or no thanks, I owe you my life!" he exclaimed; "and here is Rachel, who has been watching for me, she thanks you too."

"No more!" said Creed; "your thanks cannot restore the trust I have broken, and every moment you linger here brings the noose nearer to your neck."

"By thunder, you are right, and I know it!" cried the man; "if I don't cross the boundary before dawn, I shall never cross it—so good-bye, alcalde, and may you prosper."

"Farewell, Wilton Creed!" said a woman's voice—the justice could scarcely see her figure in the gloom, then for a few seconds was heard the sound of horses' hoofs beating on the soft earth—and then Wilton Creed, the trusted justice of Gulchville, stole back to the town, as secretly and stealthily as he had left it.

An hour after, as his sleepless, watchful ears could distinguish, fifty men assembled outside the saloon at which he had listened, and with guarded tread took the road to the gaol.

The building was surrounded in a moment, and then with sudden clamour the gaolers were called, and the prisoner demanded. As a part of a well understood and arranged farce, the gaolers refused compliance; then threats were used of burning down the gaol; then—under such coercion—the doors were thrown open, and the rioters were admitted, the gaolers exchanging meaning grins and nods with those who had just threatened them.

In a moment the place was flooded with the crowd, who went straight to the cell in which Seven-up-Jack had been confined—and found it empty! The rage of the baulked intruders was terrible, and a proposition was made to hang the guilty gaolers, which proposition would have been carried out then and there, but that the men had some friends in the throng; these, knowing how utterly useless open opposition would be, suggested trying them the next day, in order to find out who had been behind the scenes and furnished the bribes. This was approved and adopted, and the gaolers, under a strong guard, were left in the cells which so lately had been in their own charge.

But ere the next day had expired, or the gaolers' trial had taken place, rumours were afloat in Gulchville of a mysterious visitor to Squire Creed, who, it was declared, had been no other than the wife of the notorious Seven-up-Jack. Then it was proved that the justice had sent down two bottles of whisky to the gaolers, an act so much opposed to his usual habits, as in itself to be fraught with the gravest suspicion; and then the night watchman at the mail-stable had seen a man coming from the direction of the prison, who was wonderfully like Squire Creed.

Rising on these facts, there grew a mass of imaginary evidence, some ridiculously, some impossibly false, but none the less dangerous for that, and in proportion to the general respect and esteem which had been felt for the justice, rose the public indignation.

He encouraged this feeling, or gave a countenance to the worst accusations against him, by secluding himself all day in his private house, not mixing with his fellow-citizens, nor even admitting the most active of them to an interview—although he could not fail to know the excitement which was agitating the town.

The tide turned suddenly, and rose fiercely against the squire; a meeting was called at once to consider his conduct, at which the gaolers who had experienced so narrow an escape were present. As a matter of course, they—with their friends—were specially severe upon Squire Creed; this being the only chance of saving their own necks.

The meeting was held at a saloon, and was prolonged far into the night. Had it been a regular meeting of the Vigilantes everything would have been conducted discreetly and soberly; but this was a public meeting of the excited citizens, and the ardour of those present was kept up by continual draughts of whisky. Consequently, the indignation against the treacherous justice waxed higher and higher; his guilt was taken as proved, and the feeling grew so strong that one man who was present slipped out, ran to the Creed store, and, without any ceremony, burst into the room where the squire sat, dejected and alone.

"Don't ask no questions, squire," cried the stranger; "but come out with me. Don't stay for clothes, nor money, nor papers. Your manager, Peter Mack, is an honest man, and will take care of them. Come to your stable, get across your bay mare, and ride like thunder! They are going to hang you for letting out Seven-up-Jack. Don't stare like that; but come, or they will be here in time to hang you, and me too, for telling you."

Half mechanically, the justice rose from his seat, and followed the kindly messenger, who led him by a side way to his stable, and then, seeing that Creed was hardly himself, that he even yet scarcely comprehended the position, assisted him hurriedly to saddle the famous bay mare, and then helped him to his seat.

"Now, ride off, squire," said the man; "strike the Apache

ford, and then you can get to Sandyfork, where your wife is, and— Go! there ain't no time to lose, for, as I live, I can hear the boys coming."

The man was right. A hideous whooping and yelling was heard, and the flare of torches was seen at the farther end of the town. With a hearty grasp of his informant's hand, the squire struck spurs to his steed, and in a minute was out of sight.

And this was how Gulchville lost her justice, for Wilton Creed was never seen in the town again. It was known that he went East, and that he lived in Boston with his wife and children, but no further details ever reached Gulchville. His extensive store was sold "on time," that is, by payment in instalments, to his manager, Peter Mack, and an insignificant fellow, one Jemmy Grayper—who had nothing to do originally with the concern. Each of these made a large fortune, and a vague untraceable report somehow became rife that Jemmy had once rendered a great service to Squire Creed, though no one could say what it was.

One of the frequent gamblers who passed through Gulchville reported, some twelvemonths after Seven-up-Jack's escape, that he had seen the last of that celebrity, who had been shot in a "difficulty" with a brother professor.

In answer to further enquiries he said that Jack's wife had died of consumption, he understood, some months earlier, and that after her death Seven-up-Jack grew so reckless that his meeting with a fitting end was only a question of time.

## A Freak and What Came of It.

BY HENRIETTE FELL.

### CHAPTER I.

It was Christmas Eve, and two young men stood in a large hall, so dark with its oak walls, its oak ceiling, and its oak floor, that not the three large hanging lamps, or the bright glow from the huge wood-fires blazing at either end, served to more than dimly light it.

"Are they all come, Gilbert?"

"I—I should think so," was the reply in a queer, half-amused, half-vexed tone of voice, as the speaker looked again at a list of names which he held, and began reading it aloud. "Three Paxtons, Sir James and Lady Lethbridge, and their son and daughter, the Cohens of Howleigh, Maud Ellerton, the—"

"Here, let me see it," said the first speaker, unceremoniously taking the paper from his brother's hand, and rapidly running his eye over its contents. "No, there is one missing still. Miss Jean Nowell and maid. Who on earth is she, and where does she hail from? I declare, this is as bad as collecting children after a school-treat."

"It's a great deal worse," said Gilbert ruefully, "because the children are collected to be sent home, and these grown-ups are only arriving."

"But who on earth can Miss Jean Nowell be?" asked Roy Moreton again, as he looked with puzzled enquiry into Gilbert's imperturbable countenance.

"I tell you honestly, I have not the least idea," was Gilbert's answer. "My mother and Effie did all the asking while I was in Scotland this year. I know there were to be one or two new people to infuse fresh life into the affair, but 'Miss Jean Nowell and maid' does not sound like a lively addition."

"Probably some old maiden chum of the mother's, who has affectedly changed her original name of Jane into what she fancies is more taking. Hadn't we better go and dress?" Roy suggested.

"You had, but we can't leave the said maiden chum to arrive altogether unwelcomed. I'll wait about until Effie comes down."

"But you hate meeting ladies," said Roy, still lingering.

"Not if they are old ones. Hurry off, do, and be ready in the drawing-room for that dreadful ten minutes before dinner."

Roy did not require any further pressing, but flung himself up the broad stairs and shut his bedroom door behind him with characteristic vigour.

Gilbert remained warming himself at the log-fire which burnt in the great open chimney-place of the old hall, and listening, without impatience, for the sound of approaching carriage-wheels. Not quite so strongly or heavily built as his younger brother, Sir Gilbert Moreton was, nevertheless, a well-made, well-proportioned man, tall, thin, and capable of an activity strangely at variance with the idle nonchalance he usually assumed. He was very handsome; indeed, his regular features and deep-set brown eyes were altogether faultless. Some complained that they found his face expressionless, but Gilbert was not altogether unwilling that they should do so, and, in fact, he carefully cultivated an indifferent

expression, as he did an indifferent manner in society, both of which he entirely put away from him when he was alone with his family or his intimate friends. Circumstances had been what most people would have called too kind, and what he himself considered too hard, upon him.

Through the early death of his father, the title and estates had devolved upon him when he was only four-and-twenty. It had been bad enough, he thought, to be a young heir, but to be a young owner he found ever so much more trying; there was not a mother in the county wholly innocent of making up to him, and scarcely an unmarried daughter who did not show off her prettiest smiles, her readiest wit for his especial benefit, and Gilbert did so dislike smiles and wit! He was naturally a genuine, straightforward Englishman, but, to avoid the advances of the ladies, he pretended to be exclusive and fastidious. With men, he was a different being, and a general favourite.

To such a nature, it will well be believed that the annual Christmas gathering his mother and sister liked to arrange was extremely unpleasant. He submitted to it, because it had been an old custom of his father's, and he feared lest any hint of his desire, either to escape from it or to put a stop to it, should make his mother feel what he so tenderly wished to hide from her, that she was in truth no longer the mistress of Moreton Hall.

Roy knew, though he could not altogether sympathise with, his brother's dislikes, but since he believed that Gilbert was the best fellow going, he thought that if he had a few queer fancies, they deserved nothing but humouring. For himself, Roy thoroughly enjoyed the guests, and the business of amusing them; but then, as he said, he was the fortunate younger son.

In his own mind Gilbert had been commenting with some despair, as he stood waiting in the hall this particular evening, upon the number of young and unmarried girls collected at that time under his roof.

"Ten girls, and ten men," he was calculating from the list he had taken up again; "five mothers and three fathers, and this one old maid I am waiting for!"

At that moment he heard wheels outside, and when the door was opened he came forward courteously to meet his guest, however old and ugly she might be. To Gilbert's dismay he saw that she had arrived in a station-fly, a proceeding so utterly at variance with the usual well-arranged hospitality of Moreton Hall, that he was altogether taken aback; but still more dismayed was he when there stepped out from the fly a tall and beautifully erect young girl, who carried herself like a queen, and who in the graceful movements even of her first entry, reminded Gilbert of some Grecian statue come to life again in his dark hall. Her very beauty caused him to assume more than his usual indifference.

"Miss Nowell, I believe?" he said, bowing slightly.

"Yes. Sir Gilbert Moreton?" she answered and queried in a tone fully as distant as his own; and then with icy coldness they shook hands, and Gilbert said:

"I am extremely vexed to see that you have had to drive up here in a fly. There has been some foolish mistake for which some one is much to blame. I do not yet know who, only that you are the sufferer is clear."

"I have suffered nothing," said the girl in a deep, sweet voice, "and I would rather you did not apologise."

Gilbert took her at her word, and gravely pointing to a maid-servant, who stood behind him, he said:

"Lambert will show you your room. I must not detain you, because we dine at half-past seven, and it must be nearly that now; but please do not hurry yourself."

And Miss Jean Nowell and her maid followed the Moreton servant upstairs.

Gilbert thought that he had certainly been sufficiently cold that time to suppress the advances of the most audacious girl, and he shrewdly suspected the latest arrival was not one of that class, while he admitted to himself that she was splendidly handsome. And with true brotherly instinct he went to Roy's room before going to his own, and stated his opinion as to her personal attractions, with strong recommendations that if he was wise, Roy would take her in to dinner himself.

Roy, believing in his brother's good taste, did so; for Miss Nowell, although she had only had a quarter of an hour to dress in, came down, when the gong sounded, wonderfully clad in a long and stately gown of crimson plush, which would have ill suited a figure less perfect, or a head less beautiful than her own. She was warmly welcomed by Lady Moreton (the only one of all those assembled who knew her), for she was the daughter of an old friend, who on her marriage had lived abroad until the previous autumn, but who had now settled down with her child in the north of England.

"I am very glad to see you, Jean—very glad indeed; and if your mother could have accompanied you, I should have been

more pleased still," said Lady Moreton; and then, turning round, she added: "These are my sons, Sir Gilbert and Roy, and this is my daughter, Effie."

And then Roy offered her his arm and marched her off into the long, oak-panelled dining-room, hung with portraits of the Moreton family of ages long gone by, and, giving her a seat between himself and young Mr. Lethbridge, proceeded to the best of his ability to make himself agreeable to her.

First of all, seeing that his companion was a stranger to everybody present, he began at one end of the table, and gave her a short, good-natured account of the guests seated round it.

Roy was an obedient follower of that golden rule which forbids society to speak evil of any of its members, absent or present, and in consequence he had not an enemy in the world. When he came to Gilbert in his descriptive catalogue he considerably lengthened his remarks.

"You won't like him, Miss Nowell, I'm afraid—at least, not this time. If you come here often, and see him as he really is, I'll be bound you will, but it's a sad fact that he does not shine in society. I don't know exactly why it is, but, you see, he doesn't care for ladies. No, I don't mean that either, for he's awfully fond of my mother and sister. It's strange ladies—ladies who are polite, and—and who try to be extra charming—that annoy him."

"I will take care not to do so," said Miss Nowell with a quiet smile; "but I am glad you told me, for by his waiting downstairs to meet me, I fancied he must be something of a ladies' man."

"You were thoroughly mistaken; but indeed, if I'm to tell you the truth, I shall confess that Gilbert and I both thought you were going to be an old maid; and he does not mind elderly ladies nearly so much as young ones."

"I am really very sorry I disappointed him," said Miss Nowell, laughing outright. "And now you have told me so much, will you explain why you so generously added a few years to my age?"

"I would if I could, but really I don't know how it came about. You see my mother and sister asked everybody while we were away this year, and we knew nothing of your being invited till we were looking over our list just before dinner to see if everyone had come. When we saw your name we didn't remember ever having heard it before, and—well! we were very silly, I am sure, but we thought it sounded like an old maid's name."

"I am so glad it does," said Miss Nowell, softly and good-humouredly, "but I must explain to you that Jean in my case is not an affectation for Jane, as I am sure you thought it was." Poor Roy coloured like an honest culprit up to the roots of his brown hair. "It is an old family name, which has been given to the eldest daughter for generations and generations. I am fond of it myself, and I always think that 'Jean Nowell' sounds well."

"So it does," said Roy, "now I see to whom it belongs. Don't you think 'Gilbert' is exactly right for my brother—it sounds like himself, noble, and upright, and generous."

"I can't tell, for I don't know him, but I am willing to allow that you are right."

"He is a splendid fellow, and since you won't be able to find it out, I must tell you so. You should see him of an evening in the billiard-room; he knows more good stories than anyone I ever came across, and even if a tale is dull, he can make it amusing by the telling of it. Then he's such a splendid master, there isn't a landowner in the county who is respected and served as he is though he's so young. And as for sport, why he rides as if he had been born in the saddle, and shoots like William Tell; he can swim, jump, run, play cricket, racquets, and tennis; he knows Greek and Latin, and French and German and Norwegian—in fact the only fault with him is, that unfortunately he wasn't taught manners at school as a little boy. Shall I go on, or have you had enough?" said Roy, stopping abruptly and laughing.

During this panegyric, which had been begun in earnest and had ended in nonsense, Jean had twice lifted her eyes and looked at the unconscious object of their conversation. It was easy enough to believe from his countenance that he might be all that his brother had said, and a great deal more.

When dinner was over she was glad for two reasons that Roy had been her companion during the first meal—because she had learnt to like him exceedingly, and to feel at home with him, and because he had explained to her how she could, by shunning Sir Gilbert, avoid vexing him. As soon as the gentlemen joined the ladies, all adjourned to the large hall, where the time-honoured custom of snatching and eating the burning snapdragon was to be observed. There was a long table around which the young people all stood, and the servants brought in dishes of raisins, burning in lighted brandy; the lamps were lowered, pinches of salt were thrown into the brandy, and the blue flames shone on the merry faces.

Most of the girls stood back after an ineffectual snatch or two

at the raisins, and waited for them to be given to them by the young men.

Jean did not notice that after a time she was the only girl standing by the table, and helping herself. A voice by her side said gravely:

"You are not afraid of burning your fingers?"

"Certainly not, and I like raisins."

It was Gilbert who had spoken to her, and who for the sake of looking at her had come near her, and had actually been guilty of joining in what he considered the babyish folly of eating unwholesome hot raisins; he had intended those he snatched for her, but when he found she was deftly helping herself, he would not interfere with the independence he admired by offering them to her.

Miss Paxton, a tall, haughty-looking girl, who had been standing close behind Jean, and watching her with jealous surprise, now tried to attract the attention of Gilbert.

"What a handful you have secured!" she said to him. "You have been very plucky."

"Greedy, you mean," he answered her gravely. "Let me offer you some?"

"Oh, I did not want any more."

All the same, Miss Paxton meant to take them from him, to please him by her condescension, but he, accepting her first refusal, put them back into the dish and walked away from the table.

"Silly girl, and conceited man!" was Jean's comment to herself.

Shortly afterwards a dance was proposed by Roy in the hall where they were. There was a piano in a small drawing-room close by, which only wanted wheeling out a bit, so that it could be heard capitolly, and there were several volunteers to play. The first to do so was Molly Lethbridge, the only engaged girl of the party, who, conscious that her lover would come to her side and turn over the pages for her, was not at all unwilling to put herself in such a situation. Besides, Molly was very kind and good-natured, and always ready to do anything for other people. Unfortunately she was often more willing than she was able, as in this particular case, for she played dance-music very badly.

Jean's partner was a meek studious man, whose very worst accomplishments were probably dancing and making conversation, and pitying herself and him, she leant against a dark-curtained door and watched the scene, whilst she kindly allowed him to be inactive and silent. She was not naturally cynical, but Roy's remarks had opened her eyes to the little pantomime which was being played before her.

First of all, Miss Paxton and the two Misses Brent refused to dance altogether, all three of them looking furtively at Gilbert as he stood talking to Effie; they evidently thought he would not long amuse himself there. When Effie was claimed he sauntered to the fireplace, and apparently became absorbed in contemplating the burning logs. At this, the endurance of the Misses Brent came to an end, and they accepted partners, but still Miss Paxton held out, and by-and-by, by dint of gradually shifting her position, she found herself near enough to Gilbert to say to him:

"You do not dance?"

Even from the other side of the hall Jean could see him involuntarily draw himself back as he answered:

"Not just now; but let me find you a partner?"

And then Miss Paxton had to be content with the middle-aged colonel he brought up to her.

When the dance was over, Jean volunteered to play the next, and began one of Strauss's waltzes with spirit and precision. In a few minutes Gilbert came striding up to the piano.

"May I turn over your leaves for you?" he asked; "ah, I see you have none. That is always the best way. If it isn't rude to ask, will you tell me where you learnt to play dance-music so well?—not in England, I am sure."

He was standing before the piano looking fixedly at her, with a gaze of which Jean, with all her unaffectedness, being yet a girl, could not be wholly unconscious. But she remembered to whom she was talking, and answered gravely:

"I learnt in Dresden; but—please, I cannot play, if I try and talk."

Gilbert withdrew to a sofa in the inner drawing-room, and sat down where he could see her profile, and the lovely outline of her head and shoulders. As soon as she rose from the piano he followed her and asked:

"May I have the pleasure of this dance, Miss Nowell?"

She assented without a smile, and with her hand on his arm they began waltzing. There was dead silence between them. Gilbert was so accustomed for ladies to make the first advance, that he waited for her to begin to talk as a matter of course, little guessing how far this was from her intention. At last he became exasperated, because she was very beautiful, and he was sure she could be very

winning—and why, he wondered, would she not treat him as she had treated Roy at dinner?

"Miss Nowell, don't you ever talk to your partner?" he asked in an aggrieved tone.

She was amused at this beginning, and was determined to show him that at least one girl had pride and self-respect enough not to stand his airs.

"Yes, always, when he speaks to me."

Gilbert accepted the snub, and bit his lip in anger. Indeed he felt it so keenly that he could not make up his mind to venture on another remark. Jean laughed to herself afterwards when she remembered this ridiculous dance, with its one snappish interlude in the middle.

During the following Christmas week, Gilbert scarcely spoke to Jean, except to say good-morning and good-evening, and of course she did not attempt to begin a conversation with him. With the rest of the family, and with the visitors, she was a general favourite. She could sing, and skate, and dance, better than anyone else, and yet she was so kind, and unselfish, and unaffected, that even the girls were fond of her, and confided to her when they came into her dressing-room of an evening, and sat cosily round the fire, all the small hopes and fears with which a woman's heart is often so full for want of something better to occupy it.

Roy, too, told her one afternoon, quite, as he said, in private, of his unalterable love for a certain little guest called Maud Ellerton, which love Jean knew all about already from Maud, so that she was able to comfort the young man considerably about his prospects in that quarter, when the important moment should come, and he should decide to ask the final question.

But though there was such entire silence between Gilbert and Jean, they were not indifferent to each other. I suppose every bachelor in the world has his susceptibilities, and Jean's utter coldness towards him, her seeming ignorance of his very existence, stirred into activity Gilbert's, which had so long by flattery been lulled to sleep. He was piqued by her indifference, yet he could not keep himself from her presence, and all the while, silly fellow that he was, he refused to treat her, as every woman would wish to be treated, with chivalrous courtesy.

Jean watched his handsome face, and silently noted many of those good points in him of which Roy had spoken and still spoke to her, and settled in her own mind that Gilbert would make a very noble husband if only he married a wife whom he had to seek and deserve, and not one who insisted on becoming Lady Moreton.

## CHAPTER II.

It happened at last that Jean was really obliged to question Gilbert. It was one morning when Lady Moreton and Roy and Effie were all variously engaged, and Jean, left pretty much to her own devices, had determined to pay a visit she had contemplated ever since her arrival, to the mother of her late favourite maid; the girl had died a few months ago, and Jean was anxious to show some kindness to the mother for her daughter's sake. But she did not in the least know her way to the cottage, and Gilbert was the only person present of whom she could ask it.

He was standing in the library window, when she came up to him and said:

"Can you tell me which is Elm End?"

If Jean had but known the thrill of pleasure which he felt even at that matter-of-fact question!

"It's the other side of the lake, and through the plantation to the right."

"Is it far from here?"

"No, not half a mile. May I escort you there?"

"Oh no, thank you. I shall find it, I am sure, without any trouble. I have the bump of locality!"

But what could this strange girl want to do at Elm End on a snowy morning? And, besides, when Gilbert watched Jean start off in her furs half an hour afterwards, and carrying an empty basket, she went straight the other way, towards the village.

He was intensely angry with himself for caring what she did, or where she went; but curiosity—or was it love?—prompted him to put on his hat, and at a safe distance to follow her. He had the surprise of seeing her go into the butcher's shop at the corner of the village, and by-and-by come out from it, with a heavy-looking piece of something or other wrapped up in paper in her basket, with which she trudged off in the direction of Elm End.

"Good angel!" he muttered to himself as the thought struck him what she must be meaning to do with it; "that's some meat which she's going to take to some poor body or other;" and then he positively longed to be able to dare to offer to carry her basket for her, as, again at a distance, he followed her, sometimes losing sight of her altogether, but always tracing her path by the little footprints in the snow.

At Elm End, a desolate hollow, where, as its name expresses, several avenues of elm-trees meet and end, there are a couple of small cottages, lying outside the premises of an old-fashioned and empty farmhouse, and generally inhabited by labourers employed on the farm.

Now, for nearly a year, ever since the death of the late farmer, Mr. Lake, this house had been empty; the lands belonging to it had been bought by a neighbouring gentleman who wanted to enlarge his estate, and it seemed that the farmhouse was likely to remain untenanted, unless someone should care to take it as an inexpensive country home, a chance which was by no means a probability.

Gilbert did not own the farmhouse, or he would have pulled it down and built good labourers' cottages in its place, for it was dreadfully out of repair. He thought over this as he wandered in at the open door and into the dreary deserted rooms, whilst he waited for Jean to come out of the neighbouring cottage, into which she had vanished half an hour ago.

Meanwhile Jean was sitting by the dying embers in the cottage grate, and listening to the long tale of one of the quaintest old women she had ever met. She listened without any desire to interrupt the narrator, for she found a strong attraction in hearing the views of life of one who had lived it in a cottage, and in finding that there, too, as everywhere else, love and self-sacrifice, and sin and suffering go hand in hand.

Betty Helliars, when she recognised in Jean her daughter's young mistress, grasped her hand within both her own, and repeated again and again:

"Sit ye down, my dear, and bless ye for coming to see an old woman like me, who has neither kith nor kin to visit her now."

Thus invited Jean sat down, and it seemed indeed that her visit had not come inopportune, for Betty was in no small trouble, though it took Jean some time to understand its exact nature. At last she gathered that since Farmer Lake's death, Betty's son, who had worked for him and had lived with her as her only companion, had gone away to America, and that, without his help, the old woman had not means enough to live in her cottage. This sounded probable, though hard, but then Betty explained how Mr. Futter—whom Jean had to conclude was the owner of the farm—had meant to be very kind, and had told Betty that she might live at the farm, at any rate until it was let, rent free, and take care of it for him.

"Well, and why don't you?" asked Jean.

Then the old woman's face changed its expression, and a mysterious uncanny look came over her as she said, lowering her voice to a whisper, and bending towards Jean till her head almost touched hers:

"My dear, they do say as Mr. Lake comes back so dreadful."

"What?"

Jean either did not hear, or did not understand.

"They don't want we to talk on't, but—he do come back so dreadful at noights!"

"Do you mean that his ghost is supposed to walk about the house?" asked Jean, a smile which she could not repress creeping over her face.

"Yeas, that he do; ever since poor Mr. Lake be dead—that's a year come next quarter-day—he doid on a quarter-day—oh, my dear creature, you don't know how dreadful it be at noight; he rattles and creeps about, I'd sooner go into the workhouse, and end my old life there, than I would live at the farm and listen to he."

"You know I don't believe in ghosts, Mrs. Helliars," said Jean decidedly.

"Now, doan't you indeed?" said the old woman, as if she considered Jean's opinion very valuable, though by no means convincing testimony; "and Mrs. Ward, down at the inn, her's a scholar, and her says as her believes it's all the rats. Now, you be a scholar, my dear, and what do you think about it?"

"I quite agree with Mrs. Ward that it is sure to be the rats. I've never known an old house that isn't a home for rats, and I've certainly never known any house at all with a ghost."

Then followed a long monologue from Betty Helliars, in which she gave vent to her conflicting opinions upon the subject. That it would be a great help and comfort to her to live at the farm, she did not deny, in fact it seemed her only chance of keeping herself out of the workhouse—that dread nightmare of every poor woman's thoughts. But stronger even than that fear was her belief in, and terror of, the walking, wandering ghost of poor Mr. Lake! She believed in its existence merely upon hearsay; but the maids who remained in the house after its owner's death, and two women who had since been put in, but who refused to stay to look after it, had told old Betty tales which bristled with horrors to her ignorant mind, and which neither common-sense nor kindness on Jean's part could



persuade her to be silly inventions and exaggerations. Still, Jean saw that she had considerable influence with the old woman, and, unable to think of any finally convincing argument, she decided upon a bold action which struck her whilst she listened.

"Mrs. Helliars," she said, "if I came and slept at the farm one night, and saw, actually saw the rats, and nothing else, would you believe then that it was all right, and go and live there like a sensible woman?"

"You—you a lady born—sleep at the farm?"

"Yes, I will sleep there, if you will promise to believe what I tell you, and live there comfortably afterwards."

Old Betty considered for a moment, and then arriving at the conclusion that the evil spirit who did not care to harm such a beautiful creature as Miss Nowell certainly would not trouble itself about such an old woman as herself, she consented to promise.

"And you must keep your promise," Jean said as she rose to go, "and move into the farmhouse before I leave Moreton Hall, that I may know how comfortable you are there."

When Jean, with an amused, though puzzled look upon her countenance, for she could not help rather wondering how she would manage to accomplish what she had promised to do, left the cottage, her empty basket swinging on her arm, she was met by Gilbert coming out of the farm-gate.

"So you found your way down here all right?" he said, speaking to her more naturally and kindly than he had ever done before, and eliciting an answer from her in the same strain.

"Oh yes, and I did not come here straight, either; for I went round by the village. Do you know anything of old Mrs. Helliars, whom I have been visiting?"

"No, I really don't, for she has never worked for us; neither, I think, have any of her people; but I can easily find out for you, if you like."

"Oh no, thank you. I know something of her myself—at least, she is the mother of one of our favourite maids who died; and I have found out, during the last half-hour that I spent in her cottage, that she is a dear silly old soul."

"You ought to have learnt all about her, for what a long, long while you were with her."

Gilbert had not intended to admit that he had followed Jean's movements, but she naturally noticed the unconscious confession.

"You see, I did not know that you were waiting for me," she said.

"And I'm afraid you think that, after refusing my escort, when you had a chance of doing so at home, I did wrong to thrust myself on you now. I can go back by another way, if you like," he added quite humbly, and making her feel ashamed of her sharp retort.

"Please don't," she said, with the very first attempt at gentleness which he had heard in her manner when speaking to him; and then she hurriedly changed the subject, like a little child who does not like allusions to past faults.

"The old farmhouse," she asked, "is it very dilapidated and dreary?"

"The Elm Farm? Yes, it is in rather a sad state, certainly. It was a manor-house once upon a time, and would now turn into an excellent gentleman's place if any one with plenty of money and good taste chose to buy it, and rebuild it according to the intention of its first architect. But it was never fit for a farmhouse, and Mr. Lake, poor man, was all his life very hard-up and obliged to neglect it altogether, and since his death no one has been even put in to take care of it. I wonder its owner should care to leave it in such a condition. All the doors and windows are open, and actually one room I found was partly furnished with a bed and a few chairs and a table. I can't make it out!"

"Betty Helliars was telling me that two women have been put in to look after it, but that they did not stay. Perhaps they left their furniture, such as it was, for their successors."

"They are Futter's things, I expect, but I really wonder at his leaving the place so open. I shall write to him about it, I think, for I don't believe he can know."

"But what is the harm of its being so, so long as it is tenantless?" asked Jean; she remembered the lonely night she must pass there, and wanted to find out all she could about it.

"Why, it may be, for all we can tell, the —"

But at that moment, Roy and Miss Ellerton, now engaged, appeared before them, down by one of the avenues of snow-laden elm-trees which led from the park stables, and exclaimed with delight of the wonderful sledge which Roy had improvised, and which they had both been driving in.

"Come, Miss Nowell, let us see if we cannot get some amusement out of Roy's latest patented invention," said Gilbert.

But this proposal implied more friendliness than Jean was inclined to allow.

"Not now, Sir Gilbert, thank you," she said. "I must go in, for I have letters to write."

And, cruel beauty that she was, she turned away from him, leaving him to chafe and wonder why some women, or, more truthfully, one woman, could be so very aggravating.

### CHAPTER III.

It took Jean three days to make up her mind how best to arrange for the night she had promised to spend at Elm Farm, but by that time she had settled everything satisfactorily. She began by taking her own maid, Morris, into her confidence. Morris was a middle-aged woman, who had been Jean's nurse as a child, and who, in spite of her devotion, thoroughly understood by this time her mistress's strength of will and determination. If she had not done so, she would have strongly condemned the idea directly it was mentioned to her, for it struck her as wild and foolish in the extreme. Still more dismayed was she when Jean declared her intention of sleeping at the farm absolutely alone. At this poor Morris protested earnestly.

"Why, you know, Miss Jean," she said, "my mistress would not let you come to stay at the Hall without me to take care of you, and whatever will she say if I let you go to a nasty lonely house all by yourself?"

But Jean insisted on having her own way. She did not mean to let her mother know of her freak beforehand, and when she told her of it afterwards, she could easily make her laugh over the whole affair. Jean had a more serious dread of Lady Moreton and Sir Gilbert, who, she felt sure, would decidedly blame her. But Jean was a mischief-loving girl, though she could pretend to be so very sedate, and the element of naughtiness which existed in her plan added fresh zest to her energy in setting about it.

She deliberated considerably as to whether or not she should tell Effie, and at last decided that she ought to do so; but she took care to have made every arrangement beforehand, and only to speak to her just before starting. She had sent Morris down to the farm during the afternoon with rugs and shawls and furs, and she had made her come back through the village and borrow a lantern from the butcher's wife, which she afterwards hid in the shrubbery near the back door of the Hall.

Jean was in the highest spirits all that evening, keeping the now diminished party of visitors—for guests were leaving every day—constantly amused, and attracting Gilbert to her side only to repel him by her sarcasms, as a moth is drawn to the light which burns it. When the girls went upstairs, Effie, who although fond of, had not become intimate with Jean, was about to say good-night to her as usual on the landing, but Jean prevented her and said:

"Come into my room for a few minutes, will you, Effie? I want to speak to you."

"Let me first say good-night to Maud, and then I will."

Jean went into her room, and began hurriedly to change her evening dress for a dark-brown serge she sometimes wore in the morning; then she put on her warmest jacket, her fur cap, her thick boots, and when Effie came in, expecting to find her sitting in her dressing-gown before the fire, she not unnaturally exclaimed:

"Good gracious, Jean, are you mad?"

"Not a bit, Effie dear, only I am going out for a walk."

"Then, I am sure you are mad to think of such a thing at this time of night."

And really Effie looked half scared, and as if she almost believed what she was saying. Jean hastened to explain the whole affair, and concluded her tale by saying:

"And now you are a dear kind girl, and won't mind my going, I am sure. I only told you about it because I felt that I ought to, since I was staying in your mother's house. I am sure there is no harm in what I am going to do, in fact I am sure it is right. Only please don't feel uncomfortable about me, nobody will ever know anything about it. The gentlemen are away in the billiard-room. I can go downstairs and out of the front door without the least chance of being seen, and Morris, who is going to walk down to the farm with me, will fasten up the door when she comes back. In the morning, when the house is opened, I will come back again, and shall be down to breakfast as usual."

Effie listened in silence, frightened by Jean's surprising determination.

"I suppose it is all right," she said; "I should not like to be going to Elm Farm myself to-night; but then we are not a bit alike, you and I!"

No, that was quite certain, they were not alike, but without waiting to consider that question, Jean called her maid, kissed Effie and thanked her, and putting out the light in her room, glided downstairs, stepped softly across the deserted hall, carefully opened the front door, and stood with Morris upon the hard gravel

path outside. The snow had melted since her last visit to the farm; but a frost had set in again the night before, and now a drizzle of fine snow was falling and resting on the ground as it fell, and a bitter cold wind was blowing from the east. It was not a pleasant night to be out in, and when Morris rejoined her mistress, after leaving her to fetch the hidden lantern, she gave vent to the one and only complaint Jean ever heard from her kindly lips.

"Well, Miss Jean," she said, "I do think that if nothing else would hinder you from your silly freak to-night, at least the thought of taking a poor body like me out in such cold might have made you give it up!"

It seemed a much longer walk on this cold night by the lake and through the plantation to Elm End than it had done when Jean had gone that way before, in fact she several times declared they must have taken the wrong path in the dim lantern light; but Morris knew better than that, and by-and-by the gables of the farmhouse were discerned in the darkness.

Jean turned the handle of the creaking door and stood in the stone entrance-hall, where Morris had left a candle in the afternoon. They lighted it, and, without looking at any of the rooms down below, they went up the wooden staircase, and opened a door on the right of the first large landing, and entered the huge square room where Jean was to sleep. In spite of her disapproval, Morris, like the good soul she was, had done all she possibly could to make the place habitable, but that was not much. The rugs on the floor, though tolerably warm, did not look a soft or inviting bed; the table and chairs were dusted and cleaned, and so was the floor; but to a girl luxuriously brought up as Jean had been, the empty grate, and the carpetless, cushionless condition of her surroundings looked very dreary. For a moment her heart failed her, and she felt inclined to cling to her maid and beg her not to leave her. Perhaps Morris noticed this involuntary passing look of dismay on her mistress's face, for she said to her cheerily:

"I did what I could; but it's a sad-looking room for you to sleep in all alone. Won't you let me stay with you? I could pass the night quite nicely on the floor."

"No, no, Morris, thank you; I don't mind it, indeed I don't, and I am not afraid."

"Well then, good-night, and God bless you!" and Morris turned reluctantly away.

Jean stood with her candle on the landing, watching her old friend out of sight, and then, without a glance towards the rooms which opened out on all sides, she hurried into the one she had appropriated, and tried to lock the door behind her, but as might have been expected, the key refused to turn in its rusty hole, and Jean gave up her endeavours at last, and was obliged to content herself with pulling a couple of chairs in front of the door. Even that slight barricade gave her some sense of security. She did not believe in ghosts, and she had no fear of more material enemies; still, there came over her, in spite of all her endeavours to fight against it, a feeling of terrible loneliness, which made her dread to look into the dimly-lighted corners of the room. Then she harshly denounced her fears and her thoughts as mere cowardice, and resisting the impulse to keep her candle burning, she put it out, and threw herself down, without undressing, upon the rugs on the floor.

She had hoped to be able to tell Betty Helliars that she had slept soundly the whole night long, but though it was late, and she was very tired, she lay for more than an hour listening to every sound which disturbed the stillness of the night. The wind was sighing and sighing in the elm-trees round the farmhouse, and the rats of which she had been forewarned were scampering about overhead and up and down the passage. At last she fell asleep and dreamed, not of ghosts, but of the tall form of Sir Gilbert Moreton, which had lately been so constantly before her eyes, and more constantly still in her thoughts.

She could not tell how long she had been asleep when she was suddenly roused by a sharp knock upon the floor, close by her, followed by another, and a shuffling, and scuffling, and pushing, of which, even in her first waking moments, Jean knew but too well rats could not possibly be capable. She sprang up from the floor, and laid her hand on the matches by her side, but before she could strike one, and relieve her horrible fear, it was increased tenfold by hearing a rough voice growl out, "Confound it!" and by seeing through the now opening door a light shining from a lantern.

It was carried by a middle-sized shabbily-dressed man of ruffianly appearance, who was angrily pushing away Jean's frail barricade of chairs, and was coming into her room in an evil temper.

What the poor lonely girl felt, the first moment she saw him, herself still unseen, she never cared to describe; the situation was so far more terrible than anything she could possibly have found words to express—so hopeless, so altogether horrible, that for an instant her mind refused to understand the truth. She passed her

hand over her eyes to rouse herself from her nightmare, but the movement attracted the attention of the man, who uttered an oath, and took three striding steps towards her. The room was a large one providentially, and Jean had stood at the end farthest from the door; now, quick as lightning, she had reached the window near her, thrown it open, and leaning far out of it, she startled the air by screaming at the top of her voice:

"Help, help!"

And as she did so she climbed on to the broad window-sill, intending the next moment to take a leap from it into the courtyard below.

#### CHAPTER IV.

MEANWHILE, at the Hall, Effie, after parting with Jean, had gone to her room, and in its solitude had seriously thought over Jean's escape, and had blamed herself considerably for having allowed her to carry it out. First of all, she imagined to herself Jean's catching cold and being laid up, and what could she then say to Mrs. Nowell of the care they had taken of her daughter? Then she thought of the anger of her mother and Gilbert when they heard of it, as they probably would do, somehow or other, and of the blame they would bestow upon her as well as upon the culprit. Then her fears increased. She remembered the stories she had heard, as a child, of the ghost which even then was said to haunt some of the uninhabited rooms of the Elm Farm, and at last she thought of real tramps, or possibly thieves, who might make that lonely house their nightly resting-place, and who would not merely frighten but harm Jean. When this idea took possession of her, she remembered no more her lesser fears, but, feeling as if she could not possibly bear the responsibility any longer, she determined to confide in Gilbert.

His ear was not to be had yet a while, for he was still in the billiard-room at the far end of the house, smoking, and enjoying what he had once upon a time insisted upon calling the best time of the day. This was before Jean came to stay at the Hall.

It was nearly one o'clock before Effie, sitting with her bedroom-door ajar, and listening for the sound of her brother's footsteps, heard them on the stairs; then he stayed some time longer, talking on the landing with Mr. Lethbridge and Roy, but at last there was a general saying of good-night, and a shutting of doors, followed by a profound stillness. Then Effie, candle in hand, went along the passage and knocked softly at her brother's door. He opened it to her immediately.

"What on earth is the matter?" he asked quickly, scanning her from top to toe.

There seemed nothing seriously wrong about her neat little person, but Effie was such a methodical young woman that something very remarkable must have occurred to tempt her to pay this late visit.

"There is nothing wrong," she said reassuringly, "only something has happened which I don't like to go to sleep without telling you of."

This answer was so exactly like the prelude a girl would make if she were about to confide in her brother that sweetest experience in a woman's life, and young Lethbridge had been paying so much attention lately to Effie, that no wonder Gilbert concluded she was about to unburden to him the secret of her engagement, and that, therefore, he tenderly put his arm round her waist, and drawing her into his room, said in that sympathetic, brotherly tone of his of which strangers never guessed him the possessor:

"Well, little one, and what is it—the wonderful event which you must needs sit up half the night to tell me about?"

Her fear of him came over her again, and she hesitated to speak.

"Tell me, Effie," he said persuasively; "you know well enough that you have my approval, though you have suddenly become so shy."

"No, I don't, Gilbert," she said bluntly, "for I'm afraid I've done what you will not think right."

"I don't expect you have," he said, puzzled; "but tell me what it is, for I can't praise or blame in ignorance."

"Why, it is about Jean Nowell. She is sleeping at the Elm Farm to-night."

"What in the name of all common-sense do you mean by that?"

"She asked me into her room when we came upstairs this evening, and when I went to her after saying good-night to Maud, I found her ready dressed in her outdoor things, and she told me she had promised to sleep at the farm to convince some old woman that there were no ghosts there, and she begged me so hard to let her go that I gave in."

"A crazy idea; she will get some bad chill, and be laid up

for ever so long; but who did she find wild enough to go with her?"

Gilbert spoke as if he was annoyed, but Effie was relieved to find he was not more seriously angry, and answered quite bravely:

"Oh, Jean's maid walked down with her, and then came back."

"But who is with her now?"

"Why, no one."

"You mean to say you allowed that girl to sleep in the deserted farmhouse alone?"

"Yes; I—"

"Good Heavens, Effie, you must be mad!" Gilbert burst out as he seized a hat which was lying on the table, and strode towards the door.

"What are you going to do?" begged Effie, timidly hindering him.

"Do? Why, go and protect her, of course."

"But it is too late now, she will be sleeping quietly. You will only terrify her if you go into the house."

"Then I shall walk around it outside. Don't be such a fool as to think I can possibly leave her out of reach of all help an instant longer! I would not have had this happen for anything in the world!"

And without a single glance back at poor Effie, Gilbert left her to return to her own room, and there to toss sleepless with vexation upon her bed, until roused by events whose course must be followed.

Gilbert, not waiting to put on a great-coat, hurried out in his thin dress clothes into the cold east wind and driving snow. Fortunately he had learnt from his childhood to know every inch of the ground around his home, and could run even in the intense darkness of that night, without hesitation and without stumbling, straight along the path which bordered the lake, and on through the long row of elm-trees to the farm. He reached it panting and out of breath, and paused with a feeling of intense relief at the thought that at least Jean Nowell was safe now, though he was condemned to pass the rest of the night in wandering restlessly round this strange place in which she had chosen to sleep.

But he had barely had time to recover his breath, when he heard a sound of the window above his head being thrown open, and the voice he knew so well screaming in an agony of despair, "Help, help!"

Quick as lightning he dashed in at the front door, and began to mount the stairs. The man in Jean's room heard the noise he made, and instead of advancing towards Jean, went back to see who was disturbing him.

The two men met on the stairs, and instinctively, without thought, flew at each other's throats. Both were unarmed; Gilbert was the stronger made and in the best condition, but being a step lower down than his adversary, he lost in that way. The struggle between them was an affair of grim earnest, and first one and then the other seemed likely to gain the victory.

Jean, becoming conscious that the room was empty, stepped back from the window-sill into it, and listened breathlessly to the sounds of a struggle going on outside. Between whom it was, or what its issue would be for her, she could not tell, until what seemed to her an age-long suspense was broken by a cry. Surely, surely, it came from Sir Gilbert, and bravely now Jean rushed on to the landing in time to see him make a last desperate stand against his opponent.

Probably the arm which the ruffian raised would have smitten a blow which would have been decisive, but Jean, with sudden pluck and strength, seized him from the upper step where she stood tightly round the throat, and with a violent and unsuspected wrench, succeeded in dragging him off his feet, and in causing him to knock his head as he fell against the corner of the balustrade. He lay on the stairs senseless, and Jean and Gilbert, with his body between them, stood face to face in the dim lantern light.

Both were silent for a moment, and then Gilbert said in a firm earnest voice:

"Thank Heaven!"

And Jean in a faltering one repeated the words after him, and each looked into the other's eyes, and saw that there was more tenderness in them than they had known before.

"I hope the fellow is not more seriously hurt than he deserves. Hand me the light, Miss Nowell."

Gilbert took the lantern from her, and held it over the fallen man. There was a deep cut in his head which was bleeding freely, but that was the only injury they could see, and Jean took her handkerchief and Gilbert's, and bound up the wound as tightly as she could.

"We must get a doctor all the same—the first thing," said Gilbert.

"Don't leave me here, please," Jean begged in a troubled pleading voice, so different to the tone Gilbert had been accustomed to hear from her! "I am sorry to be a coward, but I cannot—cannot stay alone!"

"How could you think I should allow you to do so? Take my arm, and come with me."

"But the man?"

"I fancy he will not recover consciousness yet a while; but if he does, and can walk and get away—why, aren't you of more importance than a hundred such villains?"

As he spoke, Gilbert had taken Jean's trembling arm within his own and was leading her down the stairs and out of the farm door, which they succeeded in locking behind them.

Jean paused an instant in the courtyard.

"It's rather high, that window," she said, "and the paving-stones are very hard. I expect I should have been killed if I had jumped out of it. You have saved my life."

"What do you mean?"

"Only, that I could not escape from the man by the doorway, and so I intended to do so from the window; but you answered to my cry, and the man left the room, and I did not jump, but climbed off the window-sill, and stood listening to the fight. I thought it was between two ruffians until I heard your voice, and then I ran out, because I knew I was safe."

"You saved my life, too," said Gilbert. "The fellow was getting too much for me. I thought it was all up with me when he caught hold of my arm—"

"Ah, and hurt it!" interrupted Jean. "Why, it is bleeding, and—"

"Tis only a scratch. Make haste, Miss Nowell; I will leave you at home on my way to the village doctor."

Jean said nothing; it was not very easy for her just then to express her feelings, and she had a vain hope that she would find it less difficult on the succeeding days. Gilbert said nothing either, for he was very contented to go on walking as they were with her soft arm resting on his, and conscious that at least for once in her life she was leaning upon him, and trusting him, and needing him.

All too soon for him they reached the house. He did not mind the snow, or the wind, or the cold during his homeward walk, for when it was over, he knew his short-lived happiness would be over too.

At the Hall door Jean dropped his arm and stood away from him—already, he fancied, showing some of her old self-sufficiency.

"I must wake up the men," he said, "that we may do our duty to that wounded wretch."

"If he dies," said Jean, trembling, "it is I who have killed him, and not you—you will remember that."

"I shall remember that you saved my life." Both were hesitating and irresolute. "But you must go upstairs and get warm, and—"

"Yes—yes."

Jean moved a step or two in a trembling fashion.

Gilbert came up instantly behind her, and taking her arm again firmly, he said:

"I shall deliver you over to my sister's care."

Effie, hearing footsteps on the stairs, sprang out of bed and hurried on to the landing. A bright light shone on to it from her bedroom, and Gilbert, as he left Jean with his sister, had the satisfaction for which he had longed, of seeing clearly Jean's white face, and of knowing that at least the girl, for whose sake he had suffered, was surely a woman, and not a marble beauty, for her eyes were wet with tears as he turned away from her.

## CHAPTER V.

THE following morning, Jean, though tired and nervously depressed by what she had gone through, appeared punctually in the breakfast-room. She intensely dreaded meeting the family again whom she had so much disturbed by her folly, and because she felt sure they would all be lenient towards her, she dreaded it all the more. Only Roy was in the room when she entered it, and the absence of Lady Moreton and Gilbert and Effie, when the clock struck nine, was abnormal and alarming.

Roy met her cordially, though there was an unusually serious expression on his face.

"I did not expect to see you down," he said; "at least you are not much the worse for your adventure last night."

"At least I! What do you mean? Who is ill? What has happened?"

There could only be two people who were the worse for it, Jean knew that, and her heart beat loudly indeed as she waited for Roy's reply.

"Well, Gilbert," he began—Jean caught hold of the back of a chair to steady herself, a movement which did not escape Roy's notice, as he continued—"Gilbert went off himself to fetch Dr. Morris for the wounded man, and when they had gone together to the farm, and had found the prisoner sitting upon the stairs, apparently wondering how he came there, and but little the worse for his blow, and had seen about having him taken into custody, then Gilbert seems to have fainted away, and Dr. Morris discovered, rather late, that it was from loss of blood from a wound in his arm; and since he has been brought home he has been in a high fever, because he got chilled, they say."

"And—and I suppose he is dangerously ill?" Jean asked in faltering tones.

"Oh no! I don't think so. Dr. Morris has telegraphed to town for further advice, because he does not like to bear the responsibility of the life of the baronet alone; but if it had only been I who was ill, he would have managed the case by himself, I am sure."

This feeble attempt at fun met with no response.

"And all this because of my folly," Jean murmured. "Mr. Moreton, will your mother see me? Can she leave the sick-room, and can she bear to speak to me once, just for a moment?"

"Don't talk in that way, please, Miss Nowell," said Roy, with a kindness which Jean found it hard to bear. "You know very well that we all feel you meant to do what was right, and because your pluck has turned out unluckily, it is not your fault—you are not to blame."

"If your mother will see me!" was Jean's only answer, and Roy left the room to find her.

When Lady Moreton entered it, a quarter of an hour afterwards, unwillingly having left the bedside of her son, and entertaining no kindly thought towards the cause of her trouble, she found the girl sitting down leaning her arms upon the table, her face buried in her hands, and sobbing bitterly. The tears went straight to a mother's heart, and altogether wiped out Lady Moreton's short-lived anger. Laying her hand on Jean's shoulder, she said affectionately:

"My poor girl, you too are overwrought; you must control yourself, or we shall have you ill next."

Jean did not lift her head, and Lady Moreton continued:

"At least we have to thank you for saving our boy's life last night, and—he is very ill this morning. Well, well, Dr. Morris does not think so very seriously of his case."

"Oh, how can you be so kind to me?" said Jean, suddenly starting up from her chair and turning round and grasping both Lady Moreton's hands within her own, and looking with her tear-stained eyes into the elder lady's face. "I have nothing to say for myself or my folly, only, if you will let me stay here until Sir Gilbert is better—out of danger—I shall be able to bear my self-reproaches better; they will not quite overcome me."

"Of course you must stay with us, Jean dear," Lady Moreton said. "We could not spare you now, and if—when Gilbert is better, he would not like to find his deliverer flown."

"Oh, when he is better I can go—I must go; only just now, not to hear how he is, and to know of all your trouble and not to share it—"

Excuses were needless, and Lady Moreton told her so. "You want to stay, and we wish you to," she said. "We need not analyse the reasons. We have not time, indeed, now, for I must go back to my boy, and you must have some breakfast and rest yourself. Ah, here come Maud and Roy. They will look after you and themselves at the breakfast-table."

Jean never forgot the four following days as long as she lived, and upon her whole character they left a noticeable and a lasting mark.

Gilbert lay desperately ill, and she was the cause of it. There is nothing like self-reproach to destroy all pride, and more scathing blame than Jean took to herself it would be impossible to appropriate. She could never be cold or reserved, or proudly confident, any more, for she felt that her own judgment was not to be trusted; that she, as well as other people, was fallible and timid; and as she lay awake at night, listening to every sound from the sick-room, or while she waited in the morning with almost uncontrollable anxiety for the report of the London surgeon who came down each day from town, she was obliged to acknowledge that she was a weak woman too in the matter of love, and that she had unconsciously drifted down the same path with most of her contemporaries, and was suffering from the same complaint she had so much despised in them. This conviction did Jean no harm, for it further served to humiliate her in her own eyes.

At the end of a week the crisis in Gilbert's illness was over; his arm began to heal, and, except from great prostration, all danger was over. And as his mind began to resume its usual tone, and his thoughts to run in their accustomed channels, he knew that a change had also come over the world for him, and that without the presence of

a certain Jean Nowell by his side, it would never again seem the bright spot he had once thought it. He, too, had learned his lesson.

Gilbert did not have a chance of speaking to Jean for a long while, because the doctors, fearing all excitement for him, kept her from him, even when he could move from his bedroom into his sitting-room. They did not guess that he had any special reason for wishing to see her, and they naturally thought that her presence would recall a painful and exciting scene. Gilbert did not insist, because it was his nature to take things quietly and to bide his time. He saw her once or twice from his window when she was out in the garden, and he heard her voice sometimes, and that, together with the consciousness that she was within reach, was sufficient for him in his weak state.

But when Jean was fully assured that he was out of all danger, and was, in fact, more than convalescent, she returned to her old intention of leaving the Hall, and insisted so firmly on that point that at last Lady Moreton yielded to her entreaties, and consented to let her go. Possibly the fact that Gilbert had not asked sooner to see her may have influenced her in deciding to leave; but the movements of girls in the matter of love are strange and inexplicable. Jean knew that she loved Gilbert; but she did not know whether he loved her, and she would not wait to learn.

After Lady Moreton had seen Jean start for the station, in time to catch the mid-day train for the North, she went to Gilbert's room and told him to whom she had just said good-bye. She knew that Gilbert would not be best pleased, but she would rather he did not agitate himself until he was stronger, and then he could easily follow Jean to her own home. To her surprise, however, on hearing that Jean had left, he was moved and troubled as she had never known him before.

"Mother, mother, you have taken ten years off my life!" he exclaimed passionately, and then from lamentation he immediately and characteristically turned to action, and declared that if he started off at once, he would yet see Jean at the station and be able to bid her good-bye—at least, that was all he said he wanted to do. His mother resisted him as strongly as she dared; but she ordered his phaeton to come round at once, and as it really was a fine mild day, she hoped the drive would do him no harm. She did not believe he would get to the station in time to see Jean, although the old family coachman who was driving her always allowed himself time enough and to spare. Gilbert would not let any of his family accompany him, but telling the groom to drive with all possible speed, he sat with his watch in his hand, and his eyes fixed sometimes upon it, and sometimes upon the towers and chimneys of the town they were nearing.

"Express started yet?" he asked of the first porter he saw outside the station.

"Just off, sir."

With amazing speed, especially considering his invalid condition, Gilbert hurried on to the platform; the carriage-doors of the train were all shut, and the guard was giving the signal for it to start, but when he saw and recognised Gilbert he waited a moment, and Gilbert, catching sight of a well-known fur cap at the window of a certain carriage, opened the door and jumped in, and, as the train moved out of the station, found himself face to face and alone with Jean Nowell.

"I've only just caught you," he said, panting and laughing, and trying to put her at her ease, for she looked half scared with surprise. "What did you mean by running away without saying good-bye to me?"

"I left a message with Lady Moreton. I knew you were getting well. Oh, but why have you come out now to make yourself ill again? And—the train has started. What do you mean to do?"

"I mean to telegraph at the next station to my groom to take the carriage back again. You don't mind my escorting you to your home?"

"No," doubtfully, "but my maid is in the next carriage, and—you ought not to be out."

"Neither ought you to have come away without saying good-bye to me. You knew I wanted to see you."

"No; how could I? I was especially forbidden your room."

"And that hurt you—you cared, did you not, whether you might see me or not?"

Gilbert spoke anxiously, for he knew how much depended on her answer. She was silent for a moment, and then she said softly:

"Yes, I cared."

"And now that I have followed you, you are glad—you like being with me?"

"Yes," very softly and hesitatingly.

A pause, during which Gilbert leant forward and looked intently at her averted and blushing face.

"And more than that, isn't it, Jean? More than like—it is love, isn't it? Don't you love me?"

Then, with an attempt at her old spirit, Jean drew herself up, and said severely:

"No, I will not say that first; you should make love to me, and not I to you!"

"And so I will, and so I do, my darling. I have been always waiting for a girl who was to be won, and now I have found her. Jean, Jean, I love you with my whole heart, and I will guard and cherish you till my life's end, if you will only trust yourself to my care."

"I believe you, Gilbert," she said tenderly; "and I love you too, and will do my best to be to you the good wife you deserve."

The first time the train stopped, Gilbert sent telegrams to his home and to his groom to say that he would not be back for a day or two, and although he was none the worse for his early escape from the doctor's hands, he was either not able or not willing to return to Moreton for several weeks, and when he did so, it was to make arrangements for bringing a bride to his old home.

And meanwhile matters had there settled themselves very conveniently for him. Roy, stimulated by his engagement to Maud Ellerton, was only too glad to leave the Hall, and to take possession of a manor-house in a neighbouring county, which he owned, but which he had always declared a great deal too dull to live at.

And Effie had been obliged to write to Gilbert the happy story which she did not confide to him on a certain memorable evening, for she had become engaged to young Lethbridge, and, indeed, was married to him before Easter-time.

There remained only Gilbert's mother to provide for, and Jean felt so tenderly towards her, that she begged her husband to set apart a wing in the Hall for her permanent home.

And what became of the two other and humbler characters in the tale? The ruffian of Elm Farm, when brought to justice, was recognised as a notorious thief whom the police had for some time past been unsuccessfully endeavouring to arrest, and who, during the earlier hours of the night he had intended passing, as he doubtless had spent many others, at Elm Farm, had broken into and robbed a rectory a few miles off, and being found guilty of that and of similar offences, he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, during which period he died.

And as for Betty Helliars? Jean felt so completely humiliated that she had not been able to make up her mind to visit the old woman before she left the Hall, but she did not forget her, and intended to arrange somehow or other for her welfare as soon as she could.

It so happened that one of the first walks she took with her husband in her new home, was through the plantation towards the Elm Farm. Where the last long avenue turned off down to it, she stopped abruptly.

"Let us come this way," said Gilbert; "you must not shrink from it."

"No, no! I don't," she answered firmly; but the hand which rested on Gilbert's arm was quivering.

They reached the bottom of the valley, and stood by the tall elm-trees which had surrounded the old farm, but instead of its creeper-covered walls and mullioned windows, Jean saw a neat row of new thatched cottages.

"Why, Gilbert," she exclaimed, "what a transformation! Has Mr. Futter really done all this for the old place?"

"No, not Futter. I bought the farm of him. It was a disgrace as well as a danger to the neighbourhood, and I wanted more cottages for the labourers on our estate, and was glad to have them built here."

"Gilbert, how pleased I am! And they look such model houses too. Are they all inhabited, or may I go into one?"

"They are all occupied; but anybody about here will be only too glad to see you, Jean—in fact you must learn to know all our people. But come into this end one first."

And Gilbert knocked at the door as he spoke. A cheery voice answered, "Please to come in," and Jean, on entering, was met by Betty Helliars, who made a lower curtsy than ever on seeing whom she was admitting, and who, smiling and excited, began to tell how this was "quite the most beautiful house that ever was builded, and that no rain didn't come in, nor cold winds, and there wasn't no rats nor crying children, nor nothing to trouble we," and, indeed, before her visitors left she had assured them, with tears in her eyes, that "she hadn't expected two forenoons in one day, but that she felt as if life in this new cottage, rent free, was a fresh day altogether."

"Gilbert," said Jean, as she was returning with him to the Hall, "there are not many things in life which are wholly good, but disinterested kindness is one of them."

"So my bachelor susceptibilities taught me to discern; that is the reason why I married you."

"I am not kind, I am not good."

"I believe you to be both."

"Ditto, ditto!"

"And long may it last!"

## Sharow Mires.

BY SUSAN K. PHILLIPS.

FAIR fall the July evenings, on hill, and glen, and moor,  
Where down from storied Wensleydale rolls her own river, Ure,  
Chafing amid her boulders, or glimmering, calm and deep,  
Where her oak shadows rest serene, and her white lilies sleep;  
Sweeping beneath the arches of many an ancient bridge,  
And broadening as her tribute becks, pour down from cliff and ridge,  
Past thorp and farm and hamlet, past towns with tapering spires,  
And rushing by the sullen pools that lie in Sharow Mires.

Along the wooded banks of Ure will youth and maiden stray,  
As on the furze on Winnie Hill red gleams the dying day;  
While the soft breezes of July wave every wild rose head,  
And kiss the thousand flowerets, that blossom where they tread;  
They linger where the Red Bank wears his fir-trees like a crown,  
And look where the grey Minster stands, as guard of Ripon town;  
But the whisper falters on the lip, the careless laughter dies,  
As they wander where the Mires stretch, beneath the darkening skies.

For the shadow of a treachery hangs ever o'er the place;  
Amid the flags and bulrushes might gleam a ghastly face;  
A moan might mingle in the sound the evening breezes make,  
As they rustle through the meadow-sweet the willow leaves to shake;  
Since, when July days, in bygone times, were counted to the third,  
They say, one alder's slender boughs without a wind were stirred;  
While o'er the marshes, at its side, fast flitted ghostly fires,  
And an echo, as of flying feet, was heard on Sharow Mires.

Two hundred years and more have passed since the dark deed was wrought,  
That to the lonely haunt by Ure its evil memories brought,  
And fainter show the shadows of love, and wrath, and wrong,  
That stamped the bitter impress that Nature wears so long;  
Yet still the story lingers of the gallant Cavalier,  
Who crossed the moat at Markington, when Rupert's call rang clear;  
And the fair girl, who, heedless of Roundhead kith and kin,  
Gave all her maiden fealty to that knightly "man of sin."

Fast by the hoary Minster, her stern old father dwelt,  
Whose iron will nor manly troth, nor girlish tears could melt,  
Who crushed the young heart's pleadings beneath his iron laws,  
And sent his sons to battle, for the Saints and for the Cause;  
Yet eve by eve she stole away, and down the silent street,  
And by the long beech avenue, went the "small glancing feet,"  
Nerved by the hope that never fails, the strength that never tires,  
She went to meet Sir Roger, at the tryst in Sharow Mires.

"And if I die, love, your sweet name shall soothe my parting breath,  
And I'll hew a place in Cromwell's ranks to grace you in my death;  
And if we win, I'll come again by bold Prince Rupert's side,  
Despite of prayer and Puritan, to claim my bonnie bride;  
And if we lose, and yet I dare to bring you from the fight  
The broken blade and colours torn of your defeated knight,  
Will you meet me, in the gloaming, here, at our trysting-place,  
To give to that dark hour of mine, the sunshine of your face?"

Thus to fair Alice Letheby, Sir Roger Graham said,  
As sobbing on his steel-clad breast, she leant her golden head;  
And so they kissed and parted, that morning of July;  
Ere with trumpet blare and roll of drum, the Royalists marched by.  
Some saw them pass with curses, some watched them go with tears,  
Some muttered, "Down with Belial!" some, "God bless the Cavaliers!"  
And sweet Alice knew her lover's gain meant ruin of her sire's,  
As through the crowds in Ripon streets, she stole from Sharow Mires.

And all next day dark rumours, grew thickly in the town;  
Wild news of fear and fight and flight, flew fast from Marston Down;  
And flying bands had dashed at speed, through the watchers in the Square,  
And Leslie's, Cromwell's, Rupert's names, were hurdling in the air;  
Old Letheby buckled on his belt, and took his heavy sword,  
And barred his low-browed portal, and bade his men keep ward,  
And forth he went to gather the tidings of the hour,  
And deemed his daughter was bestowed, safe in her maiden bower.

Was ever yet the way of love by earthly barrier stopped?  
Down from her rose-twined lattice fair Alice, trembling, dropped,  
Her eye by love-light quickened, her step by love made sure,  
She gained the tiny shallop moored, on the birchen banks of Ure,  
And even as Lord Fairfax' Post, drew rein beside the Cross,  
While the rabble's fickle cheer arose to hail their monarch's loss;  
E'en as the Minster bells clashed out, and blazed the beacon fires,  
She glided to the farther bank, and stood on Sharow Mires.

Not long alone she waited beside the alder tree,  
While the night-jar warbled at her side, and the bat swooped fitfully;  
Not long, ere starting to her feet, she held her breath to heed  
The echo of a horse's hoofs, as spurred to desperate speed;  
And thundering down the Roman Riggs the reckless rider came,  
She heard him spring to ground, she heard him falter forth her name,  
And for a moment, wounds, defeat, and dangers and alarms,  
Were all forgotten as she sought her shelter in his arms.

One moment only, treachery had dogged her on her way,  
For jealousy had watched the flight it hated to betray;  
E'en as she knelt beside him, and strove his wounds to stanch,  
A furious hand drew backward the alder's sheltering branch,  
A passionate oath the silence of the lonely marshes broke,  
A sudden, brief, unequal strife, a deadly dagger stroke,  
And a bitter shriek, the shriek of one whose light of life expires,  
As they tore her from her lover's corpse, rang out o'er Sharow Mires.



So, says the tale, her sire bore his fainting child away,  
And left her slaughtered soldier to moulder where he lay,  
For terror was upon the land, and no man dared to stir  
To bear the knight to holy ground, to soothe or succour her;  
And while the robin sang his dirge, the woodbine wove his shroud,  
Beside the silenced Minister, 'neath her weight of woe she bowed,  
And ere upon the alder the leaves grew gold and red,  
They bore the blighted blossom to her rest amid the dead.

To rest!—as every fresh July (the story rose and grew)  
Came to the three broad Ridings, their beauty to renew,  
On its third day, as gloaming fell, a shadowy form would glide;  
From the tomb beneath the yew-tree, and seek the riverside;  
And in a phantom shallop to the willow copses pass,  
And sink below the alder boughs, upon the lush-green grass;  
While round her and above her would dance the mocking fires,  
And the echo of a horse's tread was heard on Sharow Mires.

At last they dug the earth away around the alder's root,  
And found the good knight's skeleton, found wild war's bitter fruit,  
Bore it away in reverence, and at length in hallowed ground,  
For him who died for Church and King a fitting rest was found;  
And, guided by a gentle thought, they made her warrior's grave,  
Where over the fair Puritan, the white rose loved to wave,  
And so, when nigh two hundred years of time and tide were passed,  
They whom life held apart were joined, by kindly death at last.

And since the holy rites were said under the old gnarled yew,  
Quiet, as their united souls they lie, that faithful Two.  
No spectre haunts the river bank, or scares the narrow street,  
And upon Sharow's meadows green, no phantom horse-hoofs beat;  
Yet still a shapeless something hangs about the lonely spot,  
The spirit of the evil deed whose fame is nigh forgot,  
And the whispering of the July breeze a nameless awe inspires,  
As it ruffles the bright breast of Ure, and sighs through Sharow Mires.

## A Nine Days' Wonder.

By M. F. THEED.

### CHAPTER I.

IN one of the best furnished and most commodious bedrooms in a Baywater boarding-house, within a stone's-throw of "the Grove," and its great distinguishing feature, "Whiteley's," between seven and eight o'clock on a fine June morning, two years ago, a lady of a certain age was engaged in leisurely surveying from her elevated position in the bed she had not yet quitted, an elaborate costume of silk and cashmere, which had been carefully arranged, apparently with a view to the inspection, over the back of a chair exactly facing her.

"I don't know how I shall look in it," she was saying to herself doubtfully, her head bent critically upon one side. "I was a fool to let that woman overpersuade me. They will say anything to put one in a good temper with oneself and with them, and I shall look as brown as a berry in that delicate *fade* grey. If I had stood by my original idea, and had a good, rich, sensible brown silk, which I could have taken to and lived in for the next six months— Good gracious, Annette, how you startled me, to be sure! What do you want, child?"

The question was addressed to the little housemaid, who, without having so much as waited for her timid knock at the door to receive an answer, had suddenly invaded the privacy of Miss Dacre's room, and was standing "fly-catching," as that lady mentally observed, at her bed-side.

"If you please, ma'am, there's a lady wants you, and she says as, up or not up, she is bound to see you."

For a moment Miss Dacre stared and knitted her brows. In that moment her thoughts travelled far and fast. She was thinking of the ill news which travels proverbially at the same rate; but there was nobody in London who was likely to have had such to bring her, at that untimely hour.

Her brow cleared, and she laughed.

"What is she like?" she asked; "and what have you done with her? You are sure she is a lady, Annette? Have you never seen her here before? She gave you her name, surely?"

"No, ma'am, she didn't," the girl replied decidedly. "And she is quite the lady—such a pretty young lady! I should have known her well enough if I'd seen her before. And please, ma'am, she's waiting in the hall."

"But please, ma'am, she is not—she could not wait there any longer," broke in a second voice—a sweet, tremulous, high-bred voice, which sent a thrill, which had in it more than surprise—a *souppçon* surely of pleasure or pain—or both, through the listener in bed. "I was obliged to come up to you myself, dear, dear Miss Dacre. I was so afraid you might refuse to see me, and I am—oh, in such trouble!"

There was no further appeal against her entrance possible. She had come into the room, and motioned the servant out, and

fastened the door behind her, almost before her hostess had arrived at her identity. And she was a most unlikely person, it must be confessed, for anyone to feel disposed to turn out. She was, indeed, a very pretty young lady—a tall, slight, graceful girl, with a carriage that, in spite of her youth and slenderness, was singularly commanding, and a face not easily forgotten.

Miss Dacre remembered it well, with its small features, and large eyes, and rich bloom, altered in no wise, save for the better, since she saw it last, two years ago.

The intrusion of an utter stranger would have been less extraordinary—less indeed of an intrusion than that of this girl. She had emphatically no business here, but her appearance was so sudden, and Miss Dacre was so completely taken aback, that she had no time to remember that she should, in the fitness of things, be no less resentful than surprised.

There can be few things more trying to a well-preserved spinster lady, far on the shady side of forty, than to find herself called upon, without any notice whatever, to give audience before she has made her toilette to a comparative stranger, and it was well possibly for both parties that the ordeal was a less trying one to Miss Dacre, with her fair, plump face and still luxuriant hair, than it would have been to most people.

She was amazed and a little scandalised at the liberty which had been taken with her, but she was not offended past redemption, and she had no unpleasant consciousness of having been found *en déshabille* in more ways than one, as the bright eyes of her visitor met her own.

In her astonishment, only two words escaped her lips. At the sound of the name they framed, the young lady came close up to the bed-side, and took the hand, which had not been offered her, eagerly in her own.

"Oh, Miss Dacre," she exclaimed, "how am I ever to apologise to you, and what can you think of me? If you only knew what a state of mind I have been in—what a terrible night I have spent! To feel that every minute was bringing it nearer and nearer, and that if I did not escape from it at once, there would be no chance for me again as long as I lived! And there was nowhere I could go. I could think of nobody but you! Do tell me you are not too angry with me—that you won't turn me out, if it is only—"

She stopped and coloured in such palpable confusion that the last thing in the world possible to so good-natured a person as was she with whom she had to deal, was to be angry with her; but the reference was scarcely a happy one, and there was a certain contraction of Miss Dacre's lips as she answered:

"We won't say anything about anybody's sake but your own, Lady Florence, and I shall not be so unmannerly as to turn you out; but I am so entirely at a loss to know what has brought you here, or what I can do for you, that until you tell me I cannot promise. It is nothing very dreadful that has befallen you, I hope? I am so out of the fashionable world," she added stiffly, "that I do not even know whether I am speaking to Lady Florence Innes or Lady Florence Templeman. Your marriage was, I know, announced for this month, but the date of it has escaped my memory."

"Is it possible you do not know?" the girl exclaimed with mingled surprise and amusement. "It has been fixed for the last three weeks—fixed for this morning, at St. James's, Piccadilly."

For a moment the other stared at her aghast. "This morning, at St. James's!" she repeated; "but you have put it off—why? Do you know it is a most unlucky thing to put off a wedding? You should never have done it—never! If you had never arranged it—ah well! it is useless to go back over that old ground. Once having arranged it, you should not have put it off on any account."

The girl was half laughing, half crying. "But I have not put it off, dear Miss Dacre," she tried to explain. "That is the worst of it. The breakfast is all ready, and the guests are all bidden, and the bride, unfortunately, is such an indispensable adjunct! A bridal without a bride—conceive it!"

"My dear, I don't understand you," Miss Dacre said gravely, not quite sure whether her visitor's brain had not become affected suddenly. "You must excuse my saying so, but you seem to me to be talking the wildest nonsense. You can never seriously mean to suppose that you intend the whole thing to come to nothing—that, in fact, you have run away!"

"I am afraid that is what I do mean, Miss Dacre, and I want you to help me. Indeed and in truth I do." She had seated herself near the foot of the bed, and as she spoke she leant forward, a beautiful, bright piece of colouring, full of life and grace, in the subdued light of the room.

"You want me to help you," Miss Dacre exclaimed warmly. "You should think first—pardon me for reminding you—what you are asking me to help you to do. If you did not think you liked this

Mr. Templeman well enough to marry him, you must have found it out long ago, and you should have spoken out and said so. You have no right now to make him and yourself the talk of the town, or to ask other people to aid and abet you in doing it."

The flush on the girl's cheek deepened.

"I know," she said, with a little dignified reproach in her tone and manner, "that what you say is all I could expect to have said to me by anybody else, but I did think that you would see it differently, that you would understand and be able to make allowances for me. Of course, if you don't—"

There was a forlorn cadence in her voice that touched Miss Dacre.

"Cannot you see for yourself, my dear child, that it is impossible? If, before things had gone so far, you had chosen to come to me, it would have been another thing. But now—I can only repeat it—now, there is only one thing that anybody who has any regard for you can advise you to do. You have still time to go back and appear in your proper place, at the proper time, and, as to this little escapade, nobody need be any the wiser."

There was no mistaking the earnestness with which she spoke. In her mind there was no doubt as to the course to be pursued, but in Lady Florence's there was no such clear conviction. She had a much stronger perception of the wrong she had already done Alan Dacre than of that she was about to do this other man, whom she had allowed to supplant him, and it seemed to her extraordinary—not to say unnatural—on the part of Alan's aunt to condemn any step which should be the means of restoring the old understanding between them.

Here, at least, she had expected to be received with open arms, and, lo and behold! Miss Dacre's one thought was to get her back again in time! And back to what? She was an old maid, certainly, and possibly was never near marrying anybody herself, but surely she might understand what it must feel like to bind yourself for life to a man you don't care about, when the man you do is on his way home to you!

"But Alan!" she exclaimed piteously, and a shade impatiently to boot. "You don't think of Alan, and the difference it will make to him."

"The time for thinking of Alan is past and over, Lady Florence. But that I do not wish to say anything unkind to you, I should say it would have been well for him had you thought as much of him whilst you had the right to do it, as I did."

"Whilst I had the right to do it!" the girl exclaimed pitifully. "Oh, Miss Dacre, I deserve to have hard things said to me, I know, but you need not put it as if there must be an end to everything between us for ever and ever. And you know so little about it. You don't know how I was driven into it. You never had to live with Lady St. Oban, and you don't know how impossible it is to hold your own against her. And it was, oh, such a long time to look forward to Alan's return!"

The elder lady was watching her with keen eyes. There was not an inflection in her voice, a change in her countenance, which escaped that scrutiny.

"And this Mr. Templeman was very rich?" she added quietly, and as if by way of conclusion, as the girl paused.

If it was her object to discompose her by putting the question at all—above all, by putting it, as she did put it, significantly—she failed in its attainment.

"Yes," Lady Florence said simply, "he is very rich, and he is very kind. He made so much of me always, and they all thought so much more of me because of it."

"And your engagement? That was too small a thing to be spoken of, I suppose?"

At this home-thrust, the delicate colour in her cheek deepened again perceptibly.

"You know, Miss Dacre," she said plaintively, "it was scarcely a recognised thing at home from the first. Papa's was only a half-and-half sanction, conditional on circumstances—on our continuing to care for each other, and so forth. And Mr. Templeman knew nothing about it."

"Whilst Lady Florence Innes did not think it worth her while to enlighten him? Well, my dear, I am glad to find there was, at all events, one person blameless in the matter," Miss Dacre observed calmly. "Perhaps, as you have told me so much already, you will not mind finishing the story, and explaining what induced you, at the eleventh hour, to change your mind? Was there any change in your fiancé?" she added dryly. "Was he any less kind to you?"

She was determined, and the other saw it, to set her conduct before her in its worst possible colours, to make her out, as she indignantly said to herself, as ungrateful as she is fickle. She must be very fond of Alan, she reflected, after all, to endure so much so patiently at the hands of his aunt, and yet she was not, she could not bring herself to be, really angry with Miss Dacre.

"No," she said; "he was as kind as ever. I have acted very

badly by him, and I am very sorry, but I cannot help it. It had nothing to do with him, Miss Dacre. Can't you guess what it was? You know surely? It was in the *Times* yesterday? Alan is ordered home on sick-leave. He will be here in England—here in London, most likely, in less than a month."

"Yes, I know," said Miss Dacre. "And you thought that his illness, whatever it might be, lay at your door?"

"Oh no, indeed I did not," laughed the girl unconcernedly. "His health is all right, I have no doubt. He has been dying to get leave ever since he went out, and at last he has managed it."

"You speak very confidently. You don't mean me to suppose, Lady Florence, that you have kept up a correspondence with him all this time?"

Again the blue eyes dropped, and the colour rose hotly in the fair cheeks.

"I have not written very regularly," she said; "but I have never ceased writing—quite."

"In fact you have never told him the truth?"

For a moment the girl hesitated, then she threw her pretty head back with a gesture, at once petulant and defiant, and laughed out her answer:

"Come now, Miss Dacre, confess that it is a very good thing that I have not."

She was laughing, but her companion looked graver than ever.

"I am not so sure that it is so," she replied in a tone that was in unison with her face. "It would have come with a better grace from you than from me, and I mentioned you when I last wrote, so that he cannot have misunderstood. I did it never thinking, but it is done, and it cannot be helped. And I am glad that you know it, my dear. It will make it easier for you to accept your fate, now that you know that, by this time, he must have made up his mind to his."

For a moment there was a silence between the two women, and the bullfinch, whistling away in the window, had it all to himself. Then her young ladyship looked up with a little sigh, and remarked plaintively to her hostess:

"Yes, of course, as you say, you did it not thinking. But, poor dear boy! how unhappy you must have made him to be sure. Do you know I never felt, until now, what a horribly wicked thing I was going to do. To think that before twelve o'clock to-day, if Lady St. Oban had not happened to make such a fuss about the *Times* being sent back into the library, which, of course, made me wish to see it, I should have perjured myself for life."

Miss Dacre was beginning to feel what a woman may be supposed to feel, who has arrived at the end of her resources. Nothing she could say apparently had any effect upon this eccentric young woman, and what it was open to her to do she scarcely knew. She could not exactly give her in custody, on a charge of refusing to allow herself to be married, nor could she be sent back by force to the paternal mansion. She could, of course, telegraph to the earl to come and fetch his daughter, but to do this would be to make the matter almost as public as she seemed bent upon making it herself.

She suggested it, nevertheless, by way of intimidation.

"It would be no good," Lady Florence replied coolly. "I should not go with him. I will never return to that house, until I am Alan's wife. They may say and do what they like then."

"If you really mean that for your ultimatum," Miss Dacre said at last, "I must beg of you to go down into the drawing-room, whilst I get up, for, if you won't go to Berkeley Square, I must."

"I beg you a thousand pardons," springing to her feet; "I forgot I was keeping you a prisoner all this time. But, Miss Dacre, you don't really mean you are going? What will you say to them? They will be so angry about me." She hesitated for a moment, then added ingenuously: "Forgive me, but they might be rude to you."

"They might," was the laconic reply, "without reason. What I wish to prevent is their being so with reason. To harbour your ladyship here, without your father's knowledge, is to give him, at all events, very good cause of complaint."

"You have heard all I have to say, and you would have me, in spite of it, go back and marry that man?"

She put the question to her hostess, standing with her hand on the door, and looking, as she did so, full into the other's eyes.

Miss Dacre shifted her position in bed uneasily.

"I should be very sorry to advise you either one way or the other," she said desperately. "It would be a responsibility I am not prepared to undertake. But, as Alan Dacre's aunt, I cannot allow Lord St. Oban to suppose for one moment that I have sanctioned the part you think of playing to-day. Whether, had Alan been in England to do it, he would have condescended to run away with the young lady who had once openly thrown him over for a better match, I cannot say; but you must excuse me if I venture to doubt it."

Never, perhaps, had Lady Florence Innes been called upon to submit to plainer speaking.

She had known Miss Dacre for years, it is true, but it had been in the slightest, most superficial way, and as to her real opinions and feelings they had not, sooth to say, concerned Lady Florence at all. She had known quite well all along that Captain Alan Dacre was no match for her—that there should be any question as to her being in every way desirable for him, had never crossed her mind.

The way in which things were being put to her now is so much more novel than pleasant, that she could almost find it in her heart to wish her hostess a very good-morning, and really take her advice, and go back again.

But Alan is no more responsible for his aunt than she is for him, and then there is that note to her father, the contents of which are by this time known to more than him. Go back and face them all after that! No; she has crossed the Rubicon, whatever she may have to put up with on this side of it, until her lover returns!

"You give me no quarter," she said with a faint smile; "and I am quite at your mercy. If you won't have me, I must go and find a lodging for myself, I suppose. Only I thought it better—that everyone would be better pleased."

"My dear," Miss Dacre broke in unceremoniously, "you know very well you can do nothing of the kind. If you will go downstairs, I will dress as quickly as I can, and they will get us some breakfast. Possibly our heads may be a little clearer when we have had something to eat."

## CHAPTER II.

"AND you really mean what you say, my lord?"

"I am in the habit of meaning what I say, madam." The clock on the library mantelpiece chimed the half-hour past ten as Lord St. Oban spoke, and he glanced significantly at it. He was still standing, as he had been pleased to stand, throughout his interview with Miss Dacre, and she could not but take this additional hint that it had, in his opinion, lasted long enough.

She rose to her feet reluctantly, with the unpleasant conviction strong upon her that, for once in her life, she, a clever woman, had had the worst of an encounter with a dull man. She had made the best of her case, but the case was too bad for her. She had defended the girl behind her back, as she would not allow her to defend herself to her face; but she felt that her father had every right to be angry and indignant.

"She has made fools of us all," the earl asserted savagely. "I do not know, madam, whether you have the least idea what this freak of Lady Florence's is likely to cost me in pounds, shillings, and pence? How much I shall have to pay for the wedding-clothes and the wedding-breakfast she has been so obliging as to leave behind her, to say nothing of the scandal and annoyance to Lady St. Oban and myself. When one gentleman breaks his word to another, there is some possible redress—some reparation. In a case like this there is none. There is not in town a man better known and more respected than the man who has paid my daughter the honour of his addresses, and it will be a pain and a grief to me to the last day of my life that he should have received such scandalous treatment at the hands of any one belonging to me."

"You cannot feel for Mr. Templeman more than I do, Lord St. Oban," Miss Dacre pleaded earnestly. "But surely if Lady Florence felt so strongly at the eleventh hour that she could not do her duty by him, it was better for her to do as she has done than to make him and herself miserable for life. After all, the mortification of the moment was preferable to the risk of that."

"I have no more to say upon the subject," he replied doggedly. "She has behaved abominably, but if she chooses to come back even now, prepared to keep her word and behave herself, she may trust to Lady St. Oban to hush it all up and find some excuse for the postponement of the ceremony. It is not everybody, let me tell you, who would do so much, in the case of conduct so disgraceful, so unprecedented, as Lady Florence's."

"I don't defend Lady Florence's conduct," urged the lady. "She has behaved badly all round—in the first place to my nephew, in the second to Mr. Templeman; but I believe she is honestly trying to be true to her better self now, and I do not think, if I were her father, I would try to force her inclinations."

"Perhaps not, madam; only, as you do not happen to be her father, and I do, the responsibility lies at my door, not at yours, and you have my ultimatum. In plain words, Miss Dacre, Lady Florence Innes has to choose between her father and her family, and your nephew and yourself."

"And suppose there should arise this further complication—suppose Lady Florence should refuse to accept the terms you propose for her return, and I, as Alan Dacre's aunt, should decline, under the circumstances, to keep her? What then, my lord?"

There was something in the calm, clear tones, from which, hard as the speaker strove to do so, she found it impossible to eliminate a

certain involuntary contempt, which stung her listener, already past his patience, to the quick.

"What then?" he exclaimed furiously; "why then she may go—"

The destination he suggested for his daughter need not be specified here, and he had the grace to mumble an apology, but Lady St. Oban herself could not have wished his lordship a very good-morning with a more imposing air of offended dignity than this quiet elderly lady from the Bayswater boarding-house. Angry as he was, he felt, as she took her departure, that, in the manner and matter of that last speech, he had played into his daughter's hands with a vengeance.

"Will the old woman be vicious enough to tell her?" he wondered, and, thereupon, he fell to wondering somewhat more anxiously how much the culprit really knew of the position in which she would find herself when she came of age this next December.

"It would be little enough for them to live upon, the young idiots! but, doubtless, they would think it plenty;" and in his heart he felt a miserable certainty that neither that day, nor for many days to come, would his daughter's shadow darken the threshold of the house in Berkeley Square.

There were few busier women in London, in any sphere whatever, than Lady St. Oban; but never, perhaps, did she get so much into the short a space of time as on that memorable 20th of June. The bundles of telegrams, all to the same effect, made quite a sensation at the different receiving-offices, amongst which they were judiciously disseminated, and the female mind in that particular department was so sympathetically exercised as to the origin of the simple announcement, which was to change the day's arrangements for so many fine folk, that the wonder was that any other despatches got attended to at all. The great question at home was, What was to be done with the bridegroom-elect? So long as there was the faintest chance of the return of the runaway, he, too, must be put off with an excuse, but the less deception practised in his case, should she be really irremediable, the better.

"She will not return," Lady St. Oban observed coolly. "I know her delightful obstinacy too well; but it will be better to have it from her own lips than through the medium of that meddling old woman. She left the number of the house, you said? Why not send Kirloch for her? Tell him he is to take a hansom and bring her back in it. Let him tell her you have made up your mind to have no more nonsense about it, and that she is to come home at once. She won't obey you. She has been a rebel at heart all along; but I suppose the more trouble she could cause me, the better she was pleased, and she has made a *coup* certainly."

The advice, thus ungraciously given, was acted upon with such celerity, that Miss Dacre's four-wheeler had not set her down more than a quarter of an hour, when the hansom containing the pretty, fair-haired boy of sixteen, who was heir to all the family honours, drove up to the door of that lady's temporary residence.

"Will you tell Lady Florence Innes that her brother wishes to speak to her?" he said hurriedly, and with a slight flush on his face, to the servant who opened the door to him.

"I beg pardon, sir—what name did you say?" opening her eyes a trifle wider at the unfamiliar prefix.

There was not a more respectable establishment in the square, nor for the matter of that, in all Westbournia, but the "connection" could not be said to be a titled one, and boy as he was, Kirloch saw the surprise in the woman's face, and felt almost intuitively that he had made a blunder.

"Will you tell Miss Dacre—the lady who is staying with Miss Dacre, I mean—that her brother wishes to see her?" he replied confusedly, and upon the strength of this amendment, was shown upstairs to the public drawing-room.

Fortunately for him, it was empty; it was a pretty, bright room, carefully kept, and had French windows, lace-curtained and opening on to a balcony full of flowers, not unlike Lady Florence's own, in the more aristocratic square, where lords and ladies fail to create a sensation.

"It is not half a bad sort of place," Kirloch was pleased to observe mentally, "but of course everybody knows it is not the place for Florence."

She came running in to him, two minutes after he was announced, and threw her arms round his neck and kissed him, so that he felt quite satisfied, ere ever he began, that it was all right, and that he had nothing but plain sailing before him. But the truth of it was, the girl's mind was so fully made up, she felt a sort of tender compunction at allowing him to plead with her at all, knowing all the time how fruitless such pleading would be. The more she thought of it, during the little time Miss Dacre was away, the clearer it appeared to her that the path she had turned into so suddenly was the path she must continue to follow, and the general tone of her father's message, softened down though it had been in its transmission, had fixed her in her resolve. Nothing the lad could say would alter it, and the more apparent his simple confidence in his own powers

of persuasion and in her love for him became to his sister, so much the more pitifully did she cling to him, and try to make him see the thing through her eyes.

"You know, Kirloch—dear, dear Kirloch, it would not be right. I ought never even to have thought of breaking my word; I ought never to have listened to Aunt Emilia, or Nathalie. It was dreadful of me, to begin with, when I knew of nothing amiss with Alan, but now, when he is coming home, invalided—whether it is that he has really been ill, or just that he may get back to me a little sooner, either way, you must see for yourself, I could not go deliberately the way to break his heart by letting the first news that reached him about me be the news of my marriage. How could I?"

It would be hard lines on Alan, Kirloch allows, but it will be equally hard the other way—on Templeman, who is such a good fellow—an out-and-out good fellow; and it is playing a mean trick on the governor and on Lady St. Oban; it is not fair play—anybody would say it was not. Why, the breakfast is laid, and the house has been turned upside down, and as to the presents, there is a cart-load of them, and Nathalie says not one of them will be Florence's any more than it will be hers, if she does not return.

"It is getting yourself so awfully talked about," he wound up in a kind of desperation, having indeed by this time acquitted himself nobly of the task that had been set him, so far as an accurate rendering of his aunt's sentiments was concerned. His father's were more pithy and more to the point.

"Oh, you need not tell me what papa says," Lady Florence broke in with a certain impatience. "He will never have anything more to do with me, he is kind enough to say. Of course, I expected nothing less, at first. He was bound to storm at me, and I don't wonder. I ought to have stood up to him long ago, and not been so supine and stupid, but I never realised what I was doing until the time came. I am sorry about papa, but he will come round when he finds it is no good, and that I am really in earnest."

"No, he won't," said Kirloch in his most convincing manner. "And he won't let me. That is the worst of it, Flo. I shan't be allowed to have anything to do with you, and what on earth is to become of me, when I get into a scrape? If the governor cuts up rough, or my lady 'twigs' anything she don't like the look of, there won't be a soul to go to! Now, if you had married Templeman, he is such a rattling good fellow, and it would all have been so serene at home about you and him, it would have been as good as your not being married at all."

"In some sort of scrapes, better," the girl replied with a little irrepressible amusement. "Ah well, Kirloch, I hope Mr. Templeman never visit the sins of the sister upon the brother. I should try and keep friends with him if I were you; and you might tell him from me that, so far as he is concerned, I am more sorry and ashamed than I can say, and that I hope—— But no, I don't think you shall say anything about what I hope. That will be for me to say when I write. And you might as well tell papa that, too—that I mean to write to Mr. Templeman, and say what I can to explain myself. And as for you, Kirloch dear—you know as well as I do it will not be a lifelong quarrel or separation for any of us. Papa is rough, but he is not cruel, and his bark is worse than his bite."

So the young lord had nothing for it but to go back as he came, and there was no longer any hope of sparing the wealthy *fiancé*, the conquest of whom had been a source of envy to so many of the mothers and daughters of his acquaintance, any portion of the hard truth.

Miss Dacre, in the meantime, was more puzzled than she had ever been, perhaps, during the half-century or so of her prosperous existence. She was a clever, self-sufficing woman, who was left mistress of herself and of a comfortable independence at a comparatively early age, and had not merely liked her own way, but been tolerably successful in getting it, ever since. In addition to a kind heart and a keen moral perception of right and wrong—neither of them so common a human attribute as some of us imagine—she had a clear head which had escaped the muddling process of constant worry of any sort, and a fair share of worldly wisdom and foresight. All her life long she had striven to make her wishes subservient to her judgment, and she was anxious to do so now. She was as eager as ever she was to do right, but never had she found it so difficult to decide what right was.

For once in her life she wanted time to think, and no time was given her. She had been forced into a position in which she must act, and act decisively, at once. And the worst of it was, her action would affect the whole future of the person whom of all human beings she loved best. What was the best thing to be done in Alan's interest?

In her own heart she was not at all sure he would not be better off without this capricious fine lady than with her, and by this time, supposing he had received her letter and read it aright, he might have arrived at a similar conclusion himself; but there remained the fact that he was very much in love, and that the girl now, however badly

she might have behaved in the interim, was literally giving up everything for him. Under such circumstances, though she had no sympathy with her disobedience, and though it involved herself in present difficulties, how was she to refuse Lady Florence a shelter?

Clearly, it was a thing not to be done, and equally certain a London boarding-house, just at the present juncture, was not the shelter to be desired. Annoying as it was, when she had made up her mind to six weeks of the season, and had only accomplished a month of it, she must leave London, and take this uninvited and unwelcome guest with her.

In three weeks Alan will be home; in three weeks, then, she will be in her own house at Deepdene, ready to receive him. In the meantime, she will take Lady Florence to a certain quiet little nook by the sea, which, at this early season, they will be tolerably certain to have to themselves.

"I scarcely think any of your world will find us out at Balmington," she observed dryly when she told that young lady that this is how it was to be.

### CHAPTER III.

In telling the story of her own adventures at this stage of her history, Lady Florence always maintains that the oddest of them all was the coincidence which befell her, not long after her withdrawal from London to the seclusion of the South Downs. That it was a coincidence, and a curious one, there is no denying.

With some little difficulty she had induced Miss Dacre to agree with her that the risk she was likely to run of meeting with any one who had the honour of her acquaintance, in the course of a few hours' shopping at Brighton, in the month of June, was too infinitesimal to be worth consideration. There would be none but the most dreadful people there, at that season, everybody knew, and it was not, as she sagaciously observed, as if she herself were either very bad or very beautiful. She had never figured in the shop-windows, or been, as far as she was aware, pointed out to country cousins in the park as a special object of admiration and amazement. None of the dreadful people were in the least likely to recognise her, and she really did want certain things which Balmington did not supply. That the ten days she had already spent there alone with Miss Dacre had been among the longest in her life, she would not for the world have had that lady suspect, and had, indeed, been at such pains to conceal it, that the more the latter saw of her the more satisfied she felt with her own share in recent events.

She was a nice girl spoilt, Alan's aunt said to herself, with a growing conviction that the spoiling was such as might be undone, under better auspices.

They made their little excursion together, and made it, up to the time of their departure, very successfully. The King's Road, if not absolutely a desert—and for heat and glare it could scarcely have been surpassed by one—might have been Sahara itself for any indication it presented of association with the fashionable world. The two ladies did such small shopping as they were concerned about in perfect peace, and it was only upon their arrival at the station they found they had mistaken "five to the hour" for "five past," and that time was up. But for a good-natured guard, who had reason to remember them, they would have been left behind, and, as it was, there was no room for Lady Florence in the compartment into which Miss Dacre was hustled.

To this mere accident was due the coincidence already referred to. In the carriage in which a seat was thus hurriedly found for Lady Florence one other place only was occupied. Comfortably ensconced in the far corner, with a pile of newspapers ready to his hand, and all the paraphernalia the male passenger delights in about him, was a man of about eight-and-thirty, with a somewhat plain-featured, heavy face, but with the kindest and most honest eyes one person of his acquaintance had ever known. If anything, the face looked a little phlegmatic, that of one who would not be easily startled or moved, but if this were indeed its owner's ordinary temper, it failed him now.

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed, and the change that came over his countenance as the words escaped him caused the girl who, as she reciprocated his recognition, would have given all she possessed to be able to turn and leave him, a sensation of such keen shame and self-reproach as she had never before experienced.

"Oh, Mr. Templeman," she stammered forth, "I never thought—I am so very, very sorry;" and then, with a sudden impulse, she leant across, and held out her hand to him. "I don't deserve it, I know, but you will shake hands with me, won't you?"

He rose from his seat at once, and came over to her. "To shake hands means to make friends again, does it not?" he said in the quiet low voice she knew so well; "I have no wish to be anything but friendly to you. I think I said as much in the letter I wrote you."



They shook hands as he spoke, and he sat down opposite to her, but he did not look at her, or she at him. If the train would only go faster, she thought, and bring them speedier release from each other's company! And yet there were things it would be such a relief to say to him, if she could muster up courage! She had written to him, but what she had written had seemed so cold and commonplace, and she was sorry, she said to herself, and grateful—grateful for a great many kindnesses, big and little, to herself and to Kirloch—kindnesses of which she had thought more lately than at the time. It was no use, she thought—she must try and say it, however her cheeks burned, and however gloomily he watched the landscape and ignored her.

There was no possibility of ignoring her when she began to speak. She was too pretty and too much in earnest for one man in a thousand to have refused—in cold blood, that is to say—to listen to her. And this man, in particular, though he had suffered a great deal at her hands—more, perhaps, than she imagined—had had time to have it out with himself before he met her, and had already in his heart forgiven her.

There was one person he found it harder to forgive, and that was Lady St. Oban.

"She might have known," he said, "that however much I might have admired you and desired to make you my wife, I should have put away the thought of you at once and for ever had I known it could only be accomplished at the cost of your happiness, and—forgive me if the truth sounds harsh to you—your honour. She should have remembered that the right to dispose of you rested no longer either in her hands or in your own."

"No, of course not," Lady Florence assented meekly. But she was not sure she liked being talked to in this fashion now she had once been assured of his forgiveness. Still, it was a great thing that he had forgiven her.

Would her father be as easy of persuasion? she wondered. It was just what her companion was wondering too. To him the step she had taken seemed more serious in its possible consequences than it did to herself.

"Then I am to understand," he observed at last, "that you expect Captain Dacre home from India in about ten days' time, and that then—" He hesitated for a moment, uncertain how to put it, and added: "And then it is all to be settled."

"I hope so," she replied shyly.

"And what about your father? Do you think he will come round?"

"I don't know—I can't tell," with a little involuntary tremor in her voice, which did not escape him. "Perhaps not just at first. He vowed that he never would, both to Miss Dacre and to Kirloch, and the other day, if you will believe it, they sent all my things—a van-load of them, the servants say—down to Deepdene, as if that were to be my home and they would really have nothing more to do with me."

Mr. Templeman knit his brows and looked grave. "I am afraid you will have to be patient," he said, "and to induce your husband—when he is your husband—to be patient, too. Do you think, if you were to let me know when Captain Dacre arrives, I could be of any use as a go-between? Your father might listen to me more readily than to you—either of you," he added with a wry face.

"Is he not quite too good, Aunt Susan!" Lady Florence demanded of Miss Dacre as she walked home with her from the station.

"Quite too good for the treatment you gave him, my dear," was the prompt reply. "And so much better than the generality of the sex that I should strongly advise you not to measure Alan or anybody else of your acquaintance by the same standard."

Yes, he was quite too good; and yet, such is the perversity of human nature that—grateful though she was for his proffered assistance, relieved though she was by his forgiveness—she was not, altogether, wholly glad. It would have been more flattering to her vanity had he vowed that he could neither forgive nor forget. Perhaps, after all, that first pained look in his face was that for which she remembered him most kindly as she thought over all that had passed between them. She had taken him at his word, however, and she felt that if promised to write to him upon Alan's arrival, the man whose quarrel Lord St. Oban might be said to be espousing, was of all men the most likely to be able to do so.

"It was not merely because he was going to marry me—papa thought so much of him, you know," she explained to Miss Dacre. "He liked him long before there was any question of that. I don't know anybody whom papa looks up to so much. He thinks him so clever about all sorts of business and so upright in every way. I do believe he thought I was the luckiest girl in England. Poor dear papa!"

Miss Dacre looked up quickly and bit her lip. There were times,

though she was learning to love her, when the girl's tone jarred upon her inexpressibly—when it seemed to her that she took all that had happened with a flippancy which was incomprehensible. Sometimes she said as much.

On the present occasion she contented herself with an enquiry as to the actual source of Mr. Templeman's wealth.

"He has no profession—no calling—that I understand; but there are works or something, are there not? He is not a simple *bond fide* country gentleman, that is what I mean to say?"

"You mean that there is no question of an old family and hereditary acres," laughed Lady Florence, with a little contemptuous putting aside of any pretence in the matter. "I was to contribute the family and Mr. Templeman the fortune—that was well understood all along. But I don't think there are any works now. His father made a fortune out of iron; but there was a time, I believe, when iron did not pay, and old Mr. Templeman managed to get out of his. His son is what you call a capitalist. I don't understand it myself; but I believe he has all sorts of shares, and sits upon any number of committees, and is very rich indeed."

"And is Lady St. Oban as partial to him as your father?"

"She was," the girl replied. "But he is very vexed with her about all this wretched business, and if he really went so far as to speak his mind to her, the other day, she will not be in a hurry to forgive him. And she will prejudice papa. It is quite dreadful, Miss Dacre, the influence Aunt Emilia has over papa—far more than if she was his wife. You see he never expected to come to the title, and poor mamma and he were the simplest couple possible, so that it was most natural they should turn to Lady St. Oban, who had always had more voice in the management of everything than my uncle himself. And then, you see, my mother lived such a short time, and nobody could be kinder or more charming than Aunt Emilia can be when she likes, and everybody thought it such a great thing for my father to have his sister-in-law to bring us all up! Why, I believe society at large would cry shame upon papa if he were to take the part of anybody living against Lady St. Oban."

Here the conversation ended, and a few days later the two ladies brought their sojourn at Balmington to a close.

## CHAPTER IV.

THERE is a very pretty village, lying quite close to a grey cathedral town, in the heart of the richest scenery in the West of England. It is so close indeed that one is tempted to wonder how it came, in the beginning, by any separate name or separate identity, for the fine old trees in the cathedral-close look lovingly down on it, and it is possible, standing at the cottage-doors, on a calm summer afternoon, when the wind is in the right quarter, to hear the grand swell of the organ, as the people are being played out of church.

It was to the prettiest house in this pretty village, a Gothic cottage covered with creepers and perched upon the summit of a succession of little terraces, always gay with flowers, and always most beautifully kept—it was to this house, I say, that Miss Dacre, to whom as the child almost entirely of her own taste and fancy, it was dearer than words can say, brought Lady Florence.

The little place itself, its situation, and surroundings—the flowers and fragrance that crept in at the lower windows, and the exquisite panorama upon which the eye rested from the upper—the whole *coup d'œil*, in short, was so perfect and peaceful, that the most critical must needs have admired; and the girl, who had no inclination to be critical, was enchanted. From the pink and white nest, which had been so daintily decked out for herself, down to the queer-shaped little snugery, by the garden-door, which went by the name of the study, and was really, as its mistress confessed, nothing more nor less than a receptacle for rubbish, everything in and about the place commended itself to the favourable notice of the grand young lady from London.

And as there is no surer way of pleasing than to show pleasure, be sure the little establishment was not less satisfied with its guest than she with it.

"It is all so different from what you have been accustomed to, my dear," Miss Dacre said doubtfully. "I sometimes think it would have been better had I had you to stay with me long ago. People should always be quite sure what it is they are marrying to, and even if Alan were to blossom forth into a general some day when you are both getting grey, he would scarcely be able to give your ladyship —with a little mischievous emphasis on the last words—"a better home than this."

"But I shall not wish for any better. I was not so happy in my grand home when I had it, and I would rather have a little house, and look after it myself, than have a tribe of servants and a fine lady-housekeeper, who would always imagine she knew better than I did—indeed I would," cried the girl.

It was rather a comfort to her hostess privately that Mrs. Bishop



and Mrs. Dean, and the "Close" generally, were taking their pleasure elsewhere at this particular season.

Lady Florence had made herself just sufficiently conspicuous to take the bloom, so to say, off such innocent pleasure and triumph as the good lady might naturally have felt in introducing her, under any other circumstances, as her niece-elect. In some places and in some circles such an offence against the proprieties might have been condoned, but not in Oldchester.

When once Lady Florence Innes should have subsided into Lady Florence Dacre, it would be all well and good, but the less said or thought about her in the meantime the better.

So they kept very quiet, and watched the papers, and waited for Alan.

And all this time there was no word from the house in Berkeley Square. Florence had written to her father and to Nathalie, her next sister, who was, however, a good deal younger than herself, and had never had much in common with her; and she had written also more than once to Kirloch; but she had received no answer to any of these letters. Her "things" had been sent to her, as she had told Mr. Templeman, and had been stowed away, most of them, with no little difficulty, in one of the attics; and there had been a puzzled, distressed little letter from her maternal grandmother, who declined to accept any version but her favourite's own.

For Miss Dacre, as a matter of course, there was plenty to do after her absence from home—this to be renewed, that to be replaced, a variety of little things to be seen into, and of dropped stitches to be taken up; but for her young guest there were no such distractions. She worked and read, and did what she could to loosen the stiff keys of the pianoforte, and she took upon herself the replenishment of the flower-vases. But, after all, the one solitary object upon which all her thoughts were concentrated at this time was the homeward voyage of the *Orontes*.

It seemed to her an immense time on its way, although in reality it reached England a day sooner than they expected, and instead of the telegram, for which Miss Dacre was preparing herself, the first notification they received of its arrival was through the medium of the morning paper.

It was Lady Florence herself who read it out, and who, skimming the list of passengers for the name she was in search of, found this: "Captain Alan Dacre, 220th Rifles, and Mrs. Dacre."

If a bomb had suddenly exploded in the pretty little drawing-room, it could not have startled its occupants more.

"What!" exclaimed Miss Dacre, and then she gathered herself together, as it were, though she could not disguise the troubled expression of her face, and added quickly: "It is too ridiculous. There is some absurd mistake somewhere. Give me the paper, my dear."

"You can make nothing else of it, it is quite plain," the girl said quietly, as she complied with her companion's request, and pointed out the offending paragraph for her perusal, and then she walked to the open window a few paces farther off, and stood there in silence, with her back to Miss Dacre.

She stood quite still, and she was not crying, but her heart beat as it had never beat before in all her life, and her face burned as though the eyes of the universe were upon her.

Was it possible he had cared for her so little as this? And she—what an idiot she had been!

"My dear," said Miss Dacre almost timidly, unable to see her companion's face, and somewhat fearful as to the way in which she might be taking it, "you surely don't think there is anything in it? You cannot suppose for a moment that Alan would go and get married without saying a syllable about it in his letter to me, to say nothing of his engagement?"

"Ah! but he was released from his engagement. You wrote and told him what I never did—what I never had the heart to do. He was free, of course, and he must have taken advantage of his freedom. That is all. One has no right to blame him, only it has happened a little unfortunately for me, as I suppose I deserved it should," she added rather bitterly.

"I don't believe it; I shall not believe it till I see it," Miss Dacre maintained stoutly. "He will be here presently."

"He is here now, I believe," Lady Florence broke in in a voice which she could not quite steady, and as she turned from the window and came hurriedly forward into the room, her hostess, too, heard the rumble of wheels on the gravel outside.

It was as though the sound gave wings to the feet of the listeners. In another minute Miss Dacre was in the hall, standing at the door she had herself opened, ready, if it should really be he, to welcome her nephew to what was now the only home England held for him, whilst, with equal celerity, her guest flew upstairs to the sanctuary of her own room, or, to be quite accurate, to the portals of that sanctuary.

For the dainty little chamber lay conveniently close to the landing, and the girl would have been a very exceptional girl had

she not paused to try and distinguish the number of footsteps and voices in the hall below. See she could not, without being seen, and there seemed to be more clatter and commotion than would be made by the arrival of any one person, but the only strange voice she recognised was the one which was not strange in her ears at all, and she felt her heart beat more freely. Surely, if there were a Mrs. Dacre, she would be with him, and would be audible.

"My dear," Miss Dacre called from the foot of the staircase, after a couple of minutes.

"And then, you know," Lady Florence says, when she tells the story, "I felt sure it was all right. Nobody need ever talk to me about intuition after that, for I don't believe in it. I ought to have had an intuition that it was all wrong, and I had nothing of the sort. I went down to my fate, smiling."

She smiles now, saying it, but it was no smiling matter to her at the time. She ran down so happily and innocently, just as happily and innocently as her kind hostess had hastened to summon her the moment her own misgivings were set at rest.

"It is all a mistake, as I told you I was sure it must be," she exclaimed, taking the girl in her arms in an access of relief and delight, and kissing her. "There was a Mrs. Dacre on board, but she had nothing to do with Alan. It was too absurd, the mere idea of it. A strange niece at a moment's notice would not have been a pleasant surprise for the old aunt," Miss Dacre added with a soft little laugh of content. "But I think there is one in store for the nephew, which will be more to his liking."

She was standing, as she spoke, out in the hall, where she had waited for the girl to join her, and now, as she drew Lady Florence's arm through her own in a caressing way, which showed how much her guest had won upon her, she called Captain Dacre by name, and the young man, who had betaken himself to the drawing-room, came hastily forward to meet them.

"Oh, Alan, I am so glad! You never expected to see me here, did you?" Lady Florence exclaimed eagerly, both her hands outstretched, and her radiant face, all the more radiant for the clouds which had been so recently chased away from it, raised to his. It was an apparition and a greeting which, to a happy lover, would have conveyed the sweetest of surprises. There was the adored object suddenly and unexpectedly within reach, looking her brightest and loveliest, and overflowing with welcome! And there, too, was his aunt, showing by her attitude that no warmth of reciprocity on his part would be too warm for her approval. Even allowing for the shadow of misunderstanding or misrepresentation which had arisen between them in his absence, was it possible to misinterpret or to withstand the frank unequivocal delight with which she hailed the sight of him?

What was the matter with him? Even to the less sensitive ear of the looker-on, the ejaculation which escaped him as he saw who it was his aunt had brought in with her, bespoke a surprise which partook of dismay rather than pleasure, and was it—could it be possible?—they were simply shaking hands!

"No, indeed. You were the last person I should have expected to find here," the young man was saying in an odd voice. He was a fine young man, and had a handsome face, and—taking him as one generally found him—a gracious presence; but he stood now very stiff and straight, looking from the young lady to the elder one with an inquisitorial expression, which was new to their experience of him. "Perhaps," he added, after a brief silence, "you will be kind enough to read me the riddle, for I fear I shall never be clever enough to do it for myself."

His eyes addressed themselves to Miss Dacre, whose perplexity was rapidly giving place to annoyance. As for Lady Florence, she stood with her head thrown back and her eyes sparkling, a fine study of a beautiful young fury ready to spring.

That any man living should have dared to snub her as she had been snubbed, was a thing scarcely to be credited on the evidence of her senses. The enormity of it threw every other sensation, for the time being, into the shade. The insult, at first sight, outweighed the injury.

"Really, my dear Alan," Miss Dacre began with some asperity, "I don't understand the tone you are taking at all. Here is Lady Florence—"

"Oh, pray do not say anything about me; that is to say, about Captain Dacre's reception of me," the girl broke in hotly. "It is not worth discussion. The mistake was on my side, not on his. We will let it pass, if you please. But he has the right to an explanation. Perhaps it will be better for me to give it, as it is I who owe it," with a slight movement of her head away from him. "I believe Miss Dacre wrote you a letter some time since, about me?"

"She wrote me a letter, in which she alluded as a matter of condolence with me—not as a piece of news to me at all—to your approaching marriage. Is that the letter you mean?" he demanded with uncompromising directness. Of all the tones he could have adopted with her, it was the best for the preservation of her own

dignity and self-possession, and she felt it. Had he been gentler with her—had he shown signs of yielding or of compunction of any sort, the restraint she had put upon herself might have given way. As it was, she maintained the appearance of composure as perfectly as himself—of the two, perhaps more so.

"The intelligence Miss Dacre referred to," she said quietly, though she did not look at him as she spoke, and was playing nervously with her rings; "the intelligence of my engagement to Mr. Templeman was quite true. I did get engaged to him. You were at such a distance, and it was so uncertain when you would return, and I was not happy at home—in short, I allowed myself to be worried into it. I ought to have written to tell you, but I hated doing it, and so I put off—"

"Pardon me for a moment," the young man interrupted her to say, "you did not put off writing. I had a letter from you only the mail before I received my aunt's. You only put off telling the truth."

"It is scarcely polite to say that," she replied freezingly; "nor is it quite fair. I never wrote to you after it was a settled thing. If I never gave you the clue to any change in my feelings, it was because—" she paused, colouring deeply.

"Because?" he repeated interrogatively.

It was hard to say it, as things now stood between them, but she said it bravely:

"Because there never was any. I hated myself for being talked over. I liked Mr. Templeman very, very much—better, I suppose, than any girl ever liked a man who was being forced upon her, before—but I was not in love with him."

"You were not in love with him, but you were going to marry him, all the same? I cannot help it, Aunt Susan. You may think me a brute—I see it in your face; but it is the sort of thing you women may understand and make excuses for—I cannot."

"I think you had better finish it, after all," Lady Florence said quietly to Miss Dacre. "Perhaps you will not meet with so many interruptions."

"I won't interrupt you any more," Alan Dacre said quickly; "and I would rather have it from your own lips."

It was an effort to tell it him face to face, after the manner in which he had met her, and in which he was still bearing himself towards her, and her whole heart was crying out indignantly against him as she did it, but she went through with it, whilst Miss Dacre stood by, awaiting with an almost pitiable anxiety the upshot of it all. She was so fond of them both by this time, and so anxious they should understand each other and make friends, without more ado. And to think the mischief had all been made by a letter of hers! She had never been a great scribe. Assuredly, henceforth she would be less of one than ever.

"And that is how it is I am here," the girl wound up.

Almost involuntarily she drew herself up and shrank a step farther away from her lover—a step nearer Miss Dacre as she spoke. She was not ready for reconciliation and embraces—not yet, if ever. She need not have concerned herself. Apparently, Captain Dacre was equally unprepared for any such open demonstration. There had been no clearing up of his countenance, as he listened to the explanation, which, dryly as it was put, could not be rendered other than flattering to himself. The hardness of his expression did indeed soften, but it was not to rapture—not even to pleasure, it gave way. If ever a man's face spoke unmistakably of pain and perplexity, it was Alan Dacre's face just then.

"I am awfully sorry," he said at last. "It seems to have been a chapter of accidents all the way through, and I don't see the end of it yet. I am sorry I should have been such a bear to begin with—but frankly, I never was so 'taken to' in my life, and I think most fellows in my place would have felt a little sore."

"I am sure we both understand that—don't we, dear?" poor Miss Dacre said appealingly to Florence, but Florence made no answer. She felt there must be something coming, and she was waiting for it. Alan may have seen she was. At all events, he plunged in *medias res*.

"It is no use beating about the bush," he said desperately. "Nobody can be more sorry than I am that things should have gone so cross, but I could not possibly foresee what was going to happen, and I do not know that I can be said to be to blame. You asked me just now whether I was married, Aunt Susan. I am not married, as I told you, but I am engaged."

There was a moment's silence, broken only by a little cry of astonishment and dismay from Miss Dacre. Then Lady Florence took a step or two forward, and deftly slipping from her finger one of the rings she had been playing with whilst she told Alan Dacre the story of her engagement to Mr. Templeman, held it out to him.

"I do not know whether my ring will be as easily replaced as I have been," she said with a smile and a flush, "but I quite agree

that there is no blame to attach to you, and I hope, whoever the lady is, you will be very happy."

She did not wait for the answer, which, indeed, did not appear to be forthcoming, but walked quietly out of the room and upstairs, leaving Captain Alan to his aunt.

#### CHAPTER V.

"HE is coming, is he not, Flo?"

"Yes, dear, he is coming."

"You wrote to him yourself?"

"Yes, dear, I wrote to him myself."

"It was awfully good of you, Flo!" And the speaker, who was none other than Kiroloch—or, rather, the shadow of what Kiroloch had been on that bright summer day, when he was sent in the wake of Miss Dacre to the Bayswater boarding-house—made a faint motion of his lips towards his sister, which she, with tears in her eyes, stooped and obeyed.

It was nearly three months since that unpleasant little scene in Miss Dacre's drawing-room. It had been July then, it was the middle of October now, and these three months had been, perhaps, taken all in all, the hardest in Lady Florence's life. She had not, as she had been wont to say at Deepdene, been accustomed to a bed of roses at home, but there had never been any real trouble, as people who know life as it is understand trouble. She had never known what it was to be in a false position, exposed to ridicule or contempt, or to that pity which is akin to both, and she had never, since she had attained an age at which she could realise its gravity, either lost or been near to losing anyone who was dear to her. And now, within this brief space of time, she had experienced trouble of both these kinds.

As to that other trouble, which to some might have appeared the most disastrous of all—the loss of the lover for whom she had sacrificed so much—it weighed lightly enough in comparison with the rest.

She had been very fond of Alan Dacre, but her love for him had been born rather of his love for her, as he had taught her to believe in it, than of any special quality in himself. It was the same load-stone which had drawn her afterwards to Mr. Templeman. She had a nature, in short, more apt to respond to love than to lavish it unasked. That it is the finest sort of nature it would be rash to say, but it may be allowed that it is the happiest. At any rate, it was Lady Florence's, and it had come to the assistance of her pride now.

Alan Dacre could not have consoled her more effectually than by that rapid consolation of himself.

But the mortification had not been so easy to bear. It would have been hard even had the rest of the world been like Miss Dacre, all friendliness and sympathy; but there were so many who would be only too glad to join in the laugh against her. And there was no hope of the pitiful *dénouement* of her little romance passing unheeded. She had drawn the eyes of her world upon her too powerfully for any such escape from them now.

There had been all this to be contended with, though Fortune had so far favoured her that Lady St. Oban, having made arrangements for Homburg which, naturally, did not include her niece, her father had not hampered his forgiveness with any conditions as to her immediate return to the bosom of her family. She had gone direct from Deepdene to her grandmother's house in Midlandshire, and there she had been allowed to remain. For so much she had had reason to be grateful, but then there had come this last and worst trouble, all the harder to bear that for this, too, indirectly, it might be said she had herself to blame.

"If only I had never left home as I did, it would never have happened," she was crying out to herself now as her eyes rested, through a mist of tears, on the white, wasted face, and her hand trembled in the boy's hot hold. And, indeed, humanly speaking, it was only too true, for had things gone smoothly, there would have been no such impatient longing to see his sister aroused in the lad's heart as to lead him to take French leave of his "crammer," one day, to go in quest of her! That there should be no kind of conveyance at the little wayside station at which he alighted, and that he should be overtaken by a thunderstorm and drenched to the skin before he arrived at the Court—these were fortuitous circumstances, over which nobody had any control; but that he should fall so dangerously ill of the effects of the exposure and excitement as to be pronounced in peril of his life, this did seem to Lady Florence as a direct visitation of her sins upon her.

The very silence of those about her as to her share in the catastrophe—the unusual gentleness of Lord St. Oban, summoned in hot haste from his own daily attendance at the Elisabethen Brunnen to the sick-bed of his son—the pitiful patience of the lad himself—all these things made it worse for her.

And yesterday the doctor had told her that any wish he expressed that could, by any possibility, be granted, must be.

There was only one, and the gratification of it did not depend upon Lady Florence; yet the mere effort to procure it for him cost her something.

"I must see Templeman; I shall not be right till I've seen Templeman," had been his constant cry, and there had been no pacifying him until the letter was written. It could only have reached its destination this morning, and already they had received a telegram to the effect that its recipient would be with them in the afternoon.

"Just like him—dear old fellow!" Kirloch sighed out happily. He was not in any pain to speak of now; the inflammation, which had threatened his life in the beginning, had subsided by this. What they feared now was the terrible weakness it had left behind, and the persistent refusal of nourishment. "I can't touch it—it is no good," the boy would say, turning now from one delicacy, now from another. "It makes me worse, worrying me. I would, if I could, just to please you all, but I can't."

"I have not liked to say it to any of the family, sir, but I cannot help thinking there is something on his mind," the nurse had remarked to the doctor, the day before, and the doctor had addressed himself at once to her who was most in the patient's confidence.

But Florence knew of nothing that either was or was likely to be on Kirloch's mind.

She thought of it now, though, as she sat watching him, and, "Kirloch," she said suddenly, "I have been wondering. Was there any special reason for your wishing to see Mr. Templeman so much?"

The boy turned his head away languidly, and without looking at her.

"No," he replied, "none—at least, that concerns you. I wanted to see him because—because I like him, I suppose," with a wretched little attempt at a laugh.

"And a very good reason, dear," Florence said cheerfully; but it was not the reason, and she knew it.

The only comfort was that he had said distinctly it did not concern her, and he would not, she knew, have told her a direct untruth.

"Flo," he asked presently, after so long a silence that she had thought him asleep, "when is that snob of a Dacre going to get married?"

"I don't know. I have not heard very lately from Miss Dacre. And, Kirloch dear, it is not kind to call him a snob."

"But he is, you know—he 'behaved as sich.' Now, Templeman would never have done that kind of thing—couldn't if he'd tried. He was in love, you see—not 'shamming.'"

"The real thing, dear?" his sister said with a forced laugh. "Such as you mean to go in for yourself, by-and-by?"

There was no immediate answer, but presently Kirloch said quietly:

"The kind of thing I should have gone in for some day, perhaps, if I had got better; but I don't think I am going to get better—that is just it, Flo."

"But, Kirloch, dear boy, why?"

People who loved and admired Lady Florence—and there were a good many who did, in spite of her faults—said that what was wanting to her bright, beautiful personality was tenderness. Had they seen and heard her at that moment, they would have acknowledged that if it was not discernible so often as it might have been, it was none the less there. As for Kirloch, he had always known it. In all his boyish troubles he had been accustomed to come to her, and how many of them had been soothed by her sympathy, even when she had been powerless to help him really out of them, nobody else knew. He was not happy in having a secret from her now, but had he told her what he really wanted with his friend, she would never have sent for him, he thought, and he did want him so badly.

"I don't know why," he said, in answer to her question, "only I feel as if I were just drifting away, and there was nothing to catch at to keep me. And I don't seem to care. I used to think I should care awfully, when the time came for me to die, but somehow now I don't feel as if I should. It seems as if it would be too much trouble to get well."

His sister stooped down and kissed him.

"My poor boy, that is only because you are so weak," she said. "I suppose everybody who has been very ill feels like that at first. And you must not talk about not caring. It would break papa's heart to hear you say that you did not care!"

The lad moved uneasily on his pillows, and the feverish flush on his cheeks deepened.

"He has Ralph and Charlie," he murmured, "and they'll never be the trouble I have been. They're ever so much steadier. I have always been out of one hole into another, Flo."

"You have been no worse than other boys, dear, only you have

been lying here thinking of it, and you know papa is prouder of you than of all the rest of us put together. Oh, Kirloch, what did I say?" for something in these last words had touched a tender spot in the lad's heart, and he was sobbing piteously. It needed all the tact and tenderness she was mistress of to calm and compose him, but the evil might almost have been said to work its own cure, for the exhaustion procured him what nothing of late had succeeded in doing—a few hours' quiet sleep.

Poor Lady Florence! It was, perhaps, as well for her that she had as little time to think of herself just then, as other people had to think of her. It did indeed occur to Lord St. Oban, even in the midst of his anxiety for his son, that there would be a little awkwardness in the meeting between his daughter and the gentleman from whom, on the day appointed for their nuptials, she had seen fit to run away, and it was not without a certain relief, though with considerable surprise, that he heard of the interview which had chanced between them in the meantime. It was only right, Florence felt, that he should know all, though, but for Mr. Templeman's good offices as a mediator, the occasion had been wanting, and she had found it impossible to write and tell him.

"Well, it is all over and done with, and there's enough for us all to think about just now, without raking it up again," the earl said with a sigh; "but if ever you get such another chance again, I will forgive you. What is it the boy wants with Templeman?" he added suddenly. "It is not that he has got low about himself, and thinks—"

A little huskiness came into his voice and stopped him.

He had his face turned away from Florence, and she did not venture to look up at him, but she took the hand that was nearest to her in both her own, and fondled it.

"No, father," she said gently, "I don't know why he is so anxious to see Mr. Templeman, but I do not think it is for that."

A little later in the day, the guest, whose advent was awaited with such varied sentiments, came. If there had been apparent to him any strangeness in the fact of his having been summoned, there was nothing in his manner to betray it. It had been very good of him, he was told, to come so far to humour the whim of a sick boy.

"I could have done no less," he said, "had he been no more to me than any other boy, and he is much more. Had I known how ill he was I should not have waited to be sent for, even to a strange house."

As for Kirloch, he made no apologies. Only he held out his poor thin hand with a faint, "I am so glad!"

"That is all right, old fellow," said the other cheerily, and then they left them alone.

"But I don't want to hear all about it," Mr. Templeman was saying as he sat by the lad's bedside a little later on. "You can tell me anything you like by-and-by. All I want to know now is the man's name and address, and how much it comes to altogether. He shall be as happy as his money can make him in the course of to-morrow. Not that that will be very happy—he'll have a bad quarter of an hour first."

Kirloch looked up at him with a little languid surprise.

"You don't mean to say you are going to him yourself—a cad like that? And it won't be of any use," he added ingenuously. "He won't take a penny off, not if you jaw ever so!"

"Of course he won't," the other replied equably. "But he will think twice perhaps before he swindles any other youngster of your age to the same tune again. How much do you say, my boy?" and he produced his pocket-book.

"It does seem a lot," Kirloch observed in his weak voice as he watched his friend make the entry. "And I knew all along I had no right to ask you. But I could not rest thinking of it. When I lay tossing here night after night, the thought of it was like a nightmare. I knew if I were to make a clean breast of it to the governor, he'd pay it without a word. It was not the fear of anything he would have said to me, but I had promised him so faithfully—I could not tell him I had broken my word; and then," the boy added with a half sob, "for it to come round to him afterwards when there would be nobody to explain it, that would have been worse."

Mr. Templeman had finished his memorandum, and put by his pocket-book.

"Now," he said quietly, "suppose we talk sense. I sleep here to-night. Your grandmother has been good enough to offer me a bed, and anyhow I should not have returned to-day. But I shall tell your father I have to be in town to-morrow, and I shall suggest—if you wish it, as I suppose you do—that I run down again the day after. You may be as sure now as you will be then that it is all settled and right, and that you need not give another thought to it; but I shall come back, nevertheless, if only to see that you are obeying orders."

"I'll do anything you like," murmured the boy—"anything."

"Then, in the first place, make up your mind to get well. It

There was a lingering emphasis on the two last words which told Lady Florence, before he said another syllable, whom it was he wished to substitute for Miss Dacre. Her consciousness showed itself in her



face—in the sudden droop of her head—perhaps, most of all, in the silence in which she let his words, as it were, pass by her. And he knew how to interpret it.

"You know what I mean," he said, taking her hands in his, and looking lovingly down at the bowed golden head; "will it be too hard away out of the difficulty to let me take you?"

And so, at last, it all ended happily, and nowhere was the news received more gladly than at Deepdene, where the kind heart of the mistress had never ceased yearning after the wayward, impulsive girl she had learned to love. Indeed, it is more than doubtful whether Miss Dacre would have assisted with any heartfelt pleasure at Captain Alan's grand wedding with his heiress, had not the tidings of that quieter and less ostentatious ceremony reached her before. For Lady Florence never made up to the guests she had so cruelly disappointed in the summer, for the shabby trick she had played them, that is to say, not in the matter of a wedding-breakfast. How she has done it since—with balls and dinners, with garden-parties and picnics, with "small and earlies" and "Cinderellas," and all the rest of it, let Society say!

## The Ghost on the Canvas.

By W. W. FENN.

"HARK! There! Listen! That was the same strange noise we heard more than a week ago. I was in hopes that we should not be troubled with it again. What can it be?"

"Surely, Walter, there is someone in the studio? Just go very softly, and peep over the gallery."

"What is the use of that? The place is pitch dark, for I drew the blind across over the top light before I came out of the room, and as to there being any one there, that's impossible, for no one was there when I left, and I know the door into the garden was fast locked and bolted inside then, and certainly no one has gone through this room since we have been sitting here. There is no other way into the studio."

"Then the noise must come from rats under the floor."

"Nonsense, my dear; rats, whether under the floor or over the floor, don't push up the rack of the easel, and that is what the noise was like."

"Perhaps the catch slipped, and let it drop of its own accord."

"Really, Gertrude, you are too foolish! Did I not say the rack was being pushed up, not down, and the catch would not let it slip up of its own accord. There it is again; don't you hear? plainly it is as if someone was pushing up the rack. By Jove! this is quite unpleasant—quite uncanny; I don't like it!"

"No more do I, Walter. Pray go and look. No, don't take a light—do as I say; creep very softly—open the door quietly, and look over the gallery."

The young man, to whom these words were addressed by a tall slim girl, rose from the table at which the two speakers were sitting, and went towards a door at the farther end of the long low room. She also rose and followed him.

At the door they both paused and listened intently; now with anxious, eager, and somewhat pallid faces, for the sound which had disturbed them was repeated for a moment. He was about to lay his hand on the handle when she laid hers on his arm as if to arrest him, saying, as she did so, in a hurried whisper:

"No, no! you had better not, perhaps! Let us call up the old man—old Gates who has been left in charge of the place; possibly he can tell us what the noise comes from; he may know all about it."

"Foolish child, don't be nervous, we can solve this mystery without old Gates's assistance. We should indeed look like a couple of idiots if we called the old fellow up at this hour about a matter upon which we can satisfy ourselves in a moment. But I must have a light, it's nonsense attempting to look into the place in the dark, and the fog is almost as thick inside the house as out—here, give me the lamp."

The young lady turned back to the table evidently with the intention of doing his bidding, but he, apparently impatient of delay, opened the door and stepped through on to the gallery upon which it gave.

At the moment she took the lamp from the table, a wild exclamation, half of surprise and half of fear, from the young man so startled her, that she let fall the light from her hand upon the floor, where it instantly went out, and the whole room was in utter darkness, save for a faint flicker from the fire in the grate before which were snugly arranged the table and chairs.

"Never mind the light, Gerty," said the man in a tremulous undertone; "come here—come towards me, give me your hand—

there, so, come and look for yourself that you may tell me I am not dreaming or going out of my mind."

Groping her way to him in the obscurity, the two, clinging close together, went softly out on to the gallery by the door through which he had stepped back into the room when he made his first exclamation—an exclamation not without a touch of terror in its tone.

It was a curiously constructed building this, one of several so-called "Residential Studios," standing not a hundred miles from St. John's Wood. The main part of it consisted naturally of the painting room, a lofty and spacious apartment rising uninterruptedly from the floor above the basement to the roof, save where a gallery ran round two sides of it, which was approached by a flight of stairs in one corner of the room, and was accessible also from the door opening out of the sitting-room. This, with bed-chamber attached, extended the full length of the building, and was parallel consequently with the studio. Beneath this sitting-room were the kitchen, servants' apartments, etc., altogether a most admirably and practically designed place for its purpose, simply but artistically decorated, the utmost being made of all the beams, joists, and woodwork necessary in its construction. A picturesque projecting porch with a small ante-room led into the studio through a covered way from the main entrance-gate in the wall, which surrounded the whole block, together with a fair proportion of lawn and garden-ground.

Walter Stilwood and his young wife Gertrude were not the permanent tenants of this residence, but were only occupying it during the temporary absence of its owner, Mark Ormshed, who, it may be guessed, was, like Stilwood, an artist. He had gone to Rome for the winter, and his friend Walter, having but lately and rather suddenly rushed into the bonds of matrimony, had gleefully accepted the offer of this abode free of charge for three or four months, while he should have time to look round for a place of his own.

The happy pair had been settled in it about a fortnight when the above conversation occurred. Except for the old caretaker, referred to as Gates, who acted as major-domo and general servant to Mark Ormshed, there was no one in the place but themselves. Thus the strangeness of the noise which had so startled them became additionally impressive from the sense of loneliness by which they were surrounded. Moreover, it was deep winter-time, with a frosty fog which had settled down as night came on, making itself felt through the very walls, to say nothing of its having penetrated into the rooms through every crack and cranny, whilst it muffled all outside sounds, and created a chilly silence by no means reassuring to the nervous. Indeed, at the best of times there was no traffic passing near, for the building stood at the bottom of a road through which there was no thoroughfare for vehicles. And now at eleven o'clock on this cold foggy winter's night, not a creature was abroad, not a sound broke the deep stillness during those intervals of the talk in which the young couple were engaged when the strange noise in the adjacent studio suddenly scared them well-nigh out of their wits.

They were as comely a looking pair of newly-married people as might be seen in a day's march. He, a tall, athletic man about seven-and-twenty, with even and regular, if not exactly well-proportioned features, with intelligent brown eyes, short, crisp, curly hair, soft beard and moustache of similar tone. She was very much of the same style of face and figure—a feminine edition of the man, so much so, in fact, that they might have passed for brother and sister—like having, as it seemed, been attracted by like in this instance. Walter Stilwood had been, since he was quite a lad, the intimate friend and *protégé* of the elder man, Mark Ormshed, to whom the studio belonged, and who, albeit a figure-painter, had directed the studies of the younger, who followed the landscape branch of art.

Gertrude Craven had crossed the path of these two friends much about the same time, and, unknown to each other, had inspired them both with a deep affection for her. Walter Stilwood had boldly, and, as it was generally held, rashly spoken, and had at once been accepted. Mark Ormshed, more cautious, had hesitated until it was too late, and had then found, to his dismay, that his rival and the cause of his rejection was none other than his dearest friend. Generous and noble-hearted, Ormshed, although bitterly disappointed and unhappy, never for one moment allowed any rancorous jealousy to affect his friendship for Stilwood; but he felt he could not, for the present, breathe the same atmosphere with him, nor stay to witness the young landscape-painter's happiness.

"I am going away, old boy," he said; "I have long intended to spend a winter in Rome, and you can't do better than occupy my quarters meanwhile. You are not too flush of coin, and it will give you time to turn round. Although the rooms are more



fit for a bachelor than a married man, still you will be able to manage, and the studio is all you can want."

So it fell out, luckily for Walter, for there was too much truth in Ormshed's reference to the condition of his friend's finances. He rather understated it when he said he was not too flush of coin, the fact being that, although the landscape-painter's prospects were good, and he promised to make a name in his art, at this period he was sorely pressed for ready money. Certain Christmas bills were likely soon to demand his attention, and the expenses incurred by his matrimonial arrangements (he had only been married three months) had run away with most of his spare cash. Moreover, like most of the brethren of the brush, he was not a good man of business, but of a nervous, sensitive, highly-strung temperament; scrupulously conscientious in his work, very diffident about his own powers, and with that deep love for his profession which makes it the paramount object of life, and places it far before and above all considerations of profit. Impulsive, too, he was, of course, and equally, too, of course, at times subject to fits of great depression, which, if they lasted long, would incapacitate him for painting for days together. Nevertheless, as I have said, his prospects were good, and there was no doubt he would do well, if he could keep his head above water during these early days of his upward struggle for fame. It would be all right, his friend said, if the steed did not starve while the grass was growing. Meanwhile, in order that he should not starve, a distinguished collector, whose attention had been called to him, gave him an important commission to execute, during the winter, from one of the batch of summer sketches he had brought home. Besides the immediate advantage of this commission the connection was likely to prove very remunerative. The gentleman in question, however, was extremely punctilious and exacting in all his dealings; and Stilwood was warned that, whatever he did, he must not fail to perform any promise he made as to the time when the picture would be finished and ready for delivery. "If you disappoint old Sir Digby," he had been told, "and don't let him have the picture on the very day he wants it and settles to have it, he very likely won't have it at all. He is a man of business, although a baronet, and he expects everyone with whom he deals to be the same."

Apart from a certain degree of nervousness which such conditions would be likely to excite in a man of Stilwood's disposition, the picture itself was causing him a great deal of anxiety, owing to the important part figures were to play in it.

The canvas was upon the easel on this particular night, and, just prior to the disturbance caused by the mysterious noise in the studio, Walter had been expressing his anxieties to his wife as they sat cosily before the fire regretting Ormshed's absence.

"If old Mark were within hail, Gertrude," he had said, "he would soon help me over the stile. You see I have never studied the figure sufficiently to be able to draw it on a large scale quite accurately, especially when only partially draped in classical robes, such as wood-nymphs are supposed to wear. If I cannot make a better hand of it than I have been doing for the last two days, I shall never get the picture finished according to my promise to Sir Digby Raikes, and then perhaps he won't have it. Certainly I can't ask the man for a cheque unless I am prepared to deliver the picture, and we shall want the money badly enough by that time; we are now within only ten days of the appointed date, and that principal figure of the wood-nymph in the foreground is as far from being finished as ever."

"Oh, have confidence in yourself, Walter, in your own powers," his wife had replied. "The spirit of Mr. Ormshed's genius ought to haunt his studio, and I am sure you ought to be imbued with it, loving him as you do, and working here under his very roof. I am sure he would gladly help you if he could transport himself hither for an hour or two, but as that is impossible, you must trust, as I say, to getting an inspiration from his spirit—in that sense I believe in spirits. What does inspiration mean, if not the influence of one spirit over another?"

"Ah, Gerty, it's all very well for you to talk, but spirits don't teach anatomy, and although I have had a model now for three days, I cannot get her pose properly, or the proportions of her figure. No! I want old Mark here just to take a piece of chalk in his hand, and show me the way the figure should come against the trunk of the tree, and her proper action and expression as she uplifts her fairy-like voice, and leads the chorus of her sisters in 'The Wood Nymph's Hymn to the Rising Sun.' Really I don't know what will become of us," the young artist had added moodily after a pause, "if I fail to complete my bargain as to time; it is becoming serious."

Then, in spite of the bright smiles, and the cheerful, coaxing, affectionate encouragement of his pretty wife, he sank into one of his fits of dejection and silence—a state from which it probably would have been difficult to arouse him for the remainder of the

evening, had not the unaccountable noise in the studio done so pretty effectually a very few minutes afterwards.

Whatever might have been the duration of this dejected mood, we have seen that it vanished promptly in the excitement which the noises caused.

If the sound had been startling, still more so must have been the sight which met the eyes of husband and wife, as clinging close to each other, Walter a little in advance, they crept from the darkness of their sitting-room on to the gallery, and cautiously and nervously peered over the high balustrade down into the studio.

Instead of the impenetrable gloom with which they might reasonably have expected to have been met, the whole space was softly illuminated. The fog which pervaded the inside as much as the outside of the house, instead of adding to the obscurity, had become apparently the medium for lighting up the apartment. Dense still, it nevertheless had assumed an unexpected silvery whiteness which rendered objects visible through it, although in a soft and subdued manner. The outlines of the walls and ceiling, the trophies of armour, the draperies, the sketches and pictures, and the multifarious decorations, together with the easels and canvases upon them, were all broken and dimmed, but were still palpably recognisable for what they were.

The first impression created by this strange and unlooked-for transformation-scene must have been that the large central gas-light had been turned on and ignited, although in that case it would hardly have lighted up the mist in the higher parts of the room, owing to the strong reflectors by which on two sides it was shrouded for the purpose of casting its full rays upon any given spot.

No; the illumination was not due to any such cause, for the lantern with its reflectors was to be clearly seen hanging in its place, unlighted, and telling as a dark object in the midst of the general iridescence. What then could have caused it? Who could have produced it, and by what means?

For a while the two startled beholders stood looking through the brilliant obscurity, if I may so call it, without interchanging more than monosyllables of wonder and alarm, and without discussing whence the light proceeded. Presently, however, they simultaneously saw the space immediately in front of the picture on which Walter was working, and which was giving him so much disquiet, grow more and more brilliant, whilst at the same time there appeared gradually to emerge from the light itself the figure of a man.

Like other objects, however, and in spite of the increased illumination, the outline and substance of the form looked blurred and undefined, so that it was not possible to say how he was dressed, or what he was like. Indeed, the back of the figure was towards the awe-struck spectators, so that under no circumstances could his features have been visible to them. The whole form was so vague, in fact, and, as it were, so semi-transparent, that it did not bear the aspect of reality for one moment. It seemed to be nothing more tangible than a wreath of denser mist which had become endowed with human shape.

Not, therefore, deceived for a moment into the belief that they were gazing at a reality—at an actual human being—the young painter and his wife accepted the only alternative left, and recognised with increasing feelings of terror the fact that they were in the presence of a weird and marvellous spiritual manifestation.

The wife, whose presence of mind seemed to be steadier than her husband's, although she trembled and clung to him convulsively, whispered to him the impression which was now dawning upon her, as, intently watching, she beheld the form assume the air and action of some one at work on the picture.

"See, Walter, see! it extends its arms," she said. "One hand is moving the easel rack." And the click of the spring and bolt, plainly recognisable as the noise which had originally attracted their attention to the room, proved the truth of her words.

"And see, the other hand holds a brush—no, not a brush, it is not long enough—it is about to touch upon the canvas. Ah, but it is all so dim, so obscure one cannot discern what it does. One cannot make out even the picture sufficiently to see what part it works on."

"Great powers!" exclaimed the young man, his voice scarcely audible, although his lips were close to the woman's ear, "what can it mean? Are we both in some horrible dream? It is not a reality; it is either a trick or something supernatural."

"Yes," she replied, "it is a vision; but one with a purpose—with a meaning. Look again; now it grows plainer, and, as I live, the figure takes the semblance of Mark Ormshed! It is his spirit revealing itself to us—to you, to inspire you with courage and self-reliance. I had no belief in such things till now. It is no trick; we both see it, we cannot both be deceived. Look again!"

"Yes," answered her husband, "it appears now as it did when I first saw it, when I first looked into the room. It was the thought that it was Mark himself which so startled me then and made me cry out as I did."

The form by this time had taken on it a much more substantial shape than hitherto. Its proportions, its actions, its one extended hand particularly had become remarkably plain. The working of the fingers as they held a port-crayon was quite visible, and although the surface of the canvas was still partially obscured, by degrees this even became more visible, and the two watchers saw that it was on that critical figure of the wood-nymph that the hand was engaged.

How many minutes this phase of the mysterious manifestation lasted, neither of these two perplexed and troubled gazers were ever able to say, but it was sufficiently long for the spectacle to have been indelibly fixed in their memories, and no common-sense or sceptical argument can ever erase their belief that they actually beheld what has here been described. The young painter can point in proof of its veracity to the results—results which he maintains he never could have reached had not he and his wife seen what they did. For at last that puzzling and important feature of the picture stood out before them clearly and completely indicated by the white chalk lines. The pose and action had been roughly, but perfectly drawn, and so unmistakably designed and arranged in the right place by the implement in that spectral hand, that Walter, in an enthusiasm of excitement which for the time mastered his surprise and breathless agitation, exclaimed:

"There, there, that is what I wanted; the exact thing. That is Mark's touch and knowledge. No other man could have so readily shown me what was necessary. Oh, if those lines will but last upon the canvas and not fade with the rest of the shadows, my difficulty is over. But ah, Gerty, the light dies out; see, see, his form is melting into the thin air of which it was composed. He is gone!"

Even while these words were on the painter's lips the room had darkened, and, as the last syllable was uttered, all was once more shrouded in deep obscurity. Still trembling from head to foot, and still holding to each other, husband and wife moved away slowly towards the sitting-room, where the flickering fire, bursting at that moment into a brighter flame, brought them back into the region of realities. Then for a while, after re-kindling the lamp, they stood gazing at each other like people suddenly aroused from sleep. They rubbed their eyes, and asked had they been dreaming? Was it all a wild hallucination begotten in the darkness of the terror which the sound had caused?

"No, no, Gerty," at length went on Stilwood; "as you said, we cannot both have dreamt the same dream simultaneously, and that it was no hallucination I will prove, ay, and at once. Let me but pull myself together for a minute, and I will light the gas in the studio, and go to work at that figure now this moment. Whether the lines are on the canvas still, or not, it matters little. I see my way to it exactly; I see in my mind's eye exactly where and how the wood-nymph should come. The arrangement and the action are firmly fixed in my memory. I dare not sleep ere I fix them on the canvas."

Acting on the impulse, as was his custom, he took a candle, and full of enthusiasm he went boldly out on to the gallery, and so down into the painting-room, again followed by his wife. All nervousness had disappeared from them both, for Gertrude was always a sharer and sympathiser in her husband's moods. Curiosity to see if indeed any marks were left upon the picture dominated for a moment all other emotions as Walter held up the light close to the canvas. In justice to their common-sense I must state that in recounting their strange experience they declare that they neither of them expected to find the slightest sign of any chalk-marks. In this they were perfectly right; the unlucky figure of the wood-nymph remained in exactly the condition of unsatisfactory incompleteness in which the painter had left it when he last worked on it.

"No, of course," murmured his wife, "it was all the baseless fabric of a vision, as much as if it had been summoned up by Prospero, and the strangest part of it is that I seemed to have felt conscious of this almost from the moment we came on to the gallery. I don't pretend to understand these things, but if what we saw was but a supernatural manifestation to our eyes, the noise of the easel was equally so to our ears—the one was no more a reality, in the strict sense of the word, than the other. Ah, it was very wonderful, and I am half bewildered still—but there, try, Walter, try if you can turn it all to good account."

She had been lighting the gas and the stove while speaking, and her husband was already dexterously beginning to rearrange the composition of the wood-nymph. Then Gertrude sat down beside him after her common habit, and throughout the whole of

that chill winter's night the painter laboured with more than his usual enthusiasm, until, by the time dawn had broken, he had so followed the lines indicated by the miraculous apparition of his friend, and had so fixed the design upon the canvas, that he rose, saying:

"There, Gerty, it is safe now; I have no fear of not getting it right. I only want you to sit as the model for a few hours when daylight comes, and the picture is finished—thanks to dear old Mark. Ah, I wonder where he is at this moment."

The thought appeared to revive in its full force the consciousness of the strange means by which his friend's help had been vouchsafed. During his labour the painter's mind had been so filled with the practical and technical execution of his task, and his enthusiasm for its completion had so possessed him, that he forgot all else; but now he seemed struck with a full sense of the remarkable means by which he had received the unexpected inspiration.

"Good Heavens!" he said suddenly; "I hope nothing has happened to Mark, and that this visitation does not forebode evil to him. One has heard of apparitions of absent friends appearing to those they love at critical moments in their lives—I never thought of this till now. You know he has always been a believer in what is vulgarly called spiritualism, or at least in the existence of forces which our finite senses do not enable us wholly to understand. He has often declared that he could project his mind and influence upon people whom he cared for, if he concentrated his thoughts upon them resolutely. I remember he has said that he would some day show me that he had this power, and he has now made good his words. I used to laugh at his dreamy fancies, and chaff about these 'occult forces'; I disbelieved in them, but I can do so no longer now; unless—unless we have been the dupes of some practical joke."

"That is out of the question," replied his wife, as pursuing their talk later on, the two sat at breakfast; "a coarse and vulgar practical joke would not have given you the inspiration which will enable you to keep your promise to Sir Digby Raikes; no, dismiss that idea."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of old Gates, the servant, who handed Stilwood a letter, saying, "The postman, sir."

In an instant, Stilwood recognised the handwriting of Mark Ormshed.

"Stranger, and stranger," he cried to his wife; "this is the first time Mark has written since he left, and that the letter should reach us this morning of all others is more than a mere coincidence, depend upon it."

Needless to say they opened and read it together. Its contents saddened them, whilst adding more and more to the excitement under which they yet laboured.

The beginning of the letter only, and its address, were in the well-known hand; it had been ended abruptly by a stranger.

Mark had reached Rome, he said, safely; but within a week of his arrival he had been attacked by a slight fever, and was obliged to keep his bed, from which he was then writing.

"I shall be all right in a few days, I hope, old boy," he went on, "but at present I am very seedy. Never mind, this confinement to my room offers a good opportunity for sending you a few lines. But for it you might have been weeks without hearing from me, for you know I am a bad correspondent at the best of times, and amidst the allurements of this city I should have tried to forget you and the old days for a while, anxious though I am to hear how you are progressing with your commission for old Sir Digby. Indeed, I have been thinking very much about this and the consequences it may exercise over your future. I suppose it is due to my illness, but I feel depressed on your account, and am haunted by nervous fears that you will not get the picture completed in time. I am afraid the figures being so important will bother you, and I heartily wish I could be near to lend you a hand, but as—"

This was all that the artist himself had written. The stranger had then taken up the pen and thus explained the situation:

"DEAR SIR,

"You will be sorry to hear that Mr. Ormshed continues seriously ill; not, I trust, sufficiently so to give his friends any alarm for the ultimate result, but at present he is delirious, and whilst I, with another friend have been nursing him, we found the envelope in which we enclose this, together with the commencement of the letter to you, which we also send, lying by the side of his bed next the wall, where it had fallen doubtless when he found himself too ill to continue it, and where for many days it escaped our observation. You being, as is evidently the case, a dear and valued friend of Mr. Ormshed's, my venturing to forward his uncompleted letter will need, I trust, no apology,

especially as your name and that of, I presume, Mrs. Stilwood, have been constantly on his lips during the wanderings of his mind. He is perpetually speaking of you, and appears to be distressed and anxious (as, indeed, he says he is in his letter) to learn how some especial picture, on which you are engaged, is progressing; it is the one subject to which his distempered brain for ever reverts. The doctors tell me that we may expect another four or five days will bring him through this stage of the fever, and they suggest that if you would write to him as soon as possible, your letter would reach him about the time we may look for a restoration of his reason, and if, happily, you should be able to give a favourable report of your progress with the picture, it might accelerate the recovery, and allay the distress of mind from which he is suffering. Meanwhile, I will keep you informed how he is going on.

"Believe me, dear Sir,  
 "Yours very truly,  
 "J. C. WARREN."

The date of Mark's portion of this communication was the 21st of November, whilst that of Mr. Warren's was the 30th, showing that it was during that interval that the writing had lain *perdu*. As Walter arrived at these facts he said slowly:

"And we are now at the 5th of December. Please God then, by this time the poor dear fellow is recovering, and last night, perhaps, he came to himself again, and caring for me and for you as he does, his spirit, annihilating all space, was enabled, as it passed from the wild dreamland of delirium to that of reality, to visit us, and, by its loving influence, to give me the much-needed aid. Any way, that which we have seen and what he has suffered are linked together by those mysterious forces in which he believed, and which defy human explanation. Dear old Mark, what a friend he is!" continued the young painter, his eyes moistening with the recollection; "to think that he should have had us so perpetually in his mind! Ah well! It is not to be wondered at, perhaps, Gerty, seeing how doubly bound he is to us—friendship and love—love and friendship hand-in-hand—what human feelings, what bonds so strong? And to these it is that we owe the help I have had. Yes, I feared all was not well with him. Oh, let us trust there will be nothing worse yet to come. I shall know no peace until I hear from this Mr. Warren again. But I will write at once as he desires, and as the doctors suggest. Although my letter will not be in time to reach him quite on the threshold of his returning reason, it will reassure him and let him know the good work his deep sympathy has wrought—the power his will has had over mine, the influence his genius has exercised upon my clumsy hand. Why, it must have been just about the time he was taken ill and when he says he was thinking so much of us that we first heard that sound in the studio," added Walter as he re-examined the letter and its dates. "Yes, the dream-spirit, not then actually released from reason, only hovered round us—it really could not, I suppose, manifest itself completely to our eyes until divorced entirely from his prostrate body. This is how he would argue and explain these revelations, I know. I have heard him talk in this fashion often and often. But let me lose no more time in speculation, let me write to him at once."

The letter was sent, and ten days later, and when the landscape-painter had the satisfaction of regarding "The Wood Nymph's Hymn to the Rising Sun" as a completed work, he had the additional delight of receiving an answer from Mark Ormshed himself. He announced his convalescence, and the gratification which his friend's account of that mysterious night in the studio with its results had given him.

"You are right in all your conclusions, Walter," continued the writer, "it was my dream-spirit you and your dear wife beheld. When the delirium of the fever overtook me my thoughts were concentrated on you; when it left me, you and yours alone possessed my mind. My first conscious ideas turned upon the aid I felt you wanted; and even during the interval preceding the recovery of my senses, my wandering words, as you have been told, were wholly of you. It would have been strange if you had not felt the influence of all this concentrated will of mine and my desire to help you. I remember vaguely that at intervals I felt I was with you; that I could read your thoughts, your hopes and fears, and that if my friendship was worth anything it would, in order to guide your brush, override distance, time, and all material obstacles. I have argued with you on these matters, you know, scores of times; you have called it rhodomontade—perhaps you will still be inclined to do so—perhaps it is; but would you have been able to have finished your picture had I not believed that I could bring the influence of my will to bear upon your hand?"

Sir Digby Raikes was a retired physician and bachelor, living

in one of the semi-classic mansions which adorn the east side of Regent's Park.

His tastes were artistic, and he indulged them to the utmost. He had a small gallery full of choice examples of his favourite artists—and his favourites were not in every case to be found amongst the most fashionable painters of the day, or even the most popular ones. He had the happy faculty of unearthing all that was best and most promising amongst unknown and struggling workers, and many a young painter owed his first success to the discernment of the good-hearted baronet.

Sir Digby prided himself too on his weekly artistic reunions; his picture-gallery and pretty drawing-rooms were thrown open every Monday evening to his many friends, almost all of whom were people well-known in the world of art, literature, music, and science. He had sympathy with all—but especially with artists—landscape-painters and portrait-painters more particularly. For the delineator of allegorical or fanciful subjects, however, he had but little admiration.

Sir Digby was very matter-of-fact, and it would have been hard to find any man less open to spiritualistic influences. Indeed, he had a great objection, as a scientific man, even to the introduction as a topic of conversation, of subjects appertaining to thought-reading, mesmerism, and the like. He disbelieved in them all, and regarded the whole business as sheer nonsense. The baronet decried the supernatural in any form—no spiritual manifestations for him! A hand he could shake, a face with a pair of honest eyes to look into, and a clear ringing voice and laugh, were to him worth all the spirit-hands and ethereally lovely spirit-heads that could ever be summoned from the realms of fancy. He denounced as charlatans and cheats all professors of the occult science loudly and vehemently whenever he had an opportunity.

Only one person amongst his acquaintance was there, whose views on these points, differing from his own, had he ever listened to or tolerated.

This was Mark Ormshed. Not only was he the possessor of several more or less allegorical or fanciful subjects from this painter's hand, but he had even condescended to fall into many an argument with him as to the immaterial constituents of our being.

Sir Digby was very fond of Mark—admired his work and admired the man, and it may have been gleaned that it was on Ormshed's recommendation that the baronet had given Walter Stilwood that notable commission.

As Ormshed had many times said to his friend, the young landscape-painter, that he would some day prove to him that he could exercise his will upon those he cared for, even at a distance, so he had always wound up his arguments with Sir Digby by good-humouredly declaring that he would also convince the baronet before he died "that there is more in heaven and earth than is dreamt of in our philosophy."

Stilwood's picture had been punctually sent home on the evening of the promised day, and as punctually been acknowledged by Sir Digby, who added that he would give himself the pleasure of calling the following day on the artist, and handing him the cheque.

"The Wood Nymph's Hymn to the Rising Sun" represents the outskirts of a romantic forest, up a deep glade in which are trooping a train of Titania-like fairies, the foremost of whom have reached the fringe of antique oaks where the woodland ends, and the open country begins. The leader of the band is hailing the burst of ruddy light just suffusing the eastern sky, and tipping the uppermost boughs and branches of the trees with roseate and golden hues, and the contrast of the sombre forest with the brilliant sky was admirably managed, and formed altogether a magnificent piece of light, shade, and colour.

"A very fine picture indeed," said Sir Digby to himself the next morning, as he sat regarding it on the easel upon which all fresh acquisitions were placed, prior to their being hung up in the gallery, "very fine. The landscape and trees are particularly good, but I don't know that I quite like all the figures. Those larger ones, especially the first damsel, hardly look to me as if they were the work of the same hand that painted the rest of the picture. It is grandly conceived and executed, but somehow it does not seem to harmonise with the background. Whose work does it remind me of?"

The old gentleman had been looking at the canvas for a long while, and now rose for a closer examination. After a minute or two, he walked away to the farther end of his gallery, where hung a picture by Mark Ormshed. This he stood contemplating for a while, and then returned to the easel.

"To be sure," he went on, thinking aloud, for he was alone in his rooms, "to be sure, Ormshed—that's the man! It's as like his handling, as like can be; he has put in those figures for his

young friend, or, at least, touched them up considerably—not a doubt of it! Well! it is all right, I suppose; such things are done amongst artists, I know, only I should like to have been told honestly that it was so in this case. I like people to be straightforward. I wish I had not taken Ormshead's advice, and had stuck to my original wish of having the landscape pure and simple, without giving way to his nonsensical idea of wood-nymphs emerging from the forest and hailing the rising sun—it was just like him, always harping on the supernatural; he would be a capital fellow but for that propensity. No! I was wrong to give way; and now he has been helping his friend, who is not a figure-painter at all, and not up to combining allegory with fact. Still, it is a fine picture; but I shall tell Mr. Stilwood that I have found him out. I will walk across the park, give him his cheque and a bit of my mind at the same time, good-naturedly of course; he is young and inexperienced, and is not up to my straightforward way of dealing. Let's see, where does he live?" and the baronet referred to his pocket-book. "Why, he is living with—at Ormshead's according to this. Mr. Mark never told me that when he persuaded me to give the young fellow a commission to work out one of his sketches for me; I don't believe he was living there then. By the way, I have not seen Ormshead for a long time."

With this the baronet took his hat and top-coat, and bent his steps across the park to the block of residential studios near St. John's Wood. He found the landscape-painter diligently at work, with his wife sitting beside him, having been shown straight into the studio by Gates, who knew him, at his own request.

The rather sudden entrance of the old gentleman upon their privacy somewhat disconcerted the young couple for a moment, and Mrs. Stilwood was about to run up the gallery-stairs to her sitting-room, when Sir Digby begged that he might not disturb her, and hoped that she would allow him the pleasure of bettering his acquaintance with her, as well as with her husband. They had met only once before, in the previous spring at some conversation, just before Walter was married. Sir Digby had a keen eye for beauty in any shape.

"I was not aware," he presently said, when Mrs. Stilwood had resumed her seat, "that you were already married, or that you were living at Mr. Ormshead's. This adds, however, only to the pleasure which I promised myself in personally coming to thank you for the very charming picture you have painted for me, and in handing you, as we may say, the reward of merit. Business is business, my dear sir, and I congratulate you upon your punctuality no less than your talent. But now, Mr. Stilwood," continued the baronet, as he rose and carelessly began looking at the various works of art standing about, "I want to ask you what, perhaps, would be considered an awkward question by some people not so straightforward by habit as I am. I only hope you will not feel more awkward in answering it than I do in putting it."

Walter and his wife wondered what was coming, but they both felt intuitively that it would have some reference to the figures.

"I hope I shall not be wanting in straightforwardness, Sir Digby, equal to your own," said Walter, not without a qualm. "What is it you desire to know?"

"Well, then, tell me candidly, in one word," said the baronet, "did not Mr. Ormshead help you with those figures of the nymphs in my picture?"

Walter hesitated for an instant, and then replied as he bit his lip, "Mr. Ormshead is in Rome, Sir Digby."

"By Jove! he evades my question," thought the baronet; "I don't like this." Then aloud: "In Rome, is he? How long has he been in Rome?"

"Oh, nearly six weeks now," said Walter.

"Humph! now look here, Mr. Stilwood. I have said that I like people to be straightforward; do me the favour to be so with me. Did he not put those figures, or the largest of them, in for you before he started for Rome?"

"Certainly not," was the prompt reply, "they were almost the last thing I worked on before I sent home the picture."

Walter saw he was not believed, and had never felt in such an unpleasant position before in his life. He looked at his wife and she at him, and by a common impulse, they by that look agreed that if they were to preserve the good opinion of Sir Digby Raikes, they must tell him their marvellous story, even at the risk of being still further disbelieved.

Without, therefore, much more beating about the bush, and after a few preliminary words, Walter acquainted the old baronet with the strange means by which he had been aided in his work, at the same time acknowledging that he felt reluctant to put such a story before any one, as he could hardly expect to be credited. "But here, Sir Digby," he went on, "is my young wife,

who was a witness of the dream, vision, ghost, or whatever you may please to call it, and who will bear out all I have told you. She saw it as I saw it. It had been our intention to have kept the matter a profound secret, not because there was any discredit in it, but because we felt it would not be credited, and because everybody would put us down as a couple of lunatics—everybody but my dear friend Ormshead, who, of course, is aware of the way he influenced my hand. Here is his letter to me, which I should like you to read."

The old gentleman took the missive from Walter, glanced through it with a rather cynical smile, which finally subsiding left his face clouded by something like anger.

"This is not worth discussing, Mr. Stilwood," he said, "by any sane man. I am aware of your friend's peculiar views on the subject, and I can only say—well, perhaps I had better not say anything. Some day when Ormshead returns—but no! any further discussion would be vain. I must wish you good-morning."

With perfect, but distant courtesy, and in a very different key to his first salutation to the painter, Sir Digby Raikes took his leave.

On his way home, he determined that this should be the last transaction he would ever have, not only with Stilwood, but with Ormshead himself; he little guessed that as regarded the latter, he would never have another opportunity.

It is Christmas Eve—a Monday night. Although the picture-gallery and rooms in the mansion in the Regent's Park had been prepared as usual for one of its owner's art receptions, owing to the season, not half-a-dozen guests had assembled, and these are now all gone and the house is closed. Most of the *habitués* have been otherwise engaged, and as the clock strikes twelve old Sir Digby is alone, sitting before his fire and smoking his final cigar. Stilwood's picture remains on the easel, with its face towards the wall, for in spite of the baronet's admiration of it, his punctilious nature has been highly offended by the trick (as he considers it) which has been put upon him. He is disgusted at the apparent duplicity, not only of the younger, but of the older artist, and is deeply offended with his friend Ormshead for having turned his craze about spiritualism to account by using it as a means of taking him in.

"I did not think it of him," Sir Digby has said to himself over and over again. "If he has not gone out of his mind he is little better than a charlatan, and I doubt if he is in Rome at all; there is some hanky-panky which I can't compass."

Thus musing for the hundredth time, he rises from his chair, turns off the gas in the sun-burner, by a tap in the corner of the room, leaving nothing to illumine it save the shaded reading-lamp on the table beside his chair. But he does not go to bed as he had intended, he appears restless and uneasy, he wanders to and fro for a few minutes, and then resumes his seat, takes up a magazine and begins to read—a very unusual proceeding for him at this hour.

Equally unusual, too, is it, that he should fall asleep anywhere but in bed; yet this also occurs in a little while, and he sleeps far into the night. A restless, broken slumber, from which he finally arouses himself apparently in great distress of mind. Lamp and fire are both gone out, and darkness adds to what in a less matter-of-fact person would not be far removed from a feeling of terror. But he gropes his way at length to the door and ascends the stairs to his room, incoherently muttering to himself the words:

"Dreaming—dreaming; never had such a dream as that before; it is quite distressing."

A bright, clear, frosty morning has ushered in the day of days. The baronet is in the habit of living with his pictures, and frequently breakfasts in the gallery. He is going to do so now, and enters the apartment looking strangely worn and haggard, which his servant, whilst busying himself with preparations for the meal, observes.

"Are you not well, Sir Digby?" says the man; but disregarding the question, his master asks abruptly:

"Why have you turned that easel round, Miles?"

"Beg your pardon, sir," says the servant, "I have not touched it."

"Somebody has then," is the sharp rejoinder.

"I can hardly think so, sir, your orders are never disobeyed: nothing is ever moved in this room, except when you give permission."

The old man is looking abstractedly at Stilwood's picture (which is certainly not standing as it did when he fell asleep), to which the clear morning light gives a peculiarly beautiful tone. The upraised head of the foremost nymph has an all but transfixed look, and her train of fairy followers, grouped around,



seem half endowed with motion, whilst the sun-kissed boughs of the forest trees throw a golden glow all over the picture.

The baronet passes his hand across his eyes once or twice, as if to clear his vision, and then says to himself: "Dreaming still; dreaming still!"

With difficulty he turns away from the easel, and takes his usual seat at the breakfast-table, but pays very little heed to the delicately-served repast put before him. A small cup of coffee and an atom of dry toast taken, Sir Digby again rises, and rings for Miles to bring him his hat and coat. The man is too well trained to make further remark, but he glances in quiet surprise at the untouched meal and the unopened letters and papers on the table.

"I am going out, Miles," says the baronet; "clear these things away, and see that nobody touches that easel. Let it remain where it is."

Once more Sir Digby walks across the park to Stilwood's rooms, but in a very different frame of mind to that in which he left them three or four days before. Husband and wife meet him on the threshold. They look excited and anxious, but are starting for a walk on this lovely Christmas morning. They are immensely surprised at his reappearance, having concluded from his manner on his previous visit that they had seen the last of him.

"Ah, Mr. Stilwood," he says, "I fear I have come at the wrong time. I wish very much for a quiet half-hour's talk with you and your wife. Will you grant this favour to an old man, who is much disturbed and distressed?"

"With pleasure," says Mrs. Stilwood, who sees in a moment the altered appearance of the old gentleman, and, taking his arm, turns back into the studio, which they had but just quitted. Walter follows, wondering and anxious to learn the reason of this unlooked-for visit.

Mrs. Stilwood, with a woman's tact, gently takes hat and stick from her visitor's hand, and drawing the easy-chair up to the stove, tenderly begs him to be seated, for his looks alarm her, and she sees he has something on his mind he desires to communicate.

He plunges at once into what he has to say and thus begins, in a voice less strong and steady than usual:

"I was very angry when I left you the other day. The postscript account you gave of the way Ormshod helped you enraged my common-sense. I must now apologise for having taken so stern a view of what you said, for I have gone through an experience since we met, which if not precisely similar, was sufficiently so to put my scepticism well-nigh to flight. Last night I lingered late in my gallery, fell asleep in my chair, and had—well—a dream, a vision, a ghostly visitation, a spiritual manifestation—call it what you please, I don't know what to call it; never experienced anything like it—can hardly believe that we are not all of us going out of our minds!"

"But to the point! We will say I dreamt, that is the most rational phrase—that I saw you, Mr. Stilwood, at work on my picture—on the head of the foremost nymph; that you were painting it from Mrs. Stilwood, who was sitting to you; and that standing just behind you was Mr. Ormshod himself. Every now and then he would direct your work by word of mouth—I heard him speak distinctly several times—and by gestures of his forefinger, with which he would point to the canvas. Occasionally he would demonstrate what he was saying by walking round to the model, and showing you the parts he was referring to, by touching Mrs. Stilwood's hair, shoulder, what not. This went on for a considerable time; it was the most distinct dream I ever had; it all appeared actual, lifelike. I saw the face and form grow under your hand; there was no doubt of it. Then, suddenly, Ormshod had disappeared. The vision changed; I was in a strange room, foreign-looking, and on the bed in it, lay poor Ormshod—dead. With this I woke, I suppose, and in the most uncomfortable, distressed frame of mind I have ever known. The whole thing so affected me that when I got to bed I could not sleep—have not slept a wink all night."

The old gentleman pauses, passes his handkerchief across his brow, and is about to resume, when Stilwood says:

"This is most strange and alarming, Sir Digby, for both my wife and myself dreamt last night that poor Ormshod was dead. On comparing notes this morning we both seem to have seen him lying upon his bed, as you now describe you saw him. We, too, have both been much distressed, and, like yourself, have not got over it yet."

"Well!" says Sir Digby, "they say there is no fool like an old fool; probably I am one, and would not have believed this of myself; but when I went into my gallery this morning, the picture which I could have sworn had its face to the wall, was turned round; and the unpleasant want of harmony between the figures and the landscape, which had given me the idea that Ormshod

had painted them, seemed entirely to have disappeared. They were quite in keeping, and perfectly beautiful. How the picture had been turned about I cannot tell, no one dares to touch a thing in my rooms, and so I must suppose that unconsciously I did it myself, being in a state of mental exaltation or depression—I don't know which. At any rate I was so bewildered, puzzled, and distressed, that I felt I must come and tell you, and apologise for—"

At this moment there is a knock at the door, old Gates enters with a yellow envelope, which he hands to Stilwood.

"A telegram, sir!"

Walter reads it aloud, his face paling to ashen whiteness. Thus it runs:

"From Warren, Rome. To Stilwood, Residential Studios, St. John's Wood, London.

"Grieved to send dreadful news. Ormshod yesterday had a relapse, and died soon after midnight."

As a man of science, of course Sir Digby Raikes was never able to throw any light upon these strange experiences. As a sentient human being, however, he could account for them very clearly. But as any explanation from this point of view would be very difficult, and as, if it became known that he had changed his opinion on the subject, it might jeopardise his reputation, he begged, and even bound the Stilwoods to be silent about it, and to keep the mysterious story a secret at least until he should be no more.

The kindly old gentleman has lately passed away, but it was not before he had added several more specimens of Walter Stilwood's art to his collection. "The Wood Nymph's Hymn to the Rising Sun," however, was never hung up in the gallery. It had a place of honour to itself in a front room, and he would sometimes whisper to Walter when that young painter and his pretty wife attended the Monday evening reunions in the Regent's Park, and when they happened to stand near the picture:

"Mind you don't tell anybody why I keep it here—at least not till I am dead and gone; then you can do as you like."

Walter Stilwood has done as he liked, and has told me the story, which I can only call "The Ghost on the Canvas."

## Miss Griffiths's Investment.

BY E. RENTOUL ESLER.

### CHAPTER I.

"GOOD-BYE, Miss Griffiths, I hope you will have pleasant holidays."

At the word "holidays" Miss Griffiths's thin mouth relaxed into a smile, and, for the first time in many months, a flush of pleasure rose in her cheeks.

"Thank you, I am always glad to be free," she answered, with a momentary expansion of her narrow chest, and then she said good-bye hurriedly, and went out into the glaring heat of the burning sun, walking with an eager erectness that sat oddly on her spare frame.

Mrs. Sotheby looked after her with a smile of good-natured compassion.

"How queer she is, and how badly she dresses; worse than any of my servants," she said to herself; and then, without a thought that she was in anywise responsible for her governess's toilet, Mrs. Sotheby dismissed her from her mind.

And Miss Griffiths went down the street towards her poor lodgings, indifferent to what they thought of her in the big stuccoed house she had left. She was free now. She was her own mistress for six long weeks. She was free and independent—as independent as the fashionable ladies sweeping past her in their luxurious carriages and powdering her with the dust from their flashing wheels.

To be at rest, to have peace and immunity from toil, and freedom of thought and action for a time, why, it was happiness; it was a triumph and reward almost worth the unflagging toil of the past ten months.

Miss Griffiths had been trained in the hard school which inculcates the necessity of gratitude for very small mercies, and as she hurried eastward, the elderly, jaded governess had the thought that comes to all of us now and then, when things are at their best—that after all we have a good deal to be thankful for.

Of course, the Sotheby children were tiresome and rude, and Mrs. Sotheby was selfish and prosperous in an aggressive way; and Mrs. Daly, who presided over Miss Griffiths's lodgings, was slatternly and dispirited, and the rooms she let throughout the year were dismal and dingy; but still, when you faced things cheerfully, they weren't really so very bad. At any rate, Miss Griffiths was about to leave all unpleasantness behind for the present, and in her heart



pulsating to the unfamiliar emotion of gladness, she had not room for a murmur. She was going away for the holidays; going out of the heat and noise and glare, away to the enjoyment of such sights and sounds as the rich grow weary of through repetition.

It was not often she dared permit herself to think of pleasant things, but for once desire and fruition could march hand-in-hand. She was going away out of the rush and bustle to find liberty and peace by the sea. Not the Cockney sea of Margate or Gravesend, but the vast ocean stretching away in leagues of rippling lustre north and south, and breaking in waves of snow and crystal on an empty strand. Expressed simply, Miss Griffiths had taken a lodging in a pretty cottage on the Cornish coast, and meant to spend her holidays with Mrs. Dingle and Sailor Bob, her husband; but no simple language could convey any idea of all the change signified to the plain-featured, over-worked governess. Why, the very kitchen in that cottage was a sanctuary, with its oaken furniture and gleaming pewter, and white windows standing always open to the sea. When she thought of it Miss Griffiths seemed to smell the salt breezes, to hear the voices of the sea-birds, and to see the green and purple waters. And then the clear-eyed old sailor and his silver-haired wife would defer to her, would take her little peculiarities as matters of course, and would tend her with sympathy. What if the treat were costly, it would be worth its price—it would be something to look back on through the years in which she could permit herself no similar pleasure.

It was not often Miss Griffiths could allow herself any enjoyment, indeed she had a hard struggle to make ends meet, despite the annual hundred pounds which Mrs. Sotheby paid her so grudgingly, for there was all the expense of her maintenance to be borne, and then there was the heavy premium to the insurance company, which had undertaken to render her old age independent.

Till she was sixty the governess would have no rest from the labour that she performed honestly, though without love; but after she was sixty she would have freedom bought by the insurance money.

On the whole, life was not very bad, Miss Griffiths was thinking, as she trudged home that sunny summer afternoon. If there was the daily toil, there was the quarterly recompense, and once in many years such a treat as her trip to Cornwall was possible. Involuntarily her hand closed over the cheque she held, and her chest rose with a half sigh. For once, through much re-assuring, she had convinced herself that she was happy.

Had anyone cared to investigate Miss Griffiths's habitual attitude of mind, he would unhesitatingly have pronounced her a pessimist, but then what was there in her experience to render her anything else? She was all alone in the world; no one loved her, she had no heritage but labour, and her youth was over; as a matter of fact she knew she must have been young once, but she could not remember when, for she was old ever since she had been teaching, and she was teaching at twenty. Of course that was no one's fault, no one had meant any harm, only fate had foisted a sorry portion on her as her lot in life. But she did not complain; she had never felt so little like complaining as she did now, when she entered her shabby sitting-room with the money, embodying her best imaginings, in her hand.

At first she did not notice that it was the landlady in person, and not the child servant, who was busying herself with the cracked tea-service, till Mrs. Daly accosted her grumblingly:

"Mary Ann has hurt her foot, I must wait on the lodgers myself till she is better."

"Indeed!" The governess came back with a start from the world of her imaginings.

"Yes, and the doctor says she may be laid up for a month; but troubles never come alone. I thought I'd had my share; but it seems the Lord does not think so." And here, to her lodger's astonishment, Mrs. Daly applied her black alpaca apron to her reddened eyes, and sat down to weep more at her ease.

"I hope there is nothing wrong," Miss Griffiths spoke gently, but her momentary contentment was gone. The woman's tears had thrown her back into her habitual consciousness of the universality of pain.

"Everything is wrong. Oh, how long life is when it is a burden! and I've tried so hard to do my best, but things have been too much for me since my man died. I've slaved late and early. I've wrought myself to skin and bone, and what does it come to?" looking at her lodger with fiery, rebellious eyes.

Miss Griffiths shook her head, that seeming the most comprehensive mode of offering sympathy.

"It means that my child and John Daly's child is a thief."

"Oh, Mrs. Daly!"

"You know the child; you remember the night you gave him a penny because he read so well? I have kept him at school every day. Often I have paid for him with the very price of my food, and half the time I dare say he was deceiving me, scheming and staying away to idle about the streets," rocking herself to and fro as she spoke.

"But so many children hate school and play truant," the governess ventured apologetically.

"But that is not the worst of it. Three days ago a policeman that I knew—he was from my own place in the country years ago—found him stealing, and brought him home to me. Only that he was my son he would have locked him up, he said."

"That is very bad indeed, Mrs. Daly. But this lesson may keep the child straight for the future, and after all it was only once."

"Unfortunately it wasn't only once, for I found, in the box under his bed, fruit and toys and candies, that he must either have stolen or stolen the price of. You have never missed any money, have you?" with a heartbroken sob.

"Oh no, indeed, I never have; but how dreadful for you, Mrs. Daly, and he such a bright, pretty little fellow too!"

"Yes, and so like his father, only that his father was honest. Well, Heaven knows, it's not my fault that Willie is a thief. But to think, Miss Griffiths, that only a few pounds might save him yet, and that I cannot raise the money; it is that that breaks my heart?"

"What do you mean?"

"The Prestons are going out to Canada, to farm-life there, and for twenty pounds John Preston would take Willie with him, and keep him till he found a fitting situation for him. He could not do it for less, for he is poor and has many children; but all I own in the world would not raise that sum."

"And what good would that do?"

"It would take him away from bad company—it would save him."

Jane Griffiths's thin hand closed on the cheque lying in her lap. What right had this strange woman to come to her with her personal troubles, and lay claim to her little all?

"I don't think I can help you," she said, speaking shrilly and rebelliously.

"Oh no, I never thought you could, but it eases one's heart a little to tell one's sorrows."

"I am a working woman. I have nothing but what I earn," she said argumentatively. "If I were rich I should be very happy to help you. But is there no one who knew you long ago, who would advance you this money on trust?" Miss Griffiths's tone became more cheerful as she pushed the responsibility from herself on to other imaginary shoulders.

"People love you well before they will lend you money," Mrs. Daly answered with a head-shake. "But don't you fret about it, miss, you have your own troubles, and I suppose I must have deserved this somehow, or it would not have been sent."

She rubbed her fretted eyes again with the stiff apron, and then, with pretended haste and alacrity, withdrew.

Miss Griffiths drew the shabby tea-tray towards her, and poured the black contents into her cracked tea-cup; but the decoction was bitter as gall to her tongue, and the hard bread and rancid butter stuck in her throat. Mrs. Daly needed twenty pounds, and twenty pounds was the whole of Miss Griffiths's treasure. Giving it up meant spending her holidays within Mrs. Daly's grimy walls; meant hearing the din of vehicles and breathing the dust of the streets though hot July and broiling August; meant shutting the doors of memory against that long-cherished dream of rest. Miss Griffiths dwelt on each item of her loss separately, picking them out as aggravations of her sacrifice. Mrs. Daly was nothing to her, her child she had scarcely seen, and yet for their sakes she must abandon the one piece of comfort that was about to find its way into her laborious year. Yes, she must do it, there was no question about it, indeed, it did not matter now whether or not she went to the Dingles. The whole thing was spoiled; there would be no light on the sea, no music in the waves, no sweetness in the briny breezes, if the thought of Willie Daly on the treadmill intruded on her hourly, as she knew it would. But what right had anyone to offer her this picture, what right had these people and their concerns to come between her and her well-merited rest?

She was righteously wroth as she rose from her meagre tea, and swept down the narrow dingy stairs into the dismal underground kitchen, where Mrs. Daly, by the light of the dim, grated window, was washing up the tea-cups of the other lodgers, while a small boy in an attitude of abject misery and self-abasement cowered over the handful of embers smouldering in the fire-place.

Miss Griffiths did not penetrate into the shabby interior, she stood on the threshold, holding her limp skirts in her hand.

"I came to say I can give you that money," she said, speaking in a high querulous voice. "I meant it for my holiday trip; it is all I have, but you can have it. I suppose your need is greater than mine."

She lingered just long enough to hear that Mrs. Daly was thanking her effusively, not declining her offer as she had half hoped. Then she turned impatiently, and went back hastily to the dismal solitude of her own apartment, and there her self-control gave way, and hiding her pale face in her thin hands, she wept, not for her lost holidays only, but for her lonely life, her forgotten youth, her loveless, hopeless, toil-filled maturity.

## CHAPTER II.

It was Christmas. In country places he was picturesque as ever, where the fields slept under unbroken snow and yellow fires looked out brightly through wide windows beneath icicle-fringed eaves, but in towns all the beauty had been trodden out of him, and he seemed to hide his face and deny his existence in the raw, chill atmosphere of the sloppy streets.

"What odious weather!" a pale lady said with a little shiver, as she drew a woollen shawl closer around her throat and nestled more comfortably in the chintz-covered chair, that was drawn up as closely as the regulations of the establishment permitted to the fitfully blazing fire.

It was the drawing-room of a Governesses' Beneficent Home, in which twenty persons, of various ages and of the female sex, were seated on the afternoon of the Christmas Eve in question; a room supplied with all the essentials of furniture in the shape of tables, chairs, and a piano, but without a picture, an album, a scrap of needlework, or other personal belonging to individualise it.

"Have you finished with the *Times* now, Miss Small?" a well-grown, buxom, shabbily-clothed young woman asked of the lady by the fire. It may here be mentioned that the only portion of the paper which was really studied in the establishment was one particular column in one of the advertisement-sheets, where heads of families made known their requirements in the educational line.

"Not yet, Miss Goodson." Miss Small's hand closed determinedly on the sheet again, and her bright little eyes looked round the room with a gleam of malice in them.

"It does not seem fair for you to keep it all day," Miss Goodson rejoined, grumbling.

"There is nothing here would suit you."

"How do you know what would suit me?"

"Ladies, you would all have a much better time if you agreed not to quarrel," a rosy girl, who was writing by the table, looked up to say with good-humoured condescension.

"Quarrel! Who is quarrelling? One can't raise the caloric sufficiently for that, I assure you. How I do wish that I dared poke that big, black, smouldering mountain of coal into a roaring blaze."

"Well, do poke it; perhaps it won't be found out, and if it is we won't tell who did it," encouragingly.

"As if that mattered; why, they have eyes here in their back hair and in their heels, and in every unexpected place—at least she has."

"Oh, do not talk so much," came entreatingly from the table.

"I cannot write with so much chattering going on, and my letter is so important."

"Is it an application?"

"No, better than that, accepting a situation."

"Ladies, silence, please. Miss Snagsby is accepting her first situation. Pile on your own virtues now, Miss Snagsby, for you will never be allowed to hold them in esteem again."

"That is only the fashionable sentiment here; lots of us fare very well, and know we do, too."

"Of course, and all of us who live with titled ladies, have a little patrimony of our own, and wear an engagement-ring, ought to find ourselves very comfortable, at least I think so, Miss Shipton."

Miss Shipton smiled; she was a tall, well-grown woman of three-and-thirty, with a deep voice and a certain masculinity of aspect, that went oddly enough with her child-like candour in the matter of her own love-affair.

"An engagement-ring isn't much; you might all have one if you wished." She looked down with a smile on the little pearl ring on her finger as she spoke.

"I mightn't; I've tried it valorously during the two-and-twenty years of my life, and I've never had an offer of any consequence yet."

This from an extremely pretty girl, the only beauty in the room.

"Do tell us how you managed, Miss Shipton, and does the mode of procedure vary when you are making up to sons of the house or friends of the family?"

One or two of the listeners laughed, but she who had been seated by the window in silence hitherto, rose impatiently, and with a muttered remark regarding silly conversation, hurried out of the room and up the carpetless stairs, and into the corner of the divided chamber that she called her apartment.

"What are Miss Griffiths's matrimonial chances?" Miss Aston enquired with grave interest, whereat the first thing like a unanimous laugh echoed in the drawing-room that day.

Meantime Miss Griffiths had flung herself on her hard little bed with an unconfessed feeling of resentment against the happier women she had left behind her. How could they be so light and unconcerned when they were all hurrying towards a destiny as evil as her own? It was nearly thirty years now since she had given her cheque to Mrs. Daly, and from then till the present no solitary

gleam of good fortune had ever come her way. She had spent her holidays in the dingy apartments that looked like a vulgar prison to her, and so had ruined the strength and courage needed for her winter labours. And then an unconscious air of martyrdom, dating from the hour of her grand sacrifice, had hung about her continually, offending Mrs. Sotheby, who considered it directed against herself, and so, after small misunderstandings that ran through all the winter term, Miss Griffiths and her employer agreed to part. Of course she found another situation, but more laborious and more remote, and Mrs. Sotheby found another governess, but at a higher salary, so neither profited by the exchange. And then after a time she left Mrs. Daly's apartments, not having the heart to withhold her weekly payments till the loan was made up, as had been the understanding at first. The daily governess sympathised with poverty as only the poor can, so she moved on. She had been moving on all her life, and her homelessness was pathetic had she been conscious of it.

Then after a year or two she fell ill, and employment grew more precarious, and the subscription to the insurance company lapsed, and so the hope of an independent old age—which was all the hope she had ever had—was ended. She was over sixty now, and her accomplishments were old-fashioned like herself, and her temper was soured, and the few pounds she had been able to save at intervals were spent in waiting for some one needing her services, and no one needed them. She was out of the running where the race is to the swift.

She had flung herself on her little bed, and had drawn her furlined cloak over her cold feet, and with her hands pressed on her aching eyeballs, was laboriously trying not to think.

She was as unpopular at the Home as she had been elsewhere. No one took to her, no young governess asked her advice, no older one claimed her sympathy. At night on both sides she would hear her neighbours telling their experiences, chatting to each other across their wooden partitions till the rules enjoined silence, but no remark beyond a civil good-night was ever addressed to her. She did not care for any of them, and yet she fancied sometimes, in her softer moods, that some of them would be sorry if they knew that only three pounds stood between her and destitution, that, in four more weeks, if she had not found a situation meantime, she had literally no prospect but the workhouse.

She knew there were homes for needy gentlewomen somewhere, but she also knew that they were beyond her reach, just as she had known once that there must be means of recovering the money she had paid into the insurance company, though the money was quite lost to her.

These thoughts made her colder, and she was shivering as she lay on her bed rubbing her chill hands together. She was quite aware that she was breaking a rule of the Home in retiring to the dormitory during the day, but she preferred the risk of a reprimand to the conversation going on below. Miss Griffiths had not yet reached that height of sympathy when she could take pleasure in every relaxation of her neighbours, and there never had been any period in her life when frivolous talk would have afforded her any gratification.

She took out her purse and looked into it again. There were the three sovereigns as she had seen them ten times that day; three sovereigns, that would pay for her board for three weeks, and the other necessary items of expenditure—her laundry, and the expected fee to the servants, and a cab to take her away to a situation—or to the workhouse. She thought of that home of the indigent without a smile, there was no suggestion of the ludicrous in it to her. It was the end of all her labours in spite of herself. She had striven for independence all her life, as others strive for wealth and fame, and she had been beaten. She must therefore accept the consequences of defeat. And then she fell to idly wondering how the workhouse could be reached, for she knew there were difficulties barring even those portals. She must go to the workhouse belonging to her own parish, but which was her parish? She did not know. She had been wandering all her life. She belonged to no place and to no person.

"If I could only die now, the three pounds would bury me," she thought, striving still towards independence, and then her thoughts went back tiredly to the little lodging in Putney that made all the home she had ever known, and to the old minister and his wife, who had been dust and ashes for nearly half a century; but she did not think of them with any tenderness. They had laid the burden of existence on her, that was all they had ever done for her. Were they conscious of the bitterness of that burden now in heaven, she wondered, and would they meet her with any self-reproach when she too entered the golden gates? It was hard for her to fancy herself in heaven, hard to fancy herself in any place of ease and rest; but then heaven had been promised to her, not because of any merit in her, but because she was weary and heavy laden.

"Oh, you're there, Miss Griffiths; I thought you had gone out." The rosy girl who was seeking an engagement had entered her

neighbour's loose box on a promiscuous hunt for something, and had been startled almost into a shriek by the pallid face and wide-open eyes fronting her.

"No, I haven't been out to-day."

"Are you ill?"

"No, thank you," the sallow countenance was turned impatiently away, "only tired of the unending chatter downstairs."

"Chatter? I think the place as quiet as a churchyard." Miss Goodson was moved by a faint sense of affront as she withdrew into her own compartment, but being possessed of that inestimable quality for a start in life, namely, a good temper, she recovered after a moment's huffy adornment of her person.

"I suppose you know it is wiser to be in the drawing-room during office-hours?" she ventured hesitatingly.

"Why?" The interrogation came quite sharply through the wooden partition.

"In case you are wanted. You know no one is looked for elsewhere."

"I am never wanted."

"But a person of your acquirements might be."

"Then there are plenty below who have them and more. I don't suppose I was urgently demanded to-day," grimly.

"No, this was a bad day, there was no one here but a lady wanting a nursery-governess."

"And did she find one?"

"No, we are all too advanced and expensive," complacently.

"And has the lady gone?" Miss Griffiths started up so suddenly that she brought her neuralgic pain back again.

"No; but it's a nursery-governess she wants, four children to wash and dress and teach, for a salary of twenty pounds. Surely you would not think of it." Miss Goodson urged distressfully.

"I have no money. I must take what I can get," was the husky answer. She did not stop to brush her hair or smooth her rumpled collar, or change her bedroom slippers, that were among her few comforts. She was thinking eagerly, "Perhaps I am not too old-fashioned for this."

"Has the lady gone?" she stopped as she passed the drawing-room door to put this question.

"What lady?" Miss White asked with a languid lifting of her eyelids.

"The lady who wanted a nursery-governess."

"She's in the office, I think."

Miss Griffiths flew on, the desperate hope of gaining this prize—think of it, educated women of England!—having set her quivering like a young girl.

She went up to the office-door eagerly, but stopped there. Miss Worrit, the superintendent, was inside, and her thin tones were falling like ice-drops on the still air:

"I am sorry; most of our ladies at present are finishing governesses, but after the New Year we may be able to suit you."

"Thanks, I shall not trouble you, elsewhere I dare say I shall find some one not too grand for my requirements." The stranger was piqued, and spoke with an offended American accent as she came forth from the dingy office.

"I beg your pardon, but I came to say that I would not mind being a nursery-governess," Miss Griffiths broke in hurriedly. "I—I understand children, and the salary would not matter—and—and I've been a finishing governess."

There was poignant anxiety in every tone of the eager voice, in the clasp of the pale hands, in the forward curve of the long, stooping figure, but the strange lady was angry, and she only noticed the untidy hair, the old sickly face, and the obtrusive bedroom slippers.

"Oh, thank you, it is quite a common person I want," she answered with a vicious little laugh, and tossed her golden head and passed on, followed by a middle-aged gentleman, who had been silent and passive during the whole interview.

"Miss Griffiths how dare you?" Miss Worrit's vibrant voice broke in furiously.

The man started, and looked round from the doorstep, taking in at a glance the old, bent, dejected figure, the haggard, sallow face, and the drooping, hopeless attitude.

"Miss Griffiths, how dare you?" The words seemed to hiss like the lash of a whip, stinging the hearer into momentary attention.

"I wanted to see the lady. I thought——"

"What business had you to think? Why were you not in the drawing-room when the lady came? Where were you? running after the agents and such people, I know."

"No, I wasn't, I was in the bedroom."

"And why were you in the bedroom? How dare you break the rules?"

Miss Griffiths returned no answer.

"And then to disgrace the Home by appearing so, with such hair

and such slippers, and such an aspect altogether. No lady would be capable of such conduct; but I always knew you were no lady." This was the deadliest stab that Miss Worrit kept in her locker, and she was wont to use it unsparingly; but for once it failed in effect. Miss Griffiths did not care what opinion Miss Worrit held of her gentility. "And I would further add," the superintendent went on, "that those who infringe the rules must give up the advantages of the establishment. You can therefore be ready to leave on Saturday."

She must leave on Saturday, and it was Thursday now; she had therefore one day in which to look out for lodgings, one day in which to find a landlady whose yawning pockets would swallow up her remaining coins and leave her penniless. She had her box to pack and a portion of her week to pay for, and all the rest of the time to look out for a new abode.

She went upstairs and changed her obnoxious slippers, and restored her hair to its usual smoothness, and bathed her hot brow and icy hands, and then she came back to the drawing-room and sat by the draughty window, looking out stonily on the muddy street. In one day she would be gone from here, would have passed out of her old life for ever. And where could she go? What could she do? What would become of her?

She fell to idly speculating on herself as if she had been another person. She was very unfortunate, she did not think she had ever known anyone quite so unfortunate. But after all, did this incident make things much worse than they had been? After all, was it necessary for her to look out another residence, since her stay in it must be so brief? Would it not be better to leave the Home and take her few possessions and go forth and sit on the pavement till a policeman took her up as a homeless person and solved her difficulty for her? She had no thought of revenge, she was too much beaten and disheartened for that; but in a vague way she thought it might benefit others if Miss Worrit's mode of procedure were examined into.

"If I am found homeless the case will come before the public, and then all who have complaints to make will take courage to say their say," she thought, "and what a blessing it will be for the old governesses if something is done!"

It was the first time in her life that the thought of becoming a public benefactress had been possible to Miss Griffiths, and for the moment it lifted her above her personal sorrows. She drew closer to the fire, and interjected a remark or two into the general conversation, and was so bright and animated that several of the governesses opined that she had got the situation, and others wondered how she could demean herself to take it. During dinner she was quite cheerful, and after dinner she volunteered a little music on the old piano, drawing more sweetness from it than any one had thought its thin strings capable of.

"The situation must be better than we thought, and she has got it," the governesses whispered to each other, but no one dared ask her, and Miss Griffiths volunteered no information. For that one evening she was allowed a spurious, feverish contentment, but in the night self-pity and despair laid hold on her again, exulting over her.

In the morning she rose, so ill and haggard that leave to rest on the hard little bed would have been a boon, but in the establishment illness was against the rules, and she was not in a position to ask or obtain a favour. She dressed herself languidly, was late for prayers, and had another reprimand, and then went back to the drawing-room and stared out with unseeing eyes at the deserted street.

It was Christmas Day, and she was wondering why she could not die, why she must drain the bitter cup of privation to its dregs, what she had ever done to deserve such special evil fortune.

"A visitor for Miss Griffiths." The porter's voice came chokily up the speaking-tube, and Miss Griffiths started with a momentary thrill of astonishment and hope. Who could care to visit her? Who thought of her in all the wide world?

She went down the stairs dazedly, and into the chill dining-room, and up towards the end window, in whose recess a man was sitting—a well-dressed, middle-aged gentleman, who rose at Miss Griffiths's approach, and held out his hand to her.

"You don't know me," he said, "I am more changed in the time than you are. I knew you at a glance yesterday."

"No, I don't know you," she said slowly, as some familiar tone awoke slumbering memories; "I suppose I taught your family some time, but I forget."

"No, you did not teach my family, but you rendered me a great service once."

"I? I think you mistake. I fear I never had it in my power to render a service to anyone."

"Oh, but you had, and you did it very generously too, and a very great service it was. I suppose you forget Willie Daly that you sent abroad?"

"And you are he?" She clasped her hands involuntarily as she looked at him.

"Yes, I am he, and I am very rich and prosperous—and honest too, and I owe it all to you."

"I am very glad—very glad." She drew a short breath as she spoke. If her life had been maimed and impotent, at least it had helped towards this man's development.

"And all these years I have remembered you," he said huskily. "Ever since I began to succeed I have laid aside a tenth of my profits as Miss Griffiths's share; it was only honest, only interest on your investment. I remembered how generously you gave, and how hard the giving was, and I have never forgotten that, under Providence, I owe it all to you."

The old governess had broken down, and was weeping bitterly. "Your mother must be proud and happy," she said with a sob.

"Mother died many, many years ago, but not before she knew I was likely to do well."

"And you knew me yesterday?" There was a sound of faint pride in her voice as she spoke.

"Oh yes, the moment I looked at you. I have been seeking you for years. I would have advertised for you long ago, but for the weak dread of telling my wife all my history. She is a Virginian, and proud and high in many ways, and I dreaded the effect of my disclosures on her. Besides, I did not know that you might not be rich and prosperous. But when I saw you, and knew how things were with you, I made up my mind to tell her the truth, and now she is as interested in you as I am. We came together to see you last night, but it was after hours, and we could not be admitted. And now we want you to come to our house this evening, and to stop with us till we decide about the future. There is an amount lodged at my banker's that will pay you three hundred a year, and it is not a tithe of all I owe you."

Miss Griffiths did not protest. She was too utterly thankful. The help was too direct and providential.

There was an excitement in the Home, such as its well-regulated interior had never known before, when a neat brougham and pair drove up for Miss Griffiths in the evening, and the golden-haired lady came to lead her off in person.

"Then you have decided on Miss Griffiths after all?" Miss Worrit asked with a gleaming smile, whereupon the stranger twisted her neck, surveyed the superintendent from head to foot, and turned her back on her without answering.

It happened that Miss Slingsby was passing through the hall at that moment, and witnessed this cut direct, the news of which crept noiselessly upstairs, and was considered better than champagne at dinner-time.

It is needless to pursue Miss Griffiths's history further. She lives now in pretty apartments in Bloomsbury, and several children who call her auntie visit her periodically, and seem to love her, and to her own astonishment Miss Griffiths finds that it is possible to regard children with affection.

## Two Christmases.

BY R. STANSBY WILLIAMS.

### I.

A DULL grey sea, a dull grey sky,  
A wailing wind that bends and stirs  
The sombre branches of the firs,  
And drifts the snowflakes far and nigh.  
And borne upon a stronger blast,  
The distant chime of Christmas bells,  
In varying cadence, sinks and swells,  
And wakens memories of the past,  
So fair, so full of happy days,  
And promise of a brighter scene.  
Till chill suspicion swept between,  
And turned my feet in other ways.  
I spoke no word, I made no sign,  
I hardened all my heart with pride;  
I put the kindlier thoughts aside,  
And now the punishment is mine.  
No voice makes music at my door,  
No kindly glances meet my own;  
The day drags slowly by—alone  
I live my life for evermore.

### II.

The fleecy flakes come slowly down, and slower yet, then ceasing,  
Leave hidden by a snowy veil the all untrodden ways;  
The dull grey clouds roll back at last, the sunny beams releasing.  
Till bush and brake, and field and fen, are sparkling in the haze.  
The sudden radiance flushes all around with crimson splendour,  
Between the barren branches of the distant woodland aisle,  
And falls upon a face that shows affection, true and tender,  
And outstretched hands of welcome, and a kindly look and smile.

Last year the day dragged slowly by, in solitude and sadness,  
The stubborn heart could feel its pain, yet would not end the strife;  
The bitter words I uttered in that momentary madness  
Might well have raised a barrier that had parted us for life.  
By you—more injured of the twain—the silence first was broken,  
Though in my inmost heart the fire had never ceased to burn—  
By you, in winning accents first the kindly words were spoken,  
That opened up to each and both a possible return.  
But, hark! the chime of distant bells, in yonder steeple ringing.  
Comes sweetly on the frosty air, all other sounds above;  
And nearer yet, the village choir their Christmas hymns are singing,  
And o'er our hearts there steals a sense of happiness and love.  
We turn no longer to the past, but fix our glances rather  
On where the happy future glows with hope's returning ray,  
And yield in perfect thankfulness our homage to our Father,  
Who gives us both His blessed gift of peace this Christmas Day.

## Cured by Cupid.

A COMEDIETTA, IN ONE ACT.

BY H. CHANCE NEWTON.

Characters represented:

EDWARD SOWERLEIGH (An Independent Young Man).  
JOHN (His Valet).  
MR. SNIGSDEN (Landlord of a Seaside Lodging House).  
CLARA FEATHERLEY (His Niece).  
COOK, HOUSEMAID, PARLOURMAID, Etc.

SCENE.—Sitting-room in a Seaside Lodging House. Large Window, opening to ground, c., leading to garden. Table, R.C., armchair beside it, other chairs here and there. Books on table.

As curtain rises MR. SNIGSDEN rushes in, followed by JOHN, also by PARLOURMAID, COOK, etc., etc.

Snigsd. I declare I'm all of a tremble. I hardly know whether I'm on my head or my heels, or whether I've got any head at all. I must really insist upon this Mr. Sowerleigh seeking other lodgings. I cannot have such terrorism in this highly respectable, neatly-furnished seaside residence—a residence facing the sea, and having good table and attendance, etc., etc., as per advertisement. I will not endure it. Why, he frightens us all to death!

All. Rather!

Snigsd. Nothing suits him, nothing pleases him. Upon my word, for a young man to behave so is shocking. There's only one of us who isn't afraid of him, and that's my niece Clara. She only laughs at him, and says his bad temper will wear off one of these days.

John. Not it. His temper's laid on too thickly to wear off. You say you tremble at him. But what of me? Look what I have to put up with!

Snigsd. You know him better than we do. How do you account for his strange behaviour?

John. I don't know. I think it is because he's got too much money and don't do anything to earn it, and so he has plenty of time to grumble at everything and everybody. He seems to have taken a dislike to the world and all that's in it. And I'm sure the world and all that's in it return the compliment to him.

Snigsd. Perhaps his liver—eh?

John. I dunno.

Parlourmaid. I declare I won't stay if he remains here.

Cook. And it's more than I can stand. Why, he finds fault even with his food. The heathen!

All. He's a perfect savage!

John. Worse than Zulus and cannibals!

Snigsd. Zulus, cannibals! Why, they're all innocence and gentleness compared to him. But I'll let him see. This very day I'll—

Sowerleigh (without). John, John! you skulking scoundrel, where are you? John, I say!

Snigsd. (in terror). Hark, there he is! let us fly.

John (trembling). Oh, lor, I'm in for it!

Snigsd. Away! Conceal yourselves! Anywhere—anywhere to avoid him.

Sowerleigh (without). John! John!

All. Oh, he's coming. The brute! Away! away!

[They hurry off in various directions. Sowerleigh (rushing in L. with newspaper, which he dashes down on table). John! Where is that lazy villain? All alike—all alike! (Walking restlessly up and down). My servants take my money, and then only laugh at me and defy my authority. I pay exorbitant rent here, to say nothing of "extras," and what do I get? Inefficiency and impertinence. I hurry away from that horrid haunt of rogues and lunatics—London—that senseless, noisy, dusty, dirty, disreputable city, hoping to find peace and quietness, and some little honesty

here, at this small seaside place. And what do I find? I'm fleeced right and left; my host is an amiable idiot; his cook is in league with all the fiends of indigestion; his other servants are saucy; his niece, who, as her uncle is a widower, rules the house for him—his niece is a simpering coquette, like the rest of her sex, all simplicity and innocence outside, but all duplicity and heartlessness within. What a world! What a world! All misery, wickedness, and humbug! Someone lately asked "Is life worth living?" If he were to try my lot for a while I'm positive he would soon answer himself in the negative

[Sits at table, scowling, and hurriedly glancing over newspaper.

CLARA enters C. with flowers; she is in walking dress.

CLARA (coming down). Good-morning, Mr. Sowerleigh. What delightful weather, is it not? (He does not answer.) Perhaps you haven't noticed the weather yet? (No answer.) Fie, fie! Mr. Sowerleigh. What a black look! That will never do. Why ever don't you try to enjoy yourself?

SOWERLEIGH (bitterly). Enjoy myself? Ha, ha! Don't be absurd.

CLARA. There, there. Is it offended then? Did the lady say something unpleasant and scold it? Never mind then.

SOWERLEIGH (rising surlily). I will not be ridiculed in this manner, Miss Featherley. I came here expecting to find peace and quietness—

CLARA. Ah, you should have brought something similar with you then. They who seek after pleasure and happiness with a grumbling, discontented spirit, never find those blessings.

SOWERLEIGH. I will not be lectured. No, not even by you, Miss Featherley. I will amuse myself in my own way.

CLARA. Which is trying to make other people miserable, I'm afraid. A nice amusement truly. (SOWERLEIGH growls.) Ha, ha, ha! Look! What a terrible visage. Just like the ogre in the fairy tale (laughing).

SOWERLEIGH (furiously). The what?

CLARA. The ogre. Don't you remember—Fee-fi-fo-fum.

[Retires up, laughing.

SOWERLEIGH (aside). I am more than ever convinced that women were sent on earth on purpose to plague and torture man. All history and experience prove it. And yet, there's something about her that—Pshaw! Don't be idiotic, Sowerleigh. They're all alike—all alike.

CLARA (coming down). You would have felt much happier, Mr. Discontent, if you'd gone out this beautiful morning. I was up and out early, across the meadows, over the cliffs, and along the beach, and oh, it was so delightful. Perhaps the bright sunshine would have thawed away your surliness! Though I doubt if even the sun would meet with your cynic-ship's approval. You would think it ought not to shine on you without your permission, I dare say.

SOWERLEIGH. Ugh! That's my business.

CLARA. Ah, when I saw the beautiful flowers raising their heads thankfully to the sun, and when I heard the birds singing away so merrily, and saw the calm blue sea glistening in the sunlight, I thought what a beautiful world this is, and how grateful we ought to be for all its loveliness!

SOWERLEIGH. Oh yes, I dare say! All that sort of stuff is very well for poets, and such like lunatics, who worship Nature, and all that sort of thing!

CLARA. Well, that's better than worshipping one's self, anyhow. (Typing up flowers at table.) Do you like flowers, Mr. Sowerleigh?

SOWERLEIGH (snappishly). No.

CLARA (sharply). Oh! (then more gently) what a pity! I was just going to offer you a few of these I gathered this morning. There, see how beautiful they are, with the tiny dew-drops glistening on them, even now. (Arranges and sorts them at table.) How do you think now the flowers would get on, if they grumbled at all the good things given to them? Suppose they obstinately shut themselves up from the dew, and the sunshine, and the showers! Why, they would be wretched, and be no pleasure either to themselves or to others. Just like some human beings are! (Laughing.) Do you like reading?

SOWERLEIGH. Reading! Bah! What is there worth reading?

CLARA. Why, there are novels—

SOWERLEIGH. Novels! Ugh! All love, courtship, and marriage, and then—naturally—elopements and divorces. A lot of twaddle bound up into three volumes, the covers of which are often the most interesting portion.

CLARA. Well, then, science? You men profess to like that.

SOWERLEIGH. Science? Stuff! a lot of something written by somebody who knows nothing, for those who care nothing for it. You take up one theory, and then find the next scientist contradicts it, and advances another theory; and so on, all the way through.

CLARA (laughing). Why not try poetry, then?

SOWERLEIGH. Here, I say, don't make a fellow shudder. Poetry! a string of childish jingles, muddled up into metre. Rubbish written

in rhythm. An insane attempt to praise two things never found on this planet—the true and the beautiful.

CLARA. What a pity you don't write; there is one vocation would have suited you admirably.

SOWERLEIGH. What is that, pray?

CLARA. You would have made such a bitter reviewer.

SOWERLEIGH. Reading is all very well for women. Little things please little minds.

CLARA (coolly). It is better to have a little mind than none at all.

SOWERLEIGH. Is it your intention to insult me, Miss Featherley? Do you mean to insinuate that I have no mind?

CLARA. I beg your pardon, I'm sure, Mr. Sowerleigh. I dare say you have a mind, but it has, I fear, become crusted with the cobwebs of cavilling. Now, a good clean sweep—

SOWERLEIGH. Clean sweep! There's no such person!

CLARA. Don't try to joke, Mr. Satirist. You know what I mean. A little sympathy with others would clear your brain—say, and even your heart.

SOWERLEIGH. But I tell you I'm disgusted with the world. It's all sham and tinsel, and as for sympathy and friendship—

CLARA. Ah, you never tried to cultivate them, perhaps. You can't have the flower without planting the seed, and it is only by being friendly that one finds friends. Friendship is like a young rose-tree; it wants careful tending, and the bitter wind of suspicion doesn't improve its growth. Now, there was your great prototype, Diogenes—

SOWERLEIGH. What, the old idiot with the tub?

CLARA. Yes; and he did trundle his tub before him as he went, and you don't even take as much exercise as that. Now, you, who have an income—at least, so I've heard uncle say—and don't have to labour for a livelihood, don't you think you might show more sympathy with those who do?

SOWERLEIGH. Don't know, I'm sure.

CLARA (coming down). Oh, how nice it must be to be able to help one's struggling fellow-creatures! Why, it's only a law of Nature. The sun helps the flowers, the flowers help the bees, and man—

SOWERLEIGH. Man helps himself to someone else's goods whenever he gets a chance. Bah! people pretend to be poor just to get money out of one. I've never seen a deserving object.

CLARA. Then you've evidently never looked for one. Just fancy, never seen poor people, and you've lived in London all your life! Like Diogenes again, you see. He looked about to find an honest man—everywhere but in the right place, for he was only thinking of himself all the while. It's a pity Diogenes never fell in love!

SOWERLEIGH. And then he'd have been a bigger fool than ever. Love, indeed! Let's have no more of that rubbish! I know what love is!

CLARA. It doesn't seem like it.

SOWERLEIGH. Why not?

CLARA. Why, if you knew what love was, you would be happier; your countenance would not be so gloomy; your heart would be in its right place—that is, it would belong to someone else. Love would soothe your temper. But there, I mustn't stay here talking to you. Uncle will wonder where I am. [Exit L.

SOWERLEIGH (alone, coming down, meditatively). By Jove! I begin to think she's not far out. There may be something in life worth living for after all if one seeks for it. She certainly seems happy enough. (Walking about.) Yes, confound it! she's too happy, and only makes me think how miserable I am. Yet somehow I don't feel quite so miserable when she's here. There is an indescribable something about her manner that is positively refreshing. It acts on one like a tonic. (Looking off.) How pretty she looks this morning. I don't think she's ever looked so pretty before. (Coming down.) Oh, hang it! this won't do! I must get away from here or I shall be falling in love, and I couldn't stand that! (About to go.) And yet, why not? (Abstractedly examining flowers.) It couldn't make me more unhappy than I am, that's certain; and it might—of course I only say it might—make me happier. Who knows? Already I begin to feel drawn towards her. Yes, that's just where it is. Love is like a whirlpool, when once one gets near it it is impossible to keep out of it. . . . A fellow might do worse, though, than win a girl like that. . . . I've a good mind to try my luck. . . . No, I won't. Bah! what am I about this morning? I must be going mad, or something. As if there were any good in women! The notion's ridiculous—utterly absurd. (Flinging himself into chair.) And yet she doesn't seem to be trying to catch a husband for gain. She seems fair and square enough. But stay! (Rising.) What was that about my position? Why, yes, of course. She said, 'You have an income—at least, so I've heard uncle says.' Of course she did. Now I come to recollect, I distinctly heard her say so. Hum! that's her little game, after all, is it? She thinks I should be a good 'catch,' no doubt. . . . I've a good mind to try



her just to serve her out. I'll go for a stroll, and think it over. (*Going.*) A capital notion! I'll pretend that something has suddenly happened to deprive me of my fortune. Then we shall see. . . . Ah, Sowerleigh, my boy, you needn't fear being caught just yet. She'll change her tone, I warrant, when she believes I'm poor. Catch women marrying for love. No, no. Cash, not Cupid, is their idol! Yes, I'll go and think it over. [*Exit c. Pause.*]

*Re-enter CLARA R.*

CLARA. Well, Mr. Sowerleigh, have you recovered yet? Oh, he's not here! Gone off grumbling, as usual, I suppose! What a strange young man to be sure! Never satisfied. Just as if discontent ever did any good! (*Arranging books, etc.*) It's a great pity though. I don't think he's utterly bad at heart. Ah well, no doubt he'll settle down one of these days, and make a good husband to somebody! (*Stopping.*) Somebody! Why, I do declare I feel half-jealous! Somebody! Why, I feel as if I had an interest in him. (*Sitting.*) So I have! I do believe I could even try to love him into a better mood. Poor fellow! He needs someone to love him; he is so miserable, everybody seems to dislike him. Heigho! I suppose that's why I like him—just a little bit. We girls are contrary creatures, I'm afraid. (*Rising.*) Poor young man! how nice it would be to be able to brighten his existence. Love would do a great deal towards that. He is a very skilful physician, especially in matters of the heart. What a pleasure it would be to tease him into kinder notions. Ah me! I'm afraid that will never be my office, for I should have to wait until he wooed me, and that doesn't seem very likely, and I couldn't woo him even though leap-year is coming. (*Looking off.*) Why, here he comes back again, and looking surlier than ever. What's the matter now, I wonder. [*Retires up R.*]

*Re-enter SOWERLEIGH C.*

Sowerleigh (*to himself*). I don't know what to think. I can't quite shake off this temporary insanity—this strange feeling that is creeping over me. I've a great mind to try that little plot, and see if she does care for me. At any rate I should see her in her true colour, which, evidently, isn't green. Ah, there she is! I'll watch her a while. [*Sits gloomily at table.*]

CLARA (*coming down c.*). Well, Mr. Solemnity, was the sun too hot, or the wind too cold, or wasn't the colour of the sea suitable to your fancy, that you are back again so soon? Good gracious, how severe you look! Is anything the matter, sir?"

Sowerleigh (*aside*). Sir! How formal it sounds from her.

CLARA. Aren't you well?

Sowerleigh (*gloomily*). No, I'm not!

CLARA (*tenderly*). Oh, I'm so sorry! Shall I send for a doctor? Is there anything I can get for you?

Sowerleigh (*pathetically*). Nothing—nothing. No one can help me now!

CLARA. Why do you talk so wildly, Mr. Sowerleigh?

Sowerleigh (*rising*). Miss Featherley, I am about to tell you what I wouldn't tell another living creature. (*Movement of surprise by CLARA.*) Miss Featherley, I am a ruined man! Don't interrupt me! I say I am ruined! I, whom you thought well-to-do—as I was—have this morning heard that the company in which my money was invested, has failed; henceforth, I am a poor man. (*Aside.*) That will settle her!

CLARA. Oh, Mr. Sowerleigh, I'm so very, very sorry! And this is what made you so ill-tempered this morning, and I unkindly made fun of you? Pray forgive me!

Sowerleigh (*aside*). She doesn't treat me coldly as yet. Sympathises. That's a dodge; sympathy is cheap; but she wouldn't hear of love now, I warrant, not she. I'll try her more plainly. (*Aloud.*) Yes, Miss Featherley, in future I must work for a livelihood. But all that I could bear. Alas! another matter troubles me still more deeply, Miss Featherley. I am in love. You look astonished, but it is true. I lately saw—no matter where—a lady who, I began to fondly think, might learn to love me. Could I have gained her affection, it would have changed me for the better. For her sake I have been trying to conquer my evil temper, for I know I have one.

CLARA. No—no. You have been troubled!

Sowerleigh. Ah, you say that to soothe me. But for her sake I would have endeavoured to become a better man, and I was only thinking of going to her, and throwing myself at her feet, and imploring her to bear with me. How can I now, a poor man, ask her to love me? How can I dare address her?

CLARA (*aside*). He tells me he loves, and loves another! How it seems to oppress me here (*heart*); and yet I must not let him know it. What is it to me? (*Aloud, with difficulty.*) But surely, sir, this lady, of whom you speak, would not refuse your love because you have met with misfortune?

Sowerleigh (*bitterly*). Wouldn't she?

CLARA (*firmly*). No! Or else love is not worth having.

Sowerleigh. Suppose you were in her place, would you accept the affection of a man, knowing him to be poor and a worker for his daily bread? Would you try to love such a man, and wait for him until he had retrieved his fortunes?

CLARA. Yes, willingly, if I loved him, and if his love were real; and so would any true woman.

Sowerleigh (*doubtfully*). You would?

CLARA. Yes, yes. Oh, go to her, Mr. Sowerleigh; tell her you love her, and all will be well. Believe me, she cannot, will not refuse you. [*Retires up sadly to window.*]

Sowerleigh (*L. c.*). I will act upon your advice. I will tell her I love her, as you suggest. Miss Featherley—Clara, I need not go far. 'Tis you whom I love, although a little while ago I knew it not. From you I have learnt (even by a subterfuge) that there is some truth in woman; that this world is not the hollow mockery I deemed it. I have been pampered, proud, foolish—aye, even mad. I've thought too much of myself, too little of others. You have enlightened me. You have taught me I have a heart. That heart I now willingly, freely offer you. Oh, do not turn from me! By your help I will strive to overcome my surliness, my suspicious manner. (*Holding her hand.*)

CLARA. Mr. Sowerleigh, I know not what to say—I—

Sowerleigh. Ah, you do refuse me, then, now I am poor.

CLARA. No, no, Mr. Sowerleigh, do not think that of me; do not think me so base, so mercenary. I always believed there was something good in you—that you did not know your better self; and—shall I confess it?—something like love for you sprang up within my heart. You seemed so lonely that I pitied you, and you know pity and love are related to each other. Mr. Sowerleigh, if you really love me, I will try, oh, so earnestly, to love you in return; yes, and will patiently wait until you get employment, and can ask me to marry you. If we love truly we can afford to wait, can we not?

Sowerleigh (*embracing her*). Hooray! There is some good in the sex after all. I here recant all my former libels. But, stay, dear, this is a knock-down blow to all my old theories, isn't it? Well, no matter, when theories make a man miserable it is best to get rid of them. Come to my arms, Clara dear, I am happier to-day than ever I've been in my life. (*SNIGSDEN and the others here appear at various doors, and look startled.*) But one thing I have to confess, darling, and that is—(*Seeing SNIGSDEN, etc., watching.*) Here, come forward, all of you; don't stand there looking so scared. I'm harmless now. You may approach me without fear.

Snigsdén and John (*doubtfully*). May we?

CLARA. Yes, uncle. Mr. Sowerleigh says I've tamed him.

All (*startled*). Is it possible?

JOHN. Then perhaps I shall lead a quieter life.

SNIGSDEN. And I!

Sowerleigh. You shall—everybody shall. You behold in me an altered man, Snigsdén. I love your niece, Snigsdén. Don't look startled; I'm perfectly sane—sane than I've ever been. I repeat—I love your niece; she loves me; and soon, Snigsdén, I must ask you to accompany us to the hymeneal altar, and give us your avuncular blessing.

Snigsdén (*astonished*). You?—she?—I? I'm so flabbergasted, I don't know what to say.

Sowerleigh. What—surely you have no objection?

Snigsdén (*aside*). What a question to ask! As if I dared to have! (*Aloud.*) Oh no, none whatever. If (*looking dubiously at CLARA*)—if she hasn't.

CLARA. Oh no, uncle dear, I've none. (*Aside to SOWERLEIGH.*) Have I?

Snigsdén (*pathetically*). Well, well, I shall miss her when she goes, but still, I will not be selfish; so, as the party says in the play, "Bless you, my children!"

All. Hooray!

CLARA (*to SOWERLEIGH*). But we cannot be married just yet, you know, dear. We must wait a while, since this great misfortune has fallen upon you. But my love shall cheer you until brighter days come again for you.

Sowerleigh. Brighter days have already come to me, darling little Clara, inasmuch as I know I am loved. As for the misfortune I mentioned, that was but a subterfuge—a ruse of mine, to try if you were of the right metal, to see if you could love me for myself alone. I was just now about to tell you. Forgive the falsehood, dear. It was wrong of me, I know, and I have behaved to you like a cad all along. But you know how sceptical and suspicious I am—at least, I was. Say you will pardon me.

CLARA. It was very, very wrong of you, sir, and I ought to be very very angry with you; but I believe you really love me too well to think me mercenary, and so I will perhaps—mind, I only say perhaps—forgive you this time. Only mind, no more surliness.

Sowerleigh. No!

CLARA. No more grumbling!

Sowerleigh. No!

*Clara.* No more thinking that everyone's dishonest or foolish, that women are all heartless, that the world isn't worth living in—

*Sowerleigh.* No, no, no!

*Clara.* And you will admit that there is some good in love, after all?

*Sowerleigh.* I will, for it has conquered even me, and that's something like a victory.

*Clara.* Ah, Love is a physician whose prescriptions never fail. His method is gentle, yet sure. And who can count the number of his patients? Testimonials to the efficacy of his treatment may be seen daily throughout the world. You (to SOWERLEIGH) are not the first cynic, nor will you be the last, who will confess that he has been

"CURED BY CUPID."

CURTAIN.

SERVANT. JOHN. SOWERLEIGH and CLARA. SNIGSDEN. SERVANT.  
R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

## Doubly Bound.

BY PAUL BLAKE.

### CHAPTER I.

"You are quite sure you feel better to-day?" asked Fraser.

It was a commonplace remark, but there was a touch of earnestness in it which took it out of the category of conventional phrases.

Marion Heatherington looked up with a bright laugh.

"You couldn't have smiled yesterday," continued Fraser.

"No, I follow the example of the ocean; yesterday I was unbearable, to-day I am all smiles."

"I felt awfully sorry for you. I wish I could have done something to make it easier for you."

"Thank you very much. Was that spoken in your capacity as doctor or friend?"

"Both, perhaps," he replied.

"I think I am very fortunate," said Marion; "few invalids can manage to have their doctor on board with them when they go a voyage in search of health. It's very convenient, because you see you can't go very far away from me, and whenever I want you all I have to do is to send for you, and there is no fear of finding you out on a round of visits."

"Yes, it is very convenient," assented Fraser. "I gladly acquiesce in any arrangement which ensures my not being far from you."

Marion did not reply to this, but, shading her eyes with her hand, gazed steadily upon the water. It was a beautiful morning, made still more so by the contrast with its predecessor.

This was the third day out. The vessel was bound for Sydney. It was a sailing-vessel, so there was plenty of leisure for the passengers to fill up as best they might. Up to the present time there had been no calm weather, and, consequently, all were as great strangers to each other as when they started; but sunshine soon brought them from their cabins, and by dinner-time a good many had struck up an acquaintance with their neighbours.

However, Marion and Fraser kept themselves aloof from the others, except when civility demanded a few words of conversation. They were put down as brother and sister by most of their fellow-passengers, for it was clear they were not man and wife.

The truth was they were neither one or the other, they were friends. Fraser was a doctor in tolerable practice in Edinburgh. Marion was an orphan, who had only recently lost the aunt with whom she used to live in the same town. Fraser had attended the elder Miss Heatherington during her illness, and had necessarily seen a great deal of the niece. She herself was not well; a pulmonary complaint caught during the previous winter had developed itself somewhat rapidly, and it was considered advisable by the physician she consulted that she should take a sea-voyage to Australia or New Zealand. But this was out of the question whilst her aunt needed her care.

Fraser discovered one day that this voyage was in contemplation. He at once said that he himself was about to sail to Sydney in the course of a few weeks, and that if he could be of any service to her he should be most happy.

There was no one to put any obstacle in the way of her acceptance of his aid. Marion was of age and her own mistress; had she not accepted Fraser's offer she must have gone alone.

"Besides," she argued to herself, "it is different travelling with one's doctor to travelling with an utter outsider."

The result was that they both sailed on the same vessel. When Fraser made his offer he was undecided whether to remain in Scotland or not. He had received a promise of a lucrative partnership in Sydney from an old fellow-student, who was making the supposition that Miss Heatherington was to remain in Scotland contributed to that resolve. At any rate, when he found she was going, he determined to go as well.

In the bustle of packing and starting, and the excitements of the first two days of the voyage, he had seen but little of her, but now that good weather had set in, he allowed himself to make up for lost time.

"I wonder whether we shall have a quick passage?" said Marion when she had looked long enough across the water.

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Fraser; "I'm in no hurry. I've had hard work for the last six years, and shall not object to a few quiet months. It's a wonderful relief to a man to let his work drop utterly."

"That is not very encouraging for me," said Marion with a smile. "I understood you were going to look after my health on the voyage."

"I don't think that will come under the category of work. Pleasure is more the word. Besides, I really don't think I shall have much to do but try and persuade you to eat more and let the sea-air do its work."

"You won't have much difficulty in making me obey you, for I have a most tremendous appetite. You don't know how different I feel already from what I did when at home."

"I'm very glad to hear it. I hope by the time you get back you will be strong enough to stand the trying winters of Edinburgh."

"I don't know if I shall return at all," replied Marion.

"Indeed?" said Fraser.

He had never questioned her as to her future intentions, though he much wanted to know them. He hoped she was now about to make a confession.

"No, I have some distant relations at Melbourne who will be quite ready to let me stay with them as long as I wish, for I shall not be any burden on them."

"I wish Sydney had been your destination; we should then have been in the same city."

"Oh," replied Marion, "I quite expect that by the time we reach Australia we shall be tired of each other, and only too glad to find our ultimate destinations are different. I've always heard that people get very bored with each other on a voyage, especially in a sailing ship."

"Let us be the exception," said Fraser.

"We might try, at all events."

"I've no fear of your success in not boring me," said he, "and you must let me know when I bore you."

"Very well, I will."

"Is that a promise?"

"Yes, if you wish," she replied with a smile.

### CHAPTER II.

MARION had not redeemed her promise at the end of two months. Yet Fraser had given her every opportunity of doing so, for they spent nearly all their time in company. By this time the rest of the passengers had discovered that no relationship existed between them, and put them down as lovers.

Were they lovers? In one sense they were. Fraser had definitely come to the conclusion that he would like above all things to marry this charming orphan; Marion could not help recognising in him a man who admired her more sincerely than even his words implied.

This state of things could not last much longer. Marion, in spite of herself, could not help wondering why he did not definitely propose. Fraser evidently began to recognise the fact that he was getting himself into a very false position.

At this crisis circumstances arose which put much intercourse out of the question. The weather, which had been very favourable for many weeks, changed rather suddenly to squally. The squall soon gave place to a gale, and that to a storm, and for two days and nights the passengers were kept below deck. The only place of meeting was the dining-saloon, and that was so full of people that private conversation was impossible.

As the next day brought a comparative lull, there was every hope they might be allowed to breathe a little fresh air again, but to the annoyance of everyone, orders were given that they should still remain below.

"Must have the deck clear for repairs," said the captain soothingly; "to-morrow it will be all right, I hope."

The passengers acquiesced. Very different would have been their sensations had they heard the short conversation which he had immediately afterwards with Mr. Jones, the chief mate.

"Well, Mr. Jones, have you found the leak?"

"No, sir; the water is gaining fast; the carpenter says it must be in the hold, and that if we move the cargo to find it we shall probably only leave the hole free for the water to come in faster."

"You have slung a sail under the keel?"

"They are doing it now, sir."

"How long can we float, do you think?"

"About four days, sir."

The truth could not be hid from the passengers many hours. The incessant pumping betrayed the existence of something unusual, and on the following day the men were summoned to take their turn at the pumps with the crew.

A keen look-out for a passing vessel was kept, but nothing could be seen. And they were hundreds of miles from land!

To everyone on board was assigned a place in a boat. The vessel carried a sufficient number to accommodate both crew and passengers.

The catastrophe came earlier than was expected. Thanks, however, to the excellence of the organisation, most of the boats were launched in safety whilst the vessel began to gradually settle.

Only one boat more had to be launched. It was the one to which Fraser and Marion were allotted.

Just as it was being lowered the vessel gave a lurch. Most of the passengers had already taken their seats; in fear lest the vessel was about to sink and drag them down in the swirl, they cut themselves loose and pushed the boat from the side, leaving the captain and a dozen others still on board.

"Come back!" shouted the captain, whilst the screams of those left to perish almost drowned his voice.

But the fear of death was too great for those in safety, and they pulled rapidly off, leaving their late companions to perish.

"Cowardly hounds!" ejaculated the captain. However, he wasted no time in words, but tried to rig up a raft, which might afford temporary safety, whilst one or two leapt overboard to swim to the boat.

Fraser held Marion's hand.

"It is only a question of hours," he said. "Tell me you forgive me for having induced you to come on this ill-fated ship."

She clasped his hand with hers, and looked up at him.

"I have nothing to forgive," she said. "I am not sorry I came, even now."

What need was there for her to try and conceal her love any longer? Death stared them in the face; let them at all events speak the truth now.

"Marion," said Fraser earnestly, putting his arms around her, "we have to face death, let us face it together. I have never told you yet that I love you; you will believe it now."

"Yes, I believe it," was her reply. "I am happier now than I have ever been. But it seems cruel that I have to die so soon after life has been made worth living."

"Perhaps it is for the best," he said. "Who knows but that something might have happened to part us? Now nothing can."

He stooped and kissed her. Then he ran forward to join the captain and others who were hard at work.

The boats gradually faded from sight. The ship still slowly sank, but so slowly that few noticed any difference. The lightning of the vessel had given it a fresh lease of life, and every heavy article on board was now thrown into the sea still further to postpone the evil hour.

Then came night. No one slept; a keen watch was kept of the progress of the water, and it was resolved that when morning came the vessel should be abandoned.

But with the morning came hope. A vessel was sighted; before long it was evident she saw the signal of distress, and in a few hours those remaining on board were in safety on board her. They were still in sight of their own ship when she sank.

Two days afterwards Marion and Fraser were seated on deck together. They were lovers now, but still they were not so happy as they had been on board the doomed vessel when they thought death was inevitable.

It was clear that Fraser had something on his mind. He took this opportunity of unburdening it.

"Marion," he said, "I want to tell you something and then ask you a question. Don't judge me too quickly. A year ago I thought I was in love with a girl whom you have never seen—

Florence Wray. She is in Australia. I had not seen you then. I wrote to her eleven months ago to ask her to be my wife."

Marion started and looked at him intently. She did not say a word.

"Since then I have never heard a word from her. She must have received my letter; the only inference I can draw from her silence is that she does not wish to marry me. I can see now at this distance of time that she was a coquette, and that my affection for her was not founded on real love, but I did not know it then. Even before I saw you I wished I had never written, and felt relieved when mail after mail came in without a letter. I began to hope that after all she had never received mine. However, when I fell in love with you, I did not feel free to confess it. I resolved to wait till I landed at Sydney and discovered for certain that I was at liberty. You know how it was I did not keep my resolution. I have perhaps acted dishonourably; of that you must be the judge. At all events I am bound to tell you the full truth; it is for you to forgive me if you can. I think you will."

"I forgive you," murmured Marion, without looking at him.

"Fully?"

"Yes, fully. It is not your fault, I do not want to be unjust. It is our fate. But oh, how I wish we had never been saved!"

"Don't say that," said Fraser. "There is hope yet that all may turn out right."

"You said you had a question to ask me," said Marion.

"Yes; what do you wish me to do? If you wish me to give up this girl entirely I will do so. I have excuse enough in her silence—at least I could make excuse enough."

"Don't tempt me," burst out Marion. "Do what is right, and for pity's sake don't leave the decision in my hands."

Fraser could not bear to listen further. He began to walk up and down the deck excitedly, cursing the cruel fate which had led him into so terrible a strait. Marion went to her cabin and there gave way to tears.

When they next met it was evident that a decision had been arrived at by both. They said no more to each other on the subject, but Marion felt that Fraser no longer treated her as he had done, and he was conscious that in vain would he look for that glad answering smile which used to greet his.

As day by day went by their constraint increased; they felt that they could not resume their original stand-points, they had stepped over the line which separates companionship from love, and it was impossible to step back. Every time they met was more painful than the last, till finally they almost avoided each other.

Eagerly enough they looked for land. They had been driven out of their course by the storm, and the date of their arrival would be some weeks after the one on which they were due. At last, however, land was sighted early in the morning, and everyone came on deck to see the welcome line of coast.

For some days Marion and Fraser had not met, except when others were present. It would not do, however, to part thus, and Fraser resolved to see her once more, before they quitted the vessel.

Marion, too, seemed to feel that an interview was necessary, however painful it might be.

They retreated to the stern, deserted now by the passengers, eager to see the land grow more distinct as they gazed.

"Marion," said Fraser, "I have not given up hope. You said you forgave me; that must mean that if it should prove I am free, you will still accept me."

"We must not think of it yet," she interposed; "we have no right."

"I must think of it," he said. "Directly we land I shall see you safely to your destination; then I start instantly to find Florence. If you do not hear from me within a fortnight, you must conclude that—that I am not free."

Marion could not speak; she was weeping bitterly.

They were completely hidden from sight of the others. Fraser bent down and kissed her.

"Good-bye, my darling," he whispered. "Forgive me. Whatever happens, remember I love you, and always shall, even if I never see you again."

### CHAPTER III.

WHEN Fraser had fulfilled his promise and seen Marion into the hands of her relatives, it struck him that it would only be wise to see his brother before starting to find Florence Wray. He had of course written to his brother immediately on landing, but had not yet seen him. He calculated now, that supposing a letter from Florence had reached Edinburgh after his departure, there would have been ample time for it to have reached the address in

Sydney to which he had given directions for all his correspondence to be forwarded. If there should be a letter there refusing his offer of marriage, it would save him a long journey to Brisbane, where Florence lived.

This determination he communicated to Marion, asking for a little more time, and promising to let her hear in any case in the course of a week.

He was heartily welcomed by his brother, but he received his welcome almost without perceiving it. He had a feverish anxiety to know if a letter had arrived for him. His anxiety was soon at rest—there was a letter, and from Florence.

It was an acceptance of his offer of marriage.

The letter fell from his hand. At last he forced himself to read it again, carefully. How stupidly it was expressed! how childish the sentiment! He had been doubtful when he wrote to her whether he was doing a wise thing; now he was sure it was a very foolish one.

The letter was dated six months ago. It had reached Scotland just after he left, and was at once sent on to his brother's, where it had awaited him ever since.

His first duty was to write to Marion. This was a hard task; he tried at first to compose a long letter, but became utterly dissatisfied with it, and tore it up, finally dispatching a broken-hearted half-dozen lines of passionate regret and farewell. He implored her not to reply.

After he had thus cut himself off from all hope of happiness, he, strange to say, began to feel less miserable. He had the satisfaction which came from doing his duty. He knew he had done what Marion wished, and that it would have been impossible to marry her with any hope of happiness unless they had been able to mutually respect each other. And how could she respect him if he broke his direct promise to another?

There was no immediate hurry now to see Florence. He wrote her a letter that evening, into which he put as much of the lover as he could, explaining how it was that her letter had not been answered, and stating that he hoped to start for Brisbane in a couple of days.

That done he gave himself up to assisting his brother, trying to forget in hard work the regrets which filled his heart.

His letter was received by Miss Wray as she was sitting in her room one afternoon. She was a most charming little blonde, with movements suggestive of the love-bird, and caressing little ways which seemed to many men the perfection of womanly attributes. They had seemed so to Fraser till he met Marion.

They had seemed so to many more since then. Eligible and charming young ladies are not so common in Brisbane as in Edinburgh, and had not Fraser's letter, offering her his hand, reached Florence just after her arrival, it is probable that he would have been too late to find her free.

As it was, she sometimes used to think she wished she had not written that unfortunate letter in which she bound herself to a doctor with a limited practice, whilst within the first month after writing it she had received two highly eligible offers, one from a retired sheep-farmer, the other from a rising engineer.

She had delayed answering Fraser's offer for some time, unable to make up her mind. She had received his letter unduly late, owing to her absence on a visit to a friend inland, where postmen are unknown. Still, allowing for delays of this kind, she began to feel that her lover was strangely negligent in not replying at once to her letter, and as day by day went by, and there was still no sign, she began to feel angry, and almost determined that Dick Alport, the engineer, who was the favourite, should be allowed to take the place of the too-apatetic Fraser.

Dick had long ago been told the whole story, and waited with a lover's anxiety to hear of Fraser's arrival. He scanned the lists of passengers with a great deal more interest than did Florence, for he was deeply smitten, and hoped that somehow things would yet turn out right.

Judge, then, his feelings when he one day brought to her the account of the abandonment of Fraser's vessel, with his name amongst the missing.

"I say, Florrie," he began, for he was on very familiar terms with her, "I've got bad news for you."

"You don't look very sad," she replied; "you ought to show some sympathy."

"Perhaps it isn't bad news for me," he said, half-ashamed that he could not pretend to be sorry. "Read this."

He gave her the paper containing the account of the shipwreck, supplied by a passenger on board one of the boats which had been picked up by a mail-vessel, and landed at Sydney nearly a fortnight before the arrival of the sailing-vessel which had rescued Marion and Fraser.

Florrie became very serious. She could not help feeling

a sort of relief; but, to do her justice, she was ashamed of the sensation.

"You must go, Dick," she said decisively.

"But, Florrie, can't you say—"

"No, not a word to-night. Don't come near me for two days. I will think it over before then."

When he came back at the appointed time he found Florrie in light mourning, sitting at her work—a rather unusual occupation for her. Dick felt awkward; he did not know if it would be proper for him to broach the subject of his affection so soon after the loss of her accepted lover, though she had hinted to him more than once that it would not break her heart if she never saw Fraser again.

However, he was saved the trouble of deciding what to do. Florrie took it for granted that he was come to renew his proposal, and informed him that he must not do so.

"Perhaps," she said, "Alan is not drowned, he may have been picked up. At any rate, I will not give up all thought of him for a month more, though he has treated me so coldly and cruelly, and never written a word to say whether he has ever received my letter or not. He ought to have written to tell me what vessel he was coming out by; it was disgraceful. But there, I mustn't speak ill of the dead, though he may not be dead for all we know yet."

There was an inconsistency in all this that struck Dick rather forcibly.

"What do you propose?" he asked.

"Yes, I mean to do all the proposing at present," she said with a light laugh, which showed that the news had not taken away her gaiety. "I don't really think there is any chance of ever seeing Alan again, and even if there were he would have to explain his mysterious silence; but yet I am not going to accept you till I have either seen or have heard from him or have heard of his death decisively, or till two months more have passed without hearing. I'm not going to be engaged to two men at once for anyone. So, Dick dear, you must wait, if you think me worth waiting for."

"I'll wait," replied Dick, "though it's very hard lines for a fellow. But you will let me come and see you?"

"Oh yes, as often as you like."

"And you will look upon me as a lover?"

"Well, I can't exactly just yet, you see. But I don't think it will make much difference. We can be friends for a couple of months more."

Dick was obliged to acquiesce, though he managed to reduce the time of probation to six weeks.

This, then, was the state of affairs when Fraser's letter arrived. By this time Florrie had given up all expectation of ever hearing of him again, and had, in spite of her resolution, begun to treat Dick almost as her accepted lover.

Now, however, that the news had come, that he had written as if there were no doubt whatever that they were engaged, she found herself in a painful position.

There was no real doubt in her mind as to what she must do. Dick must be dismissed, and Fraser accepted as her future husband.

The struggle was not a very hard one. She liked Dick more than she did Fraser; but she did not love him with sufficient intensity to make the parting from him wreck her happiness. She was incapable of such strength of affection. She was sorry for him; but, as far as she was concerned, she thought she could be very happy with Fraser, if not so happy as with Dick, who was ready to do anything for her.

Poor Dick did not take his dismissal kindly. He showed more spirit than Florrie had given him credit for, and she wept copiously at seeing his genuine distress. But he was an honourable fellow, and could not deny that Florrie's acceptance of Fraser's offer left her no choice.

"I must see you once more, Florrie," he said as he bade her good-bye. "I can't go away without one more look at you."

"Are you going away?" she asked.

"Yes, I have a chance of an appointment inland. I shall go to-day to see about it, and come back on Saturday to pack up my traps. I can't live here with you in the town."

"But I shall be going away soon."

"Not soon enough for me," said Dick.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE meeting between Fraser and Florrie was a strange one. She had of course put away her mourning, and she strove now to put away with it all recollections of the episode with Dick.

Fraser, for his part, tried his best to act as a lover should, but with ill-success. At all events, he failed to please Florrie, and

both of them felt that their courtship was not likely to prove a very happy one.

Yet neither would acknowledge as much. Each had made a sacrifice, and that was enough to keep them to their duty. It would have been cowardly to retreat. In this way two or three days passed, till Fraser, in desperation, determined to hurry on the marriage as much as possible, knowing that he would be more able then to accept his fate with equanimity.

With Saturday, Dick came to say good-bye. Fraser was not with Florrie when he arrived, but he entered the room during their interview, and was surprised to find her in tears. She made no effort to conceal them, and when Dick went away she followed him out of the room, coming back a few minutes afterwards with defiance on her features.

"I know what you are going to say," she began, as she entered; "you want to know who that is, and why I was crying. But it's no good your asking, for I sha'n't tell you."

Fraser looked up astonished.

"I was certainly going to ask the cause of your distress," he replied, "but it was only with the intention of alleviating it if I could, not of prying into your private affairs."

This gave a fresh turn to her thoughts.

"Do you mean to say," she exclaimed, "that you don't mind who comes to see me?"

"Of course I am interested in all your friends," was Fraser's reply. He feared he had shown too great indifference.

"Then I will tell you about him, just to show you what I've given up for you. That is Mr. Richard Alport, who is in love with me, and I promised I would marry him after a few months, because everyone supposed you were dead, and now I've had to send him away, and he says he'll die."

A hope sprang up in Fraser's heart. Would it be possible to induce Florrie to act as if he had never come to life again?

"Florrie," he said, "do you love him better than me?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," she replied. "It seems very odd to be talking about it. Do you know, when I thought you were drowned, I thought I liked you best."

"And now that I've come to life, you are not quite sure?"

"I'm quite sure of one thing," said Florrie vehemently: "I should never have told you anything about it if I hadn't thought you would be more thankful for what I've given up for you."

"The chance is lost," thought Fraser. What was he to do now but try to soothe her hurt feelings as much as he could, and assure her he was deeply grateful?

But Florrie did not seem to thaw under his caresses. Suddenly she swung herself free from his hold, and stood poised on one foot before him.

"Alan, tell me one thing—truly, mind. Do you want to marry me or not?"

"Why, Florrie—"

"Yes or no," she demanded impetuously, stamping her foot on the floor. "Never mind, there is no need to answer, I can tell you all about it. You have fallen in love with another woman; if I'm not right never believe a woman again."

Fraser no longer attempted to hide the truth. He told the whole story, excusing his conduct as well as he could.

"Quick!" said Florrie; "run to Mason's Hotel, and tell Dick to come back. He was to start in an hour."

Fraser obeyed, and in a quarter of an hour brought him back puzzled enough at the turn affairs had taken.

Fraser found that whilst he was absent Florrie had had time to write a letter, which she had enclosed in a blank envelope.

"Put her address on that," she said to Fraser, "and post it to-night."

"I think I had better give it her myself," said Fraser; "I'm afraid I am interrupting you here."

"Oh, never mind about that," she said, laughing, "Dick won't be jealous of you now. Dick," she continued, turning to him, "this is the man who was going to make himself miserable by marrying me when he was in love with someone else. That would have been delightful for me, wouldn't it?"

Needless to say, Fraser was in Melbourne again as soon as he could be carried there. He sent a note to Marion, telling her that he would call in an hour, leaving her to draw her own conclusions.

"My darling," he said to her when at last he clasped her in his arms, "I can ask you now to be my wife."

He knew what her answer would be. The love that had been brought to light in the face of death had survived the bitter trial of parting, and now was born anew with tenfold strength.

Florrie's letter was produced in due time, and was couched in terms effectually preventing any possibility of jealousy. She

asked Marion's forgiveness for having unintentionally been the means of separating Fraser from some one so much more worthy of him, and expressed a hope that before long she might have the pleasure of seeing them both in Brisbane.

Marion's health became completely re-established in the course of a few months. If it had not, it certainly would not have been the fault of her medical adviser, who was so assiduous in his attentions that he was nearly always in her company, and at last persuaded her to share his home, that he might have her under his immediate care.

## At the Sign of The Golden Bulrush.

ONE autumn morning at some two hundred doors in and about the good old town of Northport, were delivered as many quaintly folded and directed envelopes, each stamped with a golden bulrush. The two hundred doors included those of all the nobility, gentry, and leaders of society known to Northport, and the contents of the envelopes afforded matter for much conversation.

It was *only* a milliner's circular, after all, though Mistress Ellenore Vance had caused it to be printed in antique type, on rough paper, with uncut margins, and with a Shakesperian motto at the top:

"This dothe fyttte ye tyme."

We are writing of the dark days before anybody's house or garments wanted to be mediæval, or Tudor, or Queen Anne, or anything but nineteenth-century English. The cult of the sunflower was undeveloped. Bulrushes and peacock's-feathers could be had for the picking up, and "Patience" was not yet in rehearsal.

The æsthetic revival had certainly commenced, and rumours thereof had penetrated to Northport, the city of full purses and fair women, that prides itself on being a good six months ahead of most of creation, and Mistress Ellenore's quaint notice was studied, wondered at, doubtfully admired, but read—a result foreseen by the knowing little woman, hitherto known as Madame Hélène, of Upper Street, Islington.

She had carefully reconnoitred Northport, noted her most formidable rival's gorgeous establishment with its plate-glass frontage, "Modes de Paris," and gold-lettered announcements in the choicest milliner's French, and had justly decided that her only hope lay in a line of her own. She would have issued her circular in Japanese had any Northport printer been able to do it for her, for she had inlaid cabinets, dragon china, and Nankin blue, ivory fans, and embroidered crapes and silk to dispose of as well as art-millinery.

Failing this, she fell back on old English, as best suiting her Chippendale chairs, and old Liverpool teapots, and other treasures which had come to her with the dingy old house in Great Clive Street, where her venture was to be made.

"At the Sign of the Golden Bulrush, No. 29? Why, that was one of old Jacob Steffox's houses, was it not?" people observed. "Who came in for the property? Does anybody know?"

Mistress Ellenore Vance knew quite well. The great red-brick corner house, stuffed full of odds and ends of furniture of the fashion of a generation long past, had fallen to her lot as the only surviving child of old Jacob's niece, Prudence Borth, with two thousand pounds, free of legacy duty—a godsend indeed to the poor, hard-working little woman, fighting the world desperately for bread-and-cheese, clothes and schooling, for her six little children, and hampered by handsome, useless Tom Vance, who was always getting fitted out, and started in life, expensively, somewhere or other, and coming back—first-class, and smoking a ninepenny havannah—utterly destitute, through no fault of his own, to live on the profits of his wife's poor little shop till another opening could be found for him.

He was now in a diplomatic appointment; i.e. second clerk in the British consulate at Santa Fé, Republic of Rio Palmas, and having prospered exceedingly by his own account for at least two months, his return, according to all previous experience, would soon fall due.

Hence Mrs. Vance felt there was little time to be lost in investing her windfall. She arrived in Northport at five o'clock one morning, had knocked up the house-agent and ransacked the place from garret to cellar by breakfast-time; interviewed builders, decorators, a marine-store dealer, and her late uncle's solicitor before dinner; designed her circulars in an interval of repose, walked "down town" with them to the printers, looking about her, and taking the measure of the place, her possible rivals, and her future customers, with considerable exactness. The marine-store dealer's cart was at the door by her return. Rubbish was sorted out, paid for, and carted off with a smartness that took away the breath of the caretaker she had installed.

Stacks of genuine Chippendale furniture, hoards of old cut-



glass and china, and treasures of brass work, were put in safe keeping, and the whole place left clear for the operations of the workmen next morning, before the energetic little lady, with a satisfied mind and aching bones, took her place in the corner of the third-class carriage in which she designed to spend the night, as well to save hotel bills as to be on the spot to set the apprentices to work by six o'clock next morning.

She rolled herself up snugly in her wraps, and resolved to sleep, but in vain. The details of her arrangements persisted in repeating themselves to her, over and over, till she grew sick of them. Then all sorts of possible calamities took it in turn to suggest themselves. Even some mistrust about the reality of her own legacy arose to vex her, though that was safe and sure as Messrs. Faucit and Fulwort, the great Northport solicitors, could make it.

She had been honoured by the personal attention of the senior partner to her enquiries that very morning. He had been her great-uncle's friend through life, and in his hands was left the management of the great Stelfox property. Old Jacob had died rich—rich beyond even Northport imaginings; the executors had no light task before them. Money had rolled in upon the old man all the years of his life, he hardly knew how. Northport stories of his luck, his obstinacy, his penuriousness, his dogged, unforgiving nature, were endless, and as true as popular legends generally are. He was hardly to be called a miser, for though his personal needs were small, he gave handsomely to the principal local charities, and dying, had left the bulk of his property to carry out a well-devised scheme for the benefit of the seafaring population of his native town. His oddities were many, but only the natural results of living all to himself, out beyond his own generation, far into the next one. He had made equitable distribution of part of his wealth amongst his own and his late wife's kinsfolk, with strict regard to nearness of relationship. The house, Mr. Faucit explained, had been left to Mrs. Vance as actually his nearest-of-kin, not, as she had fancied, from some old partiality for her mother.

"Not at all, my dear madam," the courteous old lawyer had declared; "had there been ten descendants with the same claim, each of the ten would have been as liberally dealt with—of course at the expense of the Merchant Seamen's Home Fund."

Mrs. Vance became suddenly depressed in spirits by this assurance, and still more so by Mr. Faucit's last words.

"It was a curious fancy of my late lamented friend and client, though he never entered into any personal communication that he could help with his relations, to keep a close watch on them all. He used to surprise me, I assure you, by his intimate knowledge of their modes of life, private affairs, and little peculiarities. I never discovered how it was acquired. He had his ways and means."

The thought of the unseen watch which had been kept over her for years past, gave the poor lady a creepy feeling, which stuck to her all day and night. In every disturbed snatch of slumber, the figure of old Jacob Stelfox, in his snuff-coloured suit, with brass buttons and gaiters, seemed to peep and pry at her from dark corners of the carriage, pointing at her with his great gold-headed Malacca cane, or now and then resting the point of a shrivelled forefinger inquisitively on her breast, where it left a load that grew heavier and heavier, till she woke in the struggles of nightmare.

All these evil forebodings fled with the dawn, and for the next few weeks affairs went prosperously. A good purchaser was found for the Islington business. The children and apprentices were disposed of till all was ready for their reception in Northport, and Mrs. Vance and Nessie got off at last with their big cases the very day before the opening of The Golden Bulrush was to take place.

"Nessie" was—it is difficult to define what—not an apprentice, for Mrs. Vance received no money with her; not a servant, for she certainly received none from Mrs. Vance; still, an important member of the Vance household.

All that was generally known was that a little, lean, dark-eyed slip of a girl was one day introduced to the Vance family some years ago; that she fed at the mistress's table, but scrubbed and slaved, and ran errands, and minded the baby like any other maid-of-all-work; that in time she developed into "Miss Halliday," a tall, graceful young lass, with a bright decided manner, and a face, complexion, and general air of distinction that made her a show-room treasure.

Madame never had ill-treated her at the worst of times; if Nessie worked hard, she herself worked harder. Of all the small indulgences that she ever permitted herself, a bountiful share was accorded to Nessie. No one was ever permitted to treat her with disrespect, nor was she ever allowed to go out with the perambulator or sit in the kitchen. Now and then came days of plenty. A good wedding or death—the latter by preference—amongst the clients of the little shop, and madame would signalise the windfall by buying Nessie a gown or taking her to the theatre; for all of which Nessie adored her, waited on her and the children hand and foot, and worked

her hardest in the house and the shop, of which last, indeed, her bright wits and quick fingers were the mainstay, and believed in "Aunt Elly's" goodness with all her might. She almost shrieked with delight when the railway omnibus deposited them at the door of their new home.

Great Clive Street was once the most aristocratic quarter of Northport, but its day is gone, and its merchant princes fled, to villa residences up the river-side, or mansions in the great parks without the city. One end still maintains its dignity. Carriages may yet there be seen, congregating before the door of a fashionable physician or a popular dentist, but the exclusiveness of the other end has totally departed. Trade has crept in, be leases never so stringent. A well-known pastrycook evasively displays his brass plate on an inner green-baize door and lets a monster wedding-cake appear between the dining-room window-curtains; and some art metal-workers have made their balconies and area-railings as flagrant an advertisement as they dared, but Mistress Ellenore's audacity went far beyond all this.

Her bricks were newly-pointed and blushing their ruddiest; big windows with latticed panes and stained glass had been broken out on the ground and first floors, and the great stucco portico had somehow given place to a timbered erection with a red and blue legend running around it, and a golden bulrush suspended above. The legacy had been deeply dipped into, but Nessie declared the result to be worth its cost many times told.

The lower rooms were to be work-rooms, with an office for Mrs. Vance, the first-floor show-rooms, and the floors above living rooms. There was a generous amount of space in the great corner house; wide staircases, and spacious landings, airy garrets for children and apprentices, and vast unfathomed vaults of kitchen and cellars.

Nessie danced all over it, exclaiming, approving, and suggesting, till she stopped, fairly transfixed at the sight of the little room destined for herself—the only one on which paint and decoration, not actually necessary, had been expended.

It was an ideal girl's chamber, all white and soft green. Daisies on the chintz, lace curtains, white wood furniture, a big toilet-glass, and a pretty book-shelf.

"Auntie darling! you must have been mad to do it," she gasped at last.

"I knew extra furniture would be wanted, and I decided it should be for your room," Mrs. Vance answered in a dry repressed tone. "You must not have the children at night any more now; I can take both little ones now that I have room."

"That you don't," Nessie declared. "If I sleep here, so shall Toosy, that's decided."

Mrs. Vance looked wistfully at the girl for a moment.

"I have always done my best for you, haven't I, Nessie? If—if this house were yours—your own——"

She faltered.

"I should go and clear those workmen out of the show-room at once," Nessie ended promptly. "It will never be scoured down in time if we don't."

Trampling of feet and tapping of hammers were still audible, though, according to agreement, the last man should have been off the premises two days ago.

"I can't help it," the foreman declared; "I never see such a job. Seems as if we was overlooked, it do," and he spat softly to avert the omen. "Half-a-dozen of paper short at the last moment, and no matching it, and Bill Handyside, our best hand, tumbles off a ladder and puts his shoulder out, besides knocking up a can of linseed-oil slap up against that dado; and paste don't seem to hold, nor colour to set, nor even nails to be druv', as one had a right to expect them to. Seems like as it were a bewitched job, it do," grumbled the injured tradesman.

Mrs. Vance made short work of him, and cleared him and his men out, and had the charwomen in in no time, while she and Nessie unpacked, and dusted, and arranged, not only all day, but all night as well, till by ten o'clock on the fateful morning, all was in review order, and The Golden Bulrush open to the public.

Nessie, tired as she was, had revelled in her work, laying down the Persian rugs in the long show-room, draping its artistic tapestries, disposing the quaint old cabinets and tall chairs, the carved chests and china vases, to the best advantage. One huge recess at the end was fitted with a great gilded console-table, and a mirror above reaching to the ceiling.

"I know that's an abomination in your sight, Nessie," Mistress Ellenore said, laughing; "you'd like to smother it with little shelves across it, and blue teacups. I can't understand the artistic objection to a decent reflection of oneself. It's far more interesting to a woman than all the china that ever was baked."

So Nessie had to content herself with screening the obnoxious sheet of quicksilver as she best could with tall jars and gold-tipped bulrushes, and veiling its gilded abortion of a leg with the gorgeous folds of a Delhi scarf.

"Any woman might enjoy seeing herself with such a background," she pronounced, studying the carefully-chosen tints of the walls approvingly, "and any gown will look right seen against it."

But, in truth, Mrs. Vance's wares could stand on their own merits.

Nessie was clad in softly-draped sad-coloured stuff, with some telling points of dead-gold here and there.

"I don't want you to be a mere black silk lay-figure," Mrs. Vance had said. "I want you to show how any colour can be worn becomingly."

She herself was gorgeous in lustrous satin, combining the very latest fashion with some quaint suggestion of coif and kirtle, and the two made a very pretty picture in the mirror when she came softly behind and kissed Nessie's pretty ear.

"And any room or gown would look right with someone I know in it, and I only hope some of these fine young merchant-princes may come along and see it for himself, and give me the chance, for once in my life, of making a perfect wedding-dress, and — who knows? — perhaps a Court dress to follow."

"Oh, auntie!" Nessie was laughingly protesting, when she stopped amazed.

Mrs. Vance's jaw had fallen, her eyes stared wildly, she clutched Nessie's shoulder with a trembling hand, pointing with the other to the mirror.

"Who passed there just now?" she asked at last under her breath.

"Nobody, dear. You are dizzy with over-work. Let me get you some wine."

"No, no!" Mrs. Vance shook her head, rubbed her eyes, and looked furtively around. "The shadows — that glass — distorted reflections, I think," she murmured confusedly; and just then all colloquy was stopped, for the little boy in flat cap and stamped leather jerkin, who waited in the hall, flung the door open magnificently wide and ushered in the first customers.

No merchant-prince came along that day; nevertheless, it was exceptionally prosperous. The "Stelfox luck" seemed to cling about the place still. It was the dull season just before the beginning of the winter festivities, and the Northport ladies, dowered as a rule with much spare cash and more spare time, were ready to receive any novelty graciously. Mistress Ellenoure was amusing, insinuating, and fair dealing, and Nessie the most charming lay-figure for the exhibition of new and dainty devices. When evening came it was with a triumphant heart that Nessie cleared the rooms, looked half-appalled at the order-book, wrote a telegram to bring down apprentices and assistants by the first train, and then betook herself to the office to count the money, while Mrs. Vance tossed up something hot for supper in the kitchen, having dismissed the charwoman for the night.

"We must look out for extra hands if this goes on, auntie. You'll make your fortune in six months at this rate."

"Our fortune," corrected Mrs. Vance. "Yours as well as mine, I hope."

"What pretty women they have here," Nessie went on enthusiastically, "it's a pleasure to work for them; but oh, auntie, what a millennium it would be if, instead of being dressed by the dozen, all more or less alike, each woman would earnestly study and work out, once for all, her own fashion of dress, made in the richest, most lasting stuff she can rightly afford, and only modified by the season or advancing years."

"Supposing she hadn't brains enough?" objected Mistress Ellenoure.

"Then let her pay me, or some other discreet and worthy artist, to do it for her."

"Then think how bad for trade; nothing would be discarded before it was worn out."

"Think of the women who would go through life trying in vain to discover what their style really was. There'd be change enough in the world, Aunt Elly."

Here a terrific yawn interrupted the discussion, and by mutual consent both moved off to bed, early as it was. Nessie found herself too over-tired and excited to think of sleep when she got upstairs. She was still brushing out her dark curly locks, at her pretty dressing-table, when she heard a voice calling below, "Nessie! Nessie!" in suppressed tones of fear. She ran down to the first landing, where stood Mrs. Vance in her dressing-gown, lamp in hand, listening at the show-room door.

"Nessie, didn't you make all safe here?"

Nessie nodded. "Fastened the windows, barred the shutters, put out the gas, locked the door, and gave the key to you," she replied promptly.

"There's someone in there now," Mrs. Vance whispered impressively; "someone walking up and down with an irregular, limping step. I heard it, and the tap of a stick on the floor. It stopped when you came."

"Thieves! And we are all alone in the house!"

"Of course it is. That seed-pearl embroidery is worth fifty guineas, and that Point de Venise flounce five times as much. I'm not afraid. We must catch them. Run and find the key. It's hanging up in the pocket of my gown."

Nessie obeyed softly, and returned to find her aunt still on the watch, armed with the largest carver and the dinner-bell.

"There, Nessie, stand at the landing-window, and when I give the signal you rouse the neighbourhood. Don't be too precipitate, though, it may be cats."

Nessie inclined to that opinion, but wasted no time in discussion. She posted herself as desired, bell in hand, while Mrs. Vance, turning the key gently, suddenly flung open the door and marched to the attack, lamp in one hand, bare blade in the other. There was an awful portentous silence after she disappeared. Nessie waited breathless, all ears for the signal, in vain.

"N—N—Nessie, hel—l—p!" came a faint strangled cry in her aunt's voice, that sounded as if shaken out of her.

Nessie flew to the rescue.

On an ottoman in front of the big mirror sat Mrs. Vance, all limp and dishevelled, her eyes fixed blankly on its dusky depths, her lamp toppling over on a neighbouring chair, and the carving-knife dangling feebly from her nerveless clasp.

Nessie rushed at her and caught the lamp, then gazed all around in consternation.

The empty blocks and wire-frames had the room to themselves apparently. She peered cautiously round the tall cabinets, behind the curtains, and under the tables. Nothing, nobody there. Then, bolder grown, she struck a match and set all the lights of the old-fashioned gaseliers ablazing. The large doors between that room and the next were securely fastened inside. Nessie tried all the windows, looked in all the ottomans, and returned to her aunt fairly bewildered.

"Did you see anything? Why did you call 'help'?" she asked at last.

Mrs. Vance only moaned.

"I feel as if I were pinched black and blue," she complained presently; "look at my shoulders."

Nessie did look, but seeing no trace of ill-usage, wrapped her up warmly again, and suggested that they should go to bed.

"Over-work, poor dear thing," was the girl's mental conclusion as Mrs. Vance staggered to her feet, and holding very tight to her, made her shaky way back to her room.

She refused Nessie's offer of companionship for the night, and with a hurried farewell, locked and bolted herself in.

Nessie tossed and tumbled under her lace-trimmed counterpane for a little, wondering what she should do if Aunt Elly's wits really were to give way, but weariness soon got the better of her anxieties, and she woke next morning to find Mistress Ellenoure fresh, brisk, and business-like as ever. A new servant was coming in, and the apprentices, under charge of her old forewoman, would be down by noon, and must be set to work at once.

"How did you sleep?" she found time to ask Nessie.

"Very well, indeed, till morning, when I was horribly bothered by a dream visitor."

"What? The merchant-prince?"

"I'm sure I hope not. He was a grey, wizened, ever-so-old, little man in a snuff-coloured suit with bright buttons, and a huge bandage of a white-silk neckcloth, who came limping in, leaning on a gold-knobbed cane."

"How alarming!" said Mrs. Vance with a forced little laugh.

"Not at all. He smiled most benignantly on me, only persisted in urging me to get up and come away with him, which I felt cruel on his part, when I was so dead sleepy. He was becoming very imperative, indeed, when I suddenly awoke. He was just what I always fancied old Mr. Stelfox to be. Was he anything like him?"

"No. Oh dear no! Why, Uncle Jacob was quite another sort of man; with a grey beard and a fine white head, you know;" and Mistress Ellenoure hastily measured and snipped off some Turkish embroidery, three-quarters of a yard too short, and hurried away.

The red gown that Nessie donned for business hours was a novelty in those days, cruelly trying to any but the possessor of her lily and rose tints, but admirably chosen to show off Mrs. Vance's last consignments of Spanish laces. She had Algerine embroideries, too, and soft creamy Indian silks, and Nessie was kept exhibiting mantles, and flounces, and all the rest of it, till she almost grew sick of her own pretty reflection in the big mirror.

Mrs. Vance kept persistently away from that end of the room, only coming near her three times, and each time making some unwonted and astonishing blunder. She declared herself sold out of hand-painted satins, with a boxful at her elbow; and when Mrs. Towerdale, the great leader of Northport taste, was in the very middle of an order, actually turned off and hurried away, knocking

down and treading on the precious pearl embroidery, to attend to a perfectly insignificant new comer.

The great lady stared in some surprise, but her friend, whom Nessie was serving, turned vivaciously from the glass to her:

"Oh, do look! Who was that who passed just now?"

"I saw nobody," said Mrs. Towerdale icily, while Nessie, in despair at her aunt's blunder, hurriedly brought forth the great treasure of the house—a portfolio, with sketches of costume by a distinguished R.A., obtained Mrs. Vance only knew how, and with a dexterous show of semi-confidence, exhibited one or two.

"I could have sworn to him," the lady declared, "just the old, bandy, snuff-coloured legs and gaiters, and his queer little monkey-face looking over that great poultice of a white bandanna round his throat. Where can he have gone?"

Nessie nearly let fall the drawing which Mrs. Towerdale was graciously levelling her eye-glass at, in her amaze at hearing her last night's visitor described so exactly.

"You mean old Jacob Stelfox?" asked a third lady, joining the group. "I was thinking of him just now. I used to come here with my husband very often once. Dear me! it almost made me shiver to fancy I heard the tapping of his big cane, and his halting footstep! He lived in these rooms, you know, at last, and all the exercise he took was to hop up and down, and in and out."

"Of course, the idea must be carefully carried out in the other details of the costume," Mrs. Towerdale was prosing on impressively, and Nessie could listen no more to the other conversation.

Her poor little head felt utterly dazed with all she had to speculate on. How could she have come to dream of old Jacob, and why should Mrs. Vance have tried to deceive her?

The day drew to its close, again a prosperous one; so prosperous that Nessie could hardly marvel at Mistress Ellenore's unusual high spirits and talkativeness.

They sat down to supper, a well-served meal this night, with actually a bottle of champagne between them, of which all but Nessie's one modest glass fell to Mrs. Vance's share. She grew extravagantly affectionate and laudatory, predicted the advent of the merchant-prince more confidently than ever, drew fantastic pictures of their future prosperity, and ended by sending Nessie to bed early, and declaring her intention of sitting up all night, if need be, preparing work for the next day.

Nessie departed, not unwillingly, but before half her night's rest was over, started up, as she fancied, broad awake. The light of a street-lamp shone on her white blind, and dark against it was the outline of a man's figure, an old man, bent and halting, who with raised forefinger beckoned impatiently to her.

She rose, or thought she did, and reluctantly followed as he slowly limped before her out of the room, and down the staircase to the next landing. It was brilliantly lighted, and crouching all scared and white at the closed door of the show-room was Aunt Elly, clutching fast the key.

The old man made a stern gesture of command that she should open it forthwith. She hesitated with imploring looks and words that Nessie could not hear. The old man's brows knit ominously, he made one angry stride forward, his heavy stick raised to strike, when Nessie, flinging herself desperately between them, was grasped and held fast in Mrs. Vance's arms—and woke.

"My dear! What have you been dreaming of? I heard you stirring, and ran downstairs just in time to turn up the gas and catch you."

"Was I walking in my sleep?" asked Nessie confusedly. "Where's the old man? Did he hurt you?"

Mrs. Vance grew white to the lips, and glanced furtively around with terrified eyes.

"Don't, dear. Don't think any more of it. There, come upstairs again, and I'll lie down beside you."

Nessie followed her, half ashamed, and the rest of the night passed quietly.

Next day brought business brisk enough to wipe out the memory of the night's scare from the mind of one of the women at least. A great fancy ball was in contemplation, and the Northport mind was greatly exercised on the question of costume. Mistress Ellenore threw herself into the subject *con amore*, and surpassed herself in fertility of suggestion and boldness of artistic design.

Nessie wondered and admired, and wondered more when now and then she caught her sunk in fits of gloomy brooding or listened to some miserable nervous outbreak most unlike Mrs. Vance's usual happy, well-controlled temper. It suddenly occurred to her that the Rio Palmas mail might have come in and brought the usual tidings of invincible bad fortune and demand for supplies. Still, orders were pouring in, the great half-furnished resonant rooms above were buzzing like a hive with the whirr of sewing-machines, the click of scissors, and the rustle of endless yards of costly fabrics; sales, and for ready cash, had been going on all day long, and, if the worst came to the worst, The Golden Bulrush might afford Mr. Tom Vance

another start in life. Nessie tried to hint as much that same evening, but her aunt almost repulsed her.

"You don't know what you are talking about. Tom would never be so mean as to take our earnings from us. It would be robbery. Do you really think he might come home and take all this?" with a sudden look of terror; "it is mine, you know, not his at all. What will become of us if he does?"

"Auntie dearest, you are simply killing yourself with anxieties. Don't invent a new one. You haven't had a decent night's rest since we came here either. It is your turn to sleep to-night. I don't mean to close an eye till those rosebuds are on Mrs. Towerdale's train, so I shall sit by you to-night."

Half ungraciously Mrs. Vance let herself be led away, suffering the girl's tender service and caresses with a sullen stupefied air. Her eyes closed as her head touched the pillow, and she fell sound asleep holding Nessie's hand. When her clasp relaxed, Nessie softly unfolded her work, and by the light of her carefully-shaded candle began to adjust her rose-sprays on her velvet, a difficult and dainty piece of work which absorbed her entirely for some hours.

Suddenly she lifted her head. The house had been profoundly still, only Mrs. Vance's regular breathing breaking the silence. Now in the distance she heard a soft but distinct and measured sound, growing nearer and nearer—a halting footstep on the stairs. She listened breathlessly as it came closer step by step. She knew when it reached the landing and paused, as an old man would to rest, then came steadily onward till it stopped at the bedroom-door. The handle turned softly but decidedly, and the door moved inwards till it disclosed the figure that Nessie knew must be there—the little, bent, snuff-brown form of old Jacob Stelfox. His eyebrows were knit as he gazed in on them, and he raised a hand in menace.

Mrs. Vance tossed, and moaned, and started up, and Nessie, flinging a protecting arm round her shoulders, and feeling braver than she imagined possible, gazed firmly on the wizened old face that advanced out of the darkness till it glared over the foot of the bed on them. He beckoned as he had done before and turned away, while Mrs. Vance struggled away from Nessie, and attempted to get out of bed. There was something in her face that made Nessie dread either to wake or to try to stop her. So she slipped on her shoes and rolled a shawl round her. Then, one waking, one sleeping, the two women followed step by step the shadowy, limping figure that led them down the great staircase to the door at its foot. It was open. A cold, unearthly, greenish light seemed to emanate from the mirror, rendering visible the table in front, and dimly the surrounding objects. If grew stronger and clearer as the old man approached, and seemed to concentrate itself on him as he turned and faced them with bright, angry eyes.

Mrs. Vance slipped suddenly from Nessie's supporting clasp, stumbling blindly forward with outstretched arms till she fell on her knees at his feet. Again he raised his hand solemnly, his frown grew deeper, rays of fierce light seemed to dart from his eyes and transfix the kneeling suppliant before him. She writhed in dumb appeal, and at last broke forth in strangled sobbing tones:

"What have I done? What harm to you or her? Nessie! Save me! save me from him!"

But Nessie stood powerless, spell-bound.

"Why do you torment me? Did I ever ask for your house or money? Haven't I been an honest, hard-working woman all my life, and as good to Nessie as if she had been my own child? Don't! don't! Your eyes scorch me! Go away! go away!" she moaned, grovelling at the spectre's feet. "What if Nessie was your nearest-of-kin? How did I know you ever cared to hear of her? You all disowned and cast off her mother when she ran away with young Ned Halliday (I was the only one to stand up for poor Aunt Hester then), and you never cared to enquire what became of them. How could I risk a quarrel with you? I had the children to think of. If I have done wrong, it was for them. Take your money away again, ruin us if you will, but leave me."

Still the grim old face scowled menacingly down on the poor terrified creature; but as Nessie listened a flood of generous wrath seemed to rise hot and strong in her heart. With a desperate effort she burst from the spell that held her, and rushed forward.

"You wicked old man!" she cried, transported with indignation. "You mean, wrong-headed old spectre! Go away at once to your grave, or wherever you came from! What business have you here at all? This isn't your house now. It belongs to someone who will make a better use of it than you ever did. And frighten her out of it you shall not!"

Nessie spoke in a perfect torrent of wrath, that swept away all terror of the apparition, who seemed to listen with a ghastly sneer in his cold gleaming eyes.

"So you threw off my mother? Left her and me to Aunt Elly's charity, and now you want to put things straight again, as you

fancy. What do you mean to do? What do all you ghosts expect to do? You can haunt the house and drive Aunt Ellenore out of it, but you can't put anyone else in."

The phantom still listened with a sideway turn of the head, and a malicious smile wreathing his sunken lips. He laid his hand impressively on the marble table, and nodded meaningly.

Nessie defiantly swept up to him and examined the spot from which he withdrew his hand, above and below. She had dusted it often enough to know it well—the gilded garland of a frame, the impossible lion's leg beneath. The slab was marble, the garland wood and plaster, the leg wood and iron, just like a hundred others of the period.

Still, urged by that mocking smile, she tried again. Resting on the edge, she felt the slab move slightly. She pressed a little, and the whole slab slid back into some recess of the wall, leaving the frame exposed, and in the frame a secret receptacle.

Three or four dusty blue envelopes lay in it. The top one was closed and sealed. She lifted it gingerly with her finger-tips, and blowing the dust away from its address, read by the light of that weird unnatural radiance that flashed up as if in triumph:

"This codicil to my will of 1866 is to be delivered, after my death, to Messrs. Faucit and Fulworth.

"(Signed) JACOB STELFOX."

Nessie tore it open, in obedience to a gesture of the apparition's. The long-folded blue paper crackled apart reluctantly. The writing inside was fair and plain. The meaning of all the dry lengthy phrases seemed to start out clear before her in sudden vividness.

It was in the hand of old Jacob himself, in as spiteful terms as were consistent with perfect legality, and to the following purport:

That his niece, Ellenore Vance, having for purposes of her own concealed from him the existence of a daughter of his youngest sister, Hester, and Edward Halliday, to mark his disapproval of her unworthy conduct, he proceeded to cancel all previous bequests in her favour, and to bequeath all that he had originally bequeathed to her to the aforesaid daughter, etc., etc.

Nessie read, and turned a gaze of scorn on the mocking phantom. "So that was to be Aunt Elly's reward for loving and caring for me! Why didn't you do it yourself, instead of hoarding up spite against her all these years? I suppose this thing is legal," examining the document with utter repulsion, "and no lawyer can upset it." Old Jacob grinned confidently. "Then I can!" and the paper was contemptuously scattered at his feet in a dozen fragments. "As if flesh and blood could not get the better of any ghost that ever walked!"

The little grey ghost's hands were raised in trembling horror, and his chin sank suddenly forward on his white neckcloth. Nessie pursued her advantage mercilessly.

"Oh, I've no doubt you are hugging to yourself the thought of what a good exemplary benefactor to mankind you are; of all you have done for your family, and the blessing you are going to be to your native town. You foolish old man! It isn't your money now that is doing anything. No one owes you a grateful thought for it. It isn't the people you benefit when you are dead that are taken into account; it is those you did no good to when you were alive that are counted up against you."

The poor old figure seemed to shrink under her bright indignant gaze and fade fainter and fainter.

Nessie felt quite mollified towards it.

"I'll try and think as kindly as I can of you, but you must see how Aunt Elly's living love and care have been more to me than all you could ever do for me. You had better go. You have no part in our lives, and you can but trouble them. You can do no good in the world any more. Good-bye—good-bye."

There was but a little cloud of snuff-coloured mist left by this time. The weird cold light in the mirror was waxing low. On the floor lay Mrs. Vance, a motionless heap of white drapery.

A chill crept to the marrow of Nessie's bones as for one instant a cold trembling hand seemed to be laid on her downbent head, and an icy sigh, like a breath from a snow-cloud, breathed over her "Farewell," and all was darkness.

Mrs. Vance woke next morning to find herself snug in bed, after a long dreamless night. There was a smell of smouldering paper and a little pile of blackened fragments in the grate, a candle guttered to its death in a smoky socket, and in her chair beside the table slept Nessie, quietly and peacefully as a child, the last rosebud hanging by the last needleful of silver thread to the blue velvet train in her lap.

Her pretty lips parted with a smile, her long curly lashes quivered asunder.

"Something has happened," she cried, starting up broad awake. "What is it?"

Mistress Ellenore knit her brows distressfully.

"I can't recall it, Nessie. Have we both been dreaming?"

"I don't know."

"I don't know."

"Then nobody knows, unless perhaps old Jacob Stelfox."

Then with a kiss and a laugh they forgot the subject.

Nessie has never found her merchant-prince, which is the less to be regretted in that she infinitely prefers the handsome junior partner in the art metal-works opposite. She is as happy a wife as Mrs. Vance a widow, fascinating Tom Vance having ended his days characteristically in the last revolution in Rio Palmas six months before the marriage.

Having, with his usual frank affability, promised the support of the British Government unreservedly to both parties, he was incontinently shot in the market-place of Santa Fé by the first which found him out.

Mrs. Vance mourned him as a martyred patriot, but, relieved from the burden of his existence, prospers exceedingly in a gorgeous plate-glass emporium of her own nowadays.

"My dear," she said to Nessie on her wedding-day, "never despise riches. They have brought me a clear conscience at last. I dared not give up my rightful inheritance before, though I always felt it should have been yours. Now, dearest, take it with my love as your wedding-present."

She laid a mighty bundle in Nessie's hands as she spoke—the title-deeds of The Golden Bulrush.

There is music of children's voices, and patter of tiny feet up and down the solemn old dwelling, and Nessie's bright presence makes sunshine there all day long.

The dim old mirror still holds its place, but no one guesses how, when the evening shadows fall, a grey wistful face peers from out its misty depths, and a yearning sigh for life and opportunity long gone by floats sadly echoing through the deserted rooms.

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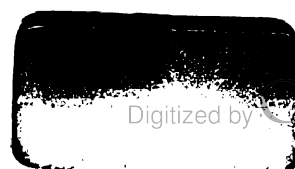
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"Any woman might enjoy seeing herself with such a background," she pronounced, studying the carefully-chosen tints of the walls approvingly, "and any gown will look right seen against it."

But, in truth, Mrs. Vance's wares could stand on their own merits.

Nessie was clad in softly-draped sad-coloured stuff, with some telling points of dead-gold here and there.

"I don't want you to be a mere black silk lay-figure," Mrs. Vance had said. "I want you to show how any colour can be worn becomingly."

She herself was gorgeous in lustrous satin, combining the very latest fashion with some quaint suggestion of coif and kirtle, and the two made a very pretty picture in the mirror when she came softly behind and kissed Nessie's pretty ear.

"And any room or gown would look right with someone I know in it, and I only hope some of these fine young merchant-princes may come along and see it for himself, and give me the chance, for once in my life, of making a perfect wedding-dress, and—who knows?—perhaps a Court dress to follow."

"Oh, auntie!" Nessie was laughingly protesting, when she stopped amazed.

Mrs. Vance's jaw had fallen, her eyes stared wildly, she clutched Nessie's shoulder with a trembling hand, pointing with the other to the mirror.

"Who passed there just now?" she asked at last under her breath.

"Nobody, dear. You are dizzy with over-work. Let me get you some wine."

"No, no!" Mrs. Vance shook her head, rubbed her eyes, and looked furtively around. "The shadows—that glass—distorted reflections, I think," she murmured confusedly; and just then all colloquy was stopped, for the little boy in flat cap and stamped leather jerkin, who waited in the hall, flung the door open magnificently wide and ushered in the first customers.

No merchant-prince came along that day; nevertheless, it was exceptionally prosperous. The "Stelfox luck" seemed to cling about the place still. It was the dull season just before the beginning of the winter festivities, and the Northport ladies, dowered as a rule with much spare cash and more spare time, were ready to receive any novelty graciously. Mistress Ellenoure was amusing, insinuating, and fair dealing, and Nessie the most charming lay-figure for the exhibition of new and dainty devices. When evening came it was with a triumphant heart that Nessie cleared the rooms, looked half-appalled at the order-book, wrote a telegram to bring down apprentices and assistants by the first train, and then betook herself to the office to count the money, while Mrs. Vance tossed up something hot for supper in the kitchen, having dismissed the charwoman for the night.

"We must look out for extra hands if this goes on, auntie. You'll make your fortune in six months at this rate."

"Our fortune," corrected Mrs. Vance. "Yours as well as mine, I hope."

"What pretty women they have here," Nessie went on enthusiastically, "it's a pleasure to work for them; but oh, auntie, what a millennium it would be if, instead of being dressed by the dozen, all more or less alike, each woman would earnestly study and work out, once for all, her own fashion of dress, made in the richest, most lasting stuff she can rightly afford, and only modified by the season or advancing years."

"Supposing she hadn't brains enough?" objected Mistress Ellenoure.

"Then let her pay me, or some other discreet and worthy artist, to do it for her."

"Then think how bad for trade; nothing would be discarded before it was worn out."

"Think of the women who would go through life trying in vain to discover what their style really was. There'd be change enough in the world, Aunt Elly."

Here a terrific yawn interrupted the discussion, and by mutual consent both moved off to bed, early as it was. Nessie found herself too over-tired and excited to think of sleep when she got upstairs. She was still brushing out her dark curly locks, at her pretty dressing-table, when she heard a voice calling below, "Nessie! Nessie!" in suppressed tones of fear. She ran down to the first landing, where stood Mrs. Vance in her dressing-gown, lamp in hand, listening at the show-room door.

"Nessie, didn't you make all safe here?"

Nessie nodded. "Fastened the windows, barred the shutters, put out the gas, locked the door, and gave the key to you," she replied promptly.

"There's someone in there now," Mrs. Vance whispered impressively; "someone walking up and down with an irregular, limping step. I heard it, and the tap of a stick on the floor. It stopped when you came."

"Thieves! And we are all alone in the house!"

"Of course it is. That seed-pearl embroidery is worth fifty guineas, and that Point de Venise dounce five times as much. I'm not afraid. We must catch them. Run and find the key. It's hanging up in the pocket of my gown."

Nessie obeyed softly, and returned to find her aunt still on the watch, armed with the largest carver and the dinner-bell.

"There, Nessie, stand at the lauding-window, and when I give the signal you rouse the neighbourhood. Don't be too precipitate, though, it may be cats."

Nessie inclined to that opinion, but wasted no time in discussion. She posted herself as desired, bell in hand, while Mrs. Vance, turning the key gently, suddenly flung open the door and marched to the attack, lamp in one hand, bare blade in the other. There was an awful portentous silence after she disappeared. Nessie waited breathless, all ears for the signal, in vain.

"N—N—Nessie, hel—l—p!" came a faint strangled cry in her aunt's voice, that sounded as if shaken out of her.

Nessie flew to the rescue.

On an ottoman in front of the big mirror sat Mrs. Vance, all limp and dishevelled, her eyes fixed blankly on its dusky depths, her lamp toppling over on a neighbouring chair, and the carving-knife dangling feebly from her nerveless clasp.

Nessie rushed at her and caught the lamp, then gazed all around in consternation.

The empty blocks and wire-frames had the room to themselves apparently. She peered cautiously round the tall cabinets, behind the curtains, and under the tables. Nothing, nobody there. Then, bolder grown, she struck a match and set all the lights of the old-fashioned gaseliers ablazing. The large doors between that room and the next were securely fastened inside. Nessie tried all the windows, looked in all the ottomans, and returned to her aunt fairly bewildered.

"Did you see anything? Why did you call 'help'?" she asked at last.

Mrs. Vance only moaned.

"I feel as if I were pinched black and blue," she complained presently; "look at my shoulders."

Nessie did look, but seeing no trace of ill-usage, wrapped her up warmly again, and suggested that they should go to bed.

"Over-work, poor dear thing," was the girl's mental conclusion as Mrs. Vance staggered to her feet, and holding very tight to her, made her shaky way back to her room.

She refused Nessie's offer of companionship for the night, and with a hurried farewell, locked and bolted herself in.

Nessie tossed and tumbled under her lace-trimmed counterpane for a little, wondering what she should do if Aunt Elly's wits really were to give way, but weariness soon got the better of her anxieties, and she woke next morning to find Mistress Ellenoure fresh, brisk, and business-like as ever. A new servant was coming in, and the apprentices, under charge of her old forewoman, would be down by noon, and must be set to work at once.

"How did you sleep?" she found time to ask Nessie.

"Very well, indeed, till morning, when I was horribly bothered by a dream visitor."

"What? The merchant-prince?"

"I'm sure I hope not. He was a grey, wizened, ever-so-old, little man in a snuff-coloured suit with bright buttons, and a huge bandage of a white-silk neckcloth, who came limping in, leaning on a gold-knobbed cane."

"How alarming!" said Mrs. Vance with a forced little laugh.

"Not at all. He smiled most benignantly on me, only persisted in urging me to get up and come away with him, which I felt cruel on his part, when I was so dead sleepy. He was becoming very imperative, indeed, when I suddenly awoke. He was just what I always fancied old Mr. Stelfox to be. Was he anything like him?"

"No. Oh dear no! Why, Uncle Jacob was quite another sort of man; with a grey beard and a fine white head, you know;" and Mistress Ellenoure hastily measured and snipped off some Turkish embroidery, three-quarters of a yard too short, and hurried away.

The red gown that Nessie donned for business hours was a novelty in those days, cruelly trying to any but the possessor of her lily and rose tints, but admirably chosen to show off Mrs. Vance's last consignments of Spanish laces. She had Algerine embroideries, too, and soft creamy Indian silks, and Nessie was kept exhibiting mantles, and flounces, and all the rest of it, till she almost grew sick of her own pretty reflection in the big mirror.

Mrs. Vance kept persistently away from that end of the room, only coming near her three times, and each time making some unwonted and astonishing blunder. She declared herself sold out of hand-painted satins, with a boxful at her elbow; and when Mrs. Towerdale, the great leader of Northport taste, was in the very middle of an order, actually turned off and hurried away, knocking



down and treading on the precious pearl embroidery, to attend to a perfectly insignificant new comer.

The great lady stared in some surprise, but her friend, whom Nessie was serving, turned vivaciously from the glass to her:

"Oh, do look! Who was that who passed just now?"

"I saw nobody," said Mrs. Towerdale icily, while Nessie, in despair at her aunt's blunder, hurriedly brought forth the great treasure of the house—a portfolio, with sketches of costume by a distinguished R.A., obtained Mrs. Vance only knew how, and with a dexterous show of semi-confidence, exhibited one or two.

"I could have sworn to him," the lady declared, "just the old, bandy, snuff-coloured legs and gaiters, and his queer little monkey-face looking over that great poultice of a white bandanna round his throat. Where can he have gone?"

Nessie nearly let fall the drawing which Mrs. Towerdale was graciously levelling her eye-glass at, in her amaze at hearing her last night's visitor described so exactly.

"You mean old Jacob Stelfox?" asked a third lady, joining the group. "I was thinking of him just now. I used to come here with my husband very often once. Dear me! it almost made me shiver to fancy I heard the tapping of his big cane, and his halting footstep! He lived in these rooms, you know, at last, and all the exercise he took was to hop up and down, and in and out."

"Of course, the idea must be carefully carried out in the other details of the costume," Mrs. Towerdale was prosing on impressively, and Nessie could listen no more to the other conversation.

Her poor little head felt utterly dazed with all she had to speculate on. How could she have come to dream of old Jacob, and why should Mrs. Vance have tried to deceive her?

The day drew to its close, again a prosperous one; so prosperous that Nessie could hardly marvel at Mistress Ellenore's unusual high spirits and talkativeness.

They sat down to supper, a well-served meal this night, with actually a bottle of champagne between them, of which all but Nessie's one modest glass fell to Mrs. Vance's share. She grew extravagantly affectionate and laudatory, predicted the advent of the merchant-prince more confidently than ever, drew fantastic pictures of their future prosperity, and ended by sending Nessie to bed early, and declaring her intention of sitting up all night, if need be, preparing work for the next day.

Nessie departed, not unwillingly, but before half her night's rest was over, started up, as she fancied, broad awake. The light of a street-lamp shone on her white blind, and dark against it was the outline of a man's figure, an old man, bent and halting, who with raised forefinger beckoned impatiently to her.

She rose, or thought she did, and reluctantly followed as he slowly limped before her out of the room, and down the staircase to the next landing. It was brilliantly lighted, and crouching all scared and white at the closed door of the show-room was Aunt Elly, clutching fast the key.

The old man made a stern gesture of command that she should open it forthwith. She hesitated with imploring looks and words that Nessie could not hear. The old man's brows knit ominously, he made one angry stride forward, his heavy stick raised to strike, when Nessie, flinging herself desperately between them, was grasped and held fast in Mrs. Vance's arms—and woke.

"My dear! What have you been dreaming of? I heard you stirring, and ran downstairs just in time to turn up the gas and catch you."

"Was I walking in my sleep?" asked Nessie confusedly. "Where's the old man? Did he hurt you?"

Mrs. Vance grew white to the lips, and glanced furtively around with terrified eyes.

"Don't, dear. Don't think any more of it. There, come upstairs again, and I'll lie down beside you."

Nessie followed her, half ashamed, and the rest of the night passed quietly.

Next day brought business brisk enough to wipe out the memory of the night's scare from the mind of one of the women at least. A great fancy ball was in contemplation, and the Northport mind was greatly exercised on the question of costume. Mistress Ellenore threw herself into the subject *con amore*, and surpassed herself in fertility of suggestion and boldness of artistic design.

Nessie wondered and admired, and wondered more when now and then she caught her sunk in fits of gloomy brooding or listened to some miserable nervous outbreak most unlike Mrs. Vance's usual happy, well-controlled temper. It suddenly occurred to her that the Rio Palmas mail might have come in and brought the usual tidings of invincible bad fortune and demand for supplies. Still, orders were pouring in, the great half-furnished resonant rooms above were buzzing like a hive with the whirr of sewing-machines, the click of scissors, and the rustle of endless yards of costly fabrics; sales, and for ready cash, had been going on all day long, and, if the worst came to the worst, The Golden Bulrush might afford Mr. Tom Vance

another start in life. Nessie tried to hint as much that same evening, but her aunt almost repulsed her.

"You don't know what you are talking about. Tom would never be so mean as to take our earnings from us. It would be robbery. Do you really think he might come home and take all this?" with a sudden look of terror; "it is mine, you know, not his at all. What will become of us if he does?"

"Auntie dearest, you are simply killing yourself with anxieties. Don't invent a new one. You haven't had a decent night's rest since we came here either. It is your turn to sleep to-night. I don't mean to close an eye till those rosebuds are on Mrs. Towerdale's train, so I shall sit by you to-night."

Half ungraciously Mrs. Vance let herself be led away, suffering the girl's tender service and caresses with a sullen stupefied air. Her eyes closed as her head touched the pillow, and she fell sound asleep holding Nessie's hand. When her clasp relaxed, Nessie softly unfolded her work, and by the light of her carefully-shaded candle began to adjust her rose-sprays on her velvet, a difficult and dainty piece of work which absorbed her entirely for some hours.

Suddenly she lifted her head. The house had been profoundly still, only Mrs. Vance's regular breathing breaking the silence. Now in the distance she heard a soft but distinct and measured sound, growing nearer and nearer—a halting footstep on the stairs. She listened breathlessly as it came closer step by step. She knew when it reached the landing and paused, as an old man would to rest, then came steadily onward till it stopped at the bedroom-door. The handle turned softly but decidedly, and the door moved inwards till it disclosed the figure that Nessie knew must be there—the little, bent, snuff-brown form of old Jacob Stelfox. His eyebrows were knit as he gazed in on them, and he raised a hand in menace.

Mrs. Vance tossed, and moaned, and started up, and Nessie, flinging a protecting arm round her shoulders, and feeling braver than she imagined possible, gazed firmly on the wizened old face that advanced out of the darkness till it glared over the foot of the bed on them. He beckoned as he had done before and turned away, while Mrs. Vance struggled away from Nessie, and attempted to get out of bed. There was something in her face that made Nessie dread either to wake or to try to stop her. So she slipped on her shoes and rolled a shawl round her. Then, one waking, one sleeping, the two women followed step by step the shadowy, limping figure that led them down the great staircase to the door at its foot. It was open. A cold, unearthly, greenish light seemed to emanate from the mirror, rendering visible the table in front, and dimly the surrounding objects. If grew stronger and clearer as the old man approached, and seemed to concentrate itself on him as he turned and faced them with bright, angry eyes.

Mrs. Vance slipped suddenly from Nessie's supporting clasp, stumbling blindly forward with outstretched arms till she fell on her knees at his feet. Again he raised his hand solemnly, his frown grew deeper, rays of fierce light seemed to dart from his eyes and transfix the kneeling suppliant before him. She writhed in dumb appeal, and at last broke forth in strangled sobbing tones:

"What have I done? What harm to you or her? Nessie! Save me! save me from him!"

But Nessie stood powerless, spell-bound.

"Why do you torment me? Did I ever ask for your house or money? Haven't I been an honest, hard-working woman all my life, and as good to Nessie as if she had been my own child? Don't! don't! Your eyes scorch me! Go away! go away!" she moaned, grovelling at the spectre's feet. "What if Nessie was your nearest-of-kin? How did I know you ever cared to hear of her? You all disowned and cast off her mother when she ran away with young Ned Halliday (I was the only one to stand up for poor Aunt Hester then), and you never cared to enquire what became of them. How could I risk a quarrel with you? I had the children to think of. If I have done wrong, it was for them. Take your money away again, ruin us if you will, but leave me."

Still the grim old face scowled menacingly down on the poor terrified creature; but as Nessie listened a flood of generous wrath seemed to rise hot and strong in her heart. With a desperate effort she burst from the spell that held her, and rushed forward.

"You wicked old man!" she cried, transported with indignation. "You mean, wrong-headed old spectre! Go away at once to your grave, or wherever you came from! What business have you here at all? This isn't your house now. It belongs to someone who will make a better use of it than you ever did. And frighten her out of it you shall not!"

Nessie spoke in a perfect torrent of wrath, that swept away all terror of the apparition, who seemed to listen with a ghastly sneer in his cold gleaming eyes.

"So you threw off my mother? Left her and me to Aunt Elly's charity, and now you want to put things straight again, as you

fancy. What do you mean to do? What do all you ghosts expect to do? You can haunt the house and drive Aunt Ellenore out of it, but you can't put anyone else in."

The phantom still listened with a sideway turn of the head, and a malicious smile wreathing his sunken lips. He laid his hand impressively on the marble table, and nodded meaningly.

Nessie defiantly swept up to him and examined the spot from which he withdrew his hand, above and below. She had dusted it often enough to know it well—the gilded garland of a frame, the impossible lion's leg beneath. The slab was marble, the garland wood and plaster, the leg wood and iron, just like a hundred others of the period.

Still, urged by that mocking smile, she tried again. Resting on the edge, she felt the slab move slightly. She pressed a little, and the whole slab slid back into some recess of the wall, leaving the frame exposed, and in the frame a secret receptacle.

Three or four dusty blue envelopes lay in it. The top one was closed and sealed. She lifted it gingerly with her finger-tips, and blowing the dust away from its address, read by the light of that weird unnatural radiance that flashed up as if in triumph:

"This codicil to my will of 1866 is to be delivered, after my death, to Messrs. Faucit and Fulwort.

"(Signed) JACOB STELFOX."

Nessie tore it open, in obedience to a gesture of the apparition's. The long-folded blue paper crackled apart reluctantly. The writing inside was fair and plain. The meaning of all the dry lengthy phrases seemed to start out clear before her in sudden vividness.

It was in the hand of old Jacob himself, in as spiteful terms as were consistent with perfect legality, and to the following purport:

That his niece, Ellenore Vance, having for purposes of her own concealed from him the existence of a daughter of his youngest sister, Hester, and Edward Halliday, to mark his disapproval of her unworthy conduct, he proceeded to cancel all previous bequests in her favour, and to bequeath all that he had originally bequeathed to her to the aforesaid daughter, etc., etc.

Nessie read, and turned a gaze of scorn on the mocking phantom. "So that was to be Aunt Elly's reward for loving and caring for me! Why didn't you do it yourself, instead of hoarding up spite against her all these years? I suppose this thing is legal," examining the document with utter repulsion, "and no lawyer can upset it." Old Jacob grinned confidently. "Then I can!" and the paper was contemptuously scattered at his feet in a dozen fragments. "As if flesh and blood could not get the better of any ghost that ever walked!"

The little grey ghost's hands were raised in trembling horror, and his chin sank suddenly forward on his white neckcloth. Nessie pursued her advantage mercilessly.

"Oh, I've no doubt you are hugging to yourself the thought of what a good exemplary benefactor to mankind you are; of all you have done for your family, and the blessing you are going to be to your native town. You foolish old man! It isn't your money now that is doing anything. No one owes you a grateful thought for it. It isn't the people you benefit when you are dead that are taken into account; it is those you did no good to when you were alive that are counted up against you."

The poor old figure seemed to shrink under her bright indignant gaze and fade fainter and fainter.

Nessie felt quite mollified towards it.

"I'll try and think as kindly as I can of you, but you must see how Aunt Elly's living love and care have been more to me than all you could ever do for me. You had better go. You have no part in our lives, and you can but trouble them. You can do no good in the world any more. Good-bye—good-bye."

There was but a little cloud of snuff-coloured mist left by this time. The weird cold light in the mirror was waxing low. On the floor lay Mrs. Vance, a motionless heap of white drapery.

A chill crept to the marrow of Nessie's bones as for one instant a cold trembling hand seemed to be laid on her downbent head, and an icy sigh, like a breath from a snow-cloud, breathed over her "Farewell," and all was darkness.

Mrs. Vance woke next morning to find herself snug in bed, after a long dreamless night. There was a smell of smouldering paper and a little pile of blackened fragments in the grate, a candle guttered to its death in a smoky socket, and in her chair beside the table slept Nessie, quietly and peacefully as a child, the last rosebud hanging by the last needleful of silver thread to the blue velvet train in her lap.

Her pretty lips parted with a smile, her long curly lashes quivered asunder.

"Something has happened," she cried, starting up broad awake. "What is it?"

Mistress Ellenore knit her brows distressfully.

"I can't recall it, Nessie. Have we both been dreaming?"

"I don't know."

"I don't know."

"Then nobody knows, unless perhaps old Jacob Stelfox."

Then with a kiss and a laugh they forgot the subject.

Nessie has never found her merchant-prince, which is the less to be regretted in that she infinitely prefers the handsome junior partner in the art metal-works opposite. She is as happy a wife as Mrs. Vance a widow, fascinating Tom Vance having ended his days characteristically in the last revolution in Rio Palmas six months before the marriage.

Having, with his usual frank affability, promised the support of the British Government unreservedly to both parties, he was incontinently shot in the market-place of Santa Fé by the first which found him out.

Mrs. Vance mourned him as a martyred patriot, but, relieved from the burden of his existence, prospered exceedingly in a gorgeous plate-glass emporium of her own nowadays.

"My dear," she said to Nessie on her wedding-day, "never despise riches. They have brought me a clear conscience at last. I dared not give up my rightful inheritance before, though I always felt it should have been yours. Now, dearest, take it with my love as your wedding-present."

She laid a mighty bundle in Nessie's hands as she spoke—the title-deeds of The Golden Bulrush.

There is music of children's voices, and patter of tiny feet up and down the solemn old dwelling, and Nessie's bright presence makes sunshine there all day long.

The dim old mirror still holds its place, but no one guesses how, when the evening shadows fall, a grey wistful face peers from out its misty depths, and a yearning sigh for life and opportunity long gone by floats sadly echoing through the deserted rooms.

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